

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA
DEBATES OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

DAILY HANSARD

Tuesday 19 May 2026

Preliminary Transcript

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

QUESTIONS

TasInsure - Election Promise

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

On 25 September, I repeatedly asked you whether you were still committed to delivering your signature election policy, TasInsure. You told this House it would be a new government business, as per your commitment during the election. I didn't believe you, so I asked you again, explicitly in black and white: would TasInsure be established as a government business? You said, 'yes'. You preyed on Tasmanians who are struggling with the rising cost of insurance in exchange for votes and misled them that help was on the way. Premier, why did you break your signature election promise?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. We are the only party that stood up, acting on cheaper and fairer insurance. That is our commitment - cheaper and fairer insurance for Tasmanians.

Yes, we went to the election with our commitment of cheaper, fairer insurance delivered through a state-owned company. With the benefit of expert advice, it is now a state-owned statutory authority. The primary goal, of course, is cheaper and fairer insurance, which we will deliver for Tasmanians. Not only will we still be delivering cheaper, fairer insurance, but it will be at less risk and less expensive to the Tasmanian taxpayer. That's why we have Mr Trowbridge's report; that's why we commissioned it, to ensure that we delivered on our commitment of cheaper, fairer insurance.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The only one who has the call right now is the Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Trowbridge clearly articulates that in his report to government, which we have listened to.

Yes, there is a change from state-owned company to state-owned statutory authority. I own that change. I own it because it's less expensive and less risk for the Tasmanian taxpayer but delivers on cheaper and fairer insurance.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - Why did the Premier promise something that he could never deliver and then break the promise after the election?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I own the change from the mechanism from state-owned company to state-owned statutory authority. I own it. What I also own is the commitment I gave the Tasmanian people of cheaper and fairer insurance to be delivered. You've seen the report from Mr Trowbridge, you've seen the implementation plan. The question for Labor, given you were talking about risk, you were talking about expense when we first announced it, and including when you asked the questions some time ago. We're now delivering the same product of cheaper and fairer insurance at less risk to the Tasmanian taxpayer and less expensive, which you called for and highlighted. Mr Trowbridge has done a very good and considered report. We're listening to expert advice, and Tasmanians will get cheaper and fairer insurance.

The SPEAKER - Before the honourable Leader of the Opposition gets the call, I do remind members to my left just to interject once or twice during a question, not continuously.

TasInsure - Election Promise

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.05 a.m.]

In the policy costing you submitted to Treasury for TasInsure during the election, you described it as 'a new government business that will provide home and contents insurance, small business insurance, community and event insurance and regional insurance to Tasmanians and Tasmanian businesses'. Does your policy deliver that and how is it not a broken promise and a lie to Tasmanians?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I point you to Mr Trowbridge's assessment about our policy commitment where he says:

The Government has recognised that rising costs of insurance present a significant cost pressure for Tasmanian families, small businesses and community groups.

...

... TasInsure should be a mechanism or a vehicle for realising the Government's insurance goals.

...

... the primary goal is ... to deliver more favourable insurance outcomes for Tasmania.

Mr Willie - You promised premiums for households.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ROCKLIFF -

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This characteristic may enable TasInsure to become a pacesetter for other States.

In other words, we're the only state in Australia that's taken on this responsibility to intervene in the market and support Tasmanians by isolating risk. That is clearly evident in the implementation plan and indeed in Trowbridge's report as well.

Following our announcement, I have said repeatedly that Tasmanians should not be paying premiums based on risks of other states in terms of flood and fire, so we're isolating that risk and we are going to -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable members to my left, this is a very important question that's been asked. I do ask that the Premier be heard, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I look forward to implementing our commitment of cheaper, fairer insurance. As I've said, we went to the election with that policy objective in mind very clearly. The vehicle we committed to was a state-owned company. With the benefit of expert advice, that is going to be delivered through a state-owned statutory authority, but the principles are exactly the same.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - The Premier went to the election promising home and contents insurance for households, small business insurance. Can he admit that it was a broken promise, because he's not going to deliver that now?

Ms Haddad - State-owned company or statutory authority, it's not delivering what you said.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Clark.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What TasInsure is about, and will continue to be about, is fair and more affordable insurance.

Mr Willie - You make promises you're not keeping.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You will see TasInsure on your insurance policies, policies that will be cheaper, fairer, and indeed, more affordable. A TasInsure-endorsed insurance outcome, it's going to have three divisions, as we've explained: consumer, market, and risk assessment and mitigation - improving in that understanding of risk and supporting long-term structural change.

Clearly we have intervened in this policy area, which no other state has. I called for it nationally, particularly when it comes to the areas of tourism, hospitality and agritourism. In the absence of national leadership, we've taken it on as a state.

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

Recognition of Visitors

The SPEAKER - I'd like us all to welcome in the gallery, please, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania cadets, graduates and trainees. Welcome to parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

Salmon Industry - Mass Mortality Crisis 2025

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.10 a.m.]

Today the ABC has revealed yet another horrifying dimension to the salmon mortality crisis that your government failed to prevent last year. Hundreds of tonnes of barely processed, diseased fish waste were dumped on farms across the southern midlands without sign-off from council and without any actual benefit to the land owners, who had to deal with rotting fish waste in their paddocks and polluted water in their dams. The salmon industry has lost control entirely on your watch. Still, we have reports from various parts of the state that the mass spreading of salmon waste is continuing too close to waterways. Your government's box-ticking exercise and any minor actions that have happened since last summer's mortalities still seem grossly inadequate. Will you act to bring in the tough regulations that are clearly needed to clean up salmon waste disposal, or are the salmon barons still the ones in control here?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. I well remember the mass-mortality event, as I made some comments at the time about salmon companies being on notice. I've always spoken about continuous improvement, right through the last 12 years of government. We have strengthened the Environment Protection Authority's (EPA) role as an independent regulator to ensure salmon mortalities are managed lawfully, transparently, and without environmental harm.

Fish that die in the course of finfish farming are classified as controlled waste under Tasmania's waste regulations. Controlled waste must be properly contained, transported by authorised operators, and disposed of at approved facilities. Approved pathways include rendering, composting, licensed landfill - where permitted - in silage and beneficial land application under approval, and other authorised disposal methods. Current waste systems are effectively managing volumes with material safety processes and beneficially reused through approved facilities. The EPA has been very active, actively and regularly progressing licence variations to further improve requirements around mortality, containment, and waste handling. Of course, the EPA undertakes inspections of EPA-regulated facilities and has also conducted inspections of council-regulated land application and burial sites associated with salmon mortality disposal.

I'm advised that EPA inspections undertaken to date have not identified observable environmental harm or nuisance at the time of attendance, and the EPA continues to work with councils to ensure consistency and compliance with approval conditions.

The 2025 mortality event highlighted the need for improved, robust waste infrastructure. The EPA is currently assessing proposals for continued or increased silage and composting capacity to maintain resilience during higher mortality periods. Waste management plans are now mandatory and require operators to demonstrate logistics, infrastructure, and contingency planning. Since the 2024-25 mortality event, the EPA has continued assessing proposals for additional or expanded silage and composting infrastructure to improve long-term system resilience during higher mortality periods.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - Premier, you said that the industry was on notice and that you were committed to continuous improvement. You said, 'We've strengthened the EPA powers so that there is not environmental harm'. We know environmental harm is still happening and we have evidence from landowners that this dumping is still occurring. Will you strengthen the EPA's powers and legislate to enable them to properly regulate salmon waste in Tasmania and the disposal of it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are a couple of areas there that should be mentioned. Firstly, there is a study into the salmon industry. That would include, no doubt, right across the supply chain, and -

Dr Woodruff - So, you're just kicking the can for a couple of years while you're waiting? You said continuous improvement.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Leader of the Greens. You had the opportunity for another question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I did. Which is why we are having a salmon study.

Dr Woodruff - It's going into dams and rivers now.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Leader of the Greens, you have the opportunity to ask further questions. I ask that the Premier be heard, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The study will no doubt look at all areas of the supply chain and there will be learnings from past events and improved practices, no doubt, as a result of that study. Part of the study will include recommendations, as you have called for. The EPA is fully independent -

Dr Woodruff - Give them a hand and give them stronger powers. Make them stronger.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Leader of the Greens.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You can laugh, but it wasn't when you were in government. You can laugh. The Department of Primary Industries was in charge of the growth and the regulation.

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

AFL Games - Public Transport

Prof RAZAY question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT

[10.15 a.m.]

Tasmania's entry into AFL presents a major opportunity not only for sport, but for tourism, local businesses, regional connections and community participation. What plan does the government have to ensure Tasmanians can travel to AFL games in Launceston and Hobart through cheap, reliable and dedicated public transport? Will the government consider a coordinated game day transport plan so that Tasmanians from across the state can attend games safely and affordably, while reducing congestion, parking pressure and drink driving risk?

ANSWER

Thank you for the question. It is exciting. These are exciting times in Tasmania to see so many Devils supporters coming out to support now, the women's side as well as the men's side. It is fantastic. To hear Kath McCann speaking at the Red Shield launch this morning to find out the fifth largest sporting club in the world, even before they took to the grass. Great numbers and that indicates the strength in the community that we saw with the Jack Jumpers and now is being accelerated into football.

We are very aware of the transport situation, we are very conscious of the free fares that we use on a regular service level now to make sure that the cost of living is easier for everybody that wants to use the public transport. We would also like to see a lot more communication regarding those sporting events and that does lie with the Devils themselves or the organiser of other sporting events where the numbers need to be and those things happen. I have had discussions with a lot of private operators. We were very keen to take full advantage from the regional areas of moving people to these sporting events and back again as part of their business. There is still a lot of work to do on those numbers and the movement of those people. With the new stadium coming on board, there is the bus mall there as well, which will allow for it to be a lot easier for regional people to come in on the bus and do that. I acknowledge that we have not got to a full agreement yet, but communications are always taking place and the numbers as they grow and the pressure points are something we will always consider in amongst what we need to do to get Tasmanians to and from sporting events.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Webuild Contractor

Ms BURNET question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[10.18 a.m.]

There are two groups currently bidding to construct the Macquarie Point stadium. One of the companies involved, Webuild, has, according to the New South Wales government, been linked to major delays and cost overruns on multibillion dollar infrastructure projects, with costs reportedly blowing out sixfold. The company has also been referred to various

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government bodies in New South Wales for investigation. Can you outline what due diligence your government has undertaken in relation to Webuild and whether its alleged conduct in New South Wales is consistent with the expectations set out in your government's Supplier Code of Conduct released on 16 April 2026? Further, what discussions, if any, have you or your government had with the New South Wales government regarding these allegations? Why are Webuild even still in the race?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, we know that the honourable member for Clark, Ms Burnet, is opposed to the stadium and will continue to be opposed to the stadium. In relation to the question, she must know that all the probity and other overlays ensures that I, as the government minister, am at arm's length from all this. I say to the honourable member, you can't have it both ways. You cannot say the minister has to be removed from all this and then assert that somehow I am responsible for it or the government is responsible for it.

Might I also add that we are in the middle of a procurement process? Therefore, it stands to reason that with competitive tensions and other things - I don't know who - there might be allegations of this nature floated. What I can provide to the parliament, and I'm willing to table, is a letter from Webuild to the Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC) - I table that, Speaker - which deals with some of the allegations made against them.

Paper tabled.

Mr ABETZ - I say this only to place on record that which is in my possession. It is not my role in any way, shape or form to run a defence for Webuild -

Dr Woodruff - Surely it's the basics of due diligence.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable Leader of the Greens, this is your first warning.

Mr ABETZ - or indeed any other business that might be involved in this current procurement process. We have to be exceptionally careful that we don't jump on particular bandwagons and allegations without checking them out exceptionally carefully.

What we as a government have indicated to MPDC and those involved in developing the procurement process is that we want a world class stadium at the best possible price. That is what the officials are currently working through. After the expressions of interest system, we had two tenders that went for - or two expressions going forward for the request for tender. That process should continue and be allowed to continue. Undoubtedly, I would assume, these sort of allegations, if they are substantiated, will be taken into account by those undertaking the probity and other checks as to whether particular applicants to build the stadium are fit and proper businesses to do so.

Supplementary Question

Ms BURNET - I find it remarkable, Treasurer, that you don't see that there's a place for you to be concerned. We're talking about a \$1.13 billion stadium project. Have you picked up the phone and talked to your Treasurer counterpart, Daniel Mookhey, in New South Wales in

relation to his concerns? He's known about this for months, Treasurer. Why aren't you doing your due diligence?

Mr ABETZ - I don't know how often I have to say it. It is not my role or the government's role in relation to the issue of due diligence. The task of MPDC, the probity committee, the oversight committee; they are the ones charged with doing those sorts of checks that you would seek to have undertaken. If I were to involve myself in the way that you are suggesting -

Ms Burnet - You just have to pick up the phone.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Deputy Speaker.

Mr ABETZ - I have no doubt that the very first question would be: why are you championing this builder or that builder? Why are you denigrating this builder or that builder? Why do you want to champion? Why are you picking favourites?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. I ask the House to settle, please, so that the Treasurer can be heard.

Mr ABETZ - That would be a very good idea, Speaker, for the honourable member to actually hear what I'm saying. The parliament determines the process -

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

Anti-Discrimination Act - Support

Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.25 a.m.]

Women Speak Tasmania wants to weaken Tasmania's *Anti-Discrimination Act*. They want to allow discrimination against trans and gender diverse people. The anti-trans group has asked MPs to sign a pledge to ban trans women from single sex spaces, services and sports. This would be a radical change from decades of inclusive practice in Tasmania with no issue and flies in the face of strong support for inclusion by Tasmania's women's service providers and community sporting organisations.

Premier, you have been a strong ally of the LGBTQIA+ community. They need your ongoing support and leadership. Do you reaffirm your support for Tasmania's strong and effective *Anti-Discrimination Act*? As Premier of this state, do you stand with trans and gender diverse people and support their full inclusion in Tasmanian life?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. We stand with all Tasmanians, irrespective of circumstance or background. We have no plans to change the anti-discrimination laws.

Forest Practices Authority - Fines

**Mr Di FALCO question to MINISTER for BUSINESS, INDUSTRY and RESOURCES,
Mr ELLIS**

[10.25 a.m.]

Do you consider the fine of \$100,000 to a farming business on the east coast appropriate, who acknowledge their mistake, cooperated with the Forest Practices Authority (FPA) and undertook the clearing as part of broader farm works for animal welfare, farm safety and operational reasons, who also propose substantial remediation works intended to achieve positive environmental outcomes? Farmers are fed-up with the increasing regulation they are confronted with. Do you accept that many farmers now feel the FPA is weighted more towards punishment and bureaucracy than practical environmental outcomes and productive agriculture?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Lyons for his question and interest in the matter. I'm aware that a \$100,000 fine has recently been issued to an east coast farmer by the courts for clearing forested areas on their farm without a forest practices plan. This includes 7.1 hectares of a threatened native vegetation community, *Eucalyptus globulus*, dry forest and woodland and an additional 11.5 hectares of trees. The clearing of threatened native vegetation communities is generally not permitted under the *Forest Practices Act* due to their high conservation value and the protection under the *Nature Conservation Act*.

This vegetation type provides important habitat for native wildlife, including endangered species such as the swift parrot. I'm advised that the Forest Practices Authority engaged constructively with the landowner throughout the investigation to seek remediation and rehabilitation outcomes that there would be equivalent of the ecosystem that had been cleared, but no agreement could be reached. I'm advised that the landowner had attained forest practices plans for other activity in the past.

The matter was referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions with the offender pleading guilty to all charges. The extent of the fine was set by the court, so it's important to recognise that the Forest Practices Authority's decision-making has clearly been upheld by the courts in this process and we encourage anyone that's undergoing land clearing and other such activities to work closely with the Forest Practices Authority.

Certainly, there's been significant new resources made available to particular communities so that they can understand the complex nature of these ecosystems and what might be required if they go down the path of forest clearing, for example. Noting that this matter has been a determination of the court that's upheld the Forest Practices Authority's view on the legal matter, it's important that we allow that process to hold its course.

TasInsure - Election Promise

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF -

[10.28 a.m.]

TasInsure was your signature election policy. You explicitly promised Tasmanians that you were going to set up a government business that would sell insurance to Tasmanians. You promised it would save them \$250 a year. You promised it would reduce grocery prices. You knew it wouldn't work from the day you announced it, but you kept wearing the jacket and kept preying on Tasmanians struggling with a real issue. Now that you've broken your signature election promise to Tasmanians, will you admit that your policy was nothing more than blatant insurance fraud?

ANSWER

I am more than happy to argue the case for TasInsure every single day because Tasmanians are still telling me that insurance has become unattainable -

Mr Willie - And you dupe them. You duped them.

The SPEAKER - Order, honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And unaffordable, and that's why we will continue with our commitment of cheaper and fairer insurance. The question for you, honourable member, is are you going to support cheaper and fairer insurance? Are you going to support it? The expert, John Trowbridge, provided input into our policy commitment. We've changed our method from a state-owned company to state-owned statutory authority. The promise remains the same: cheaper and fairer insurance through the mechanisms of which -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable members to my left, if you're not interested in hearing the Premier's answer - it's very hard to hear what the Premier is saying over so many interjections. I ask that the Premier be heard in silence, please. It's also very difficult for Hansard to record the Premier's answers when there are so many interjections. I ask the Premier be heard, otherwise I'll move on to the next question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The challenge for the Leader of the Opposition is, if he's not going to support our commitments - TasInsure - and our implementation plan and the three stages - what is the honourable member going to do?

Mr Willie - You don't support your own commitments.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Leader of the Opposition, it's your first warning.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What's the honourable member's alternative to this commitment?

Mr Mitchell - You're not supporting your own commitment.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Lyons, Mr Mitchell, your first warning.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We've changed the mechanism: I stand by that. I stand by that change because we've had the benefit of sound advice from Mr Trowbridge, who I thank for that advice.

Ms Haddad - Are you going to be selling insurance to Tasmanians through this new statutory authority?

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Clark, this is your first warning.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Our commitment is to deliver cheaper and fairer insurance, and that's exactly what we will do.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - The Premier's commitment was to set up TasInsure as a government business to sell insurance premiums to Tasmanians struggling with insurance costs. He said that they would save \$250. Can he admit that it was nothing more than a fake policy?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe I've already answered that question quite clearly. We remain committed to cheaper and fairer insurance. We've had the benefit of an expert in the field -

Ms Haddad - That it won't work.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What was that, sorry? The honourable member, Mr Winter, was out on parliament lawns with his normal erratic behaviour following the TasInsure announcement and actually had to admit he hadn't read the report, in actual fact.

Members interjecting.

Mr Abetz - Shame.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I mean, really.

Mr Willie - You make promises without the reports, that's shame.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The report is there for you to read, digest and, hopefully, we can have -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. All members of the House, I ask you all to settle, please.

Native Forest Logging - New Wood Supply Contracts

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.33 a.m.]

Independent legal and economic advice has been given to you that proves what the Greens and environmentalists have long known: continuing native forest logging with new wood supply contracts could cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars in payouts, particularly with new national environment laws yet to be implemented. The logging industry wants to land new contracts so it can lock in unsustainable logging and get a payday when these new laws come in and constrain native forest logging. Native forest logging is a loss-making, climate-wrecking industry that's been kept on taxpayer-funded life support for decades, and it has to stop. Taxpayers have already handed out over a billion dollars to this industry over the past 20 years in Tasmania and our state's budget clearly cannot sustain more. Why would you put the state at risk by signing new wood-supply contracts when you could do the right thing and end native forest logging when contracts expire?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Your questions are rather overly descriptive today, I've noticed, and taking some licence with that as well. These negotiations are -

Dr Woodruff - I never got the memo that questions are meant to be boring.

The SPEAKER - Order, honourable Leader of the Greens. I remind all members: if you have asked a question, you allow the minister or the Premier to answer the question. You have a supplementary that you can use, you also have further questions, plus you have other forms of this House that you can use as well. I ask that the honourable Premier or the ministers be heard, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Firstly, I recognise the uncertainty created by the Commonwealth law changes. There is a degree of uncertainty. I know that minister Ellis was in Canberra last week, in fact, and navigating his way around these matters, which is why we are engaging constructively to ensure Tasmania's forestry sector remains strong and remains viable, because not unlike other primary industries, including the aquaculture industry, it employs many thousands of Tasmanians - including the supply chain - in rural and regional Tasmania. Unlike Victoria, which spent \$1.5 billion dollars to shut down its native forest industry, and regional jobs with it, we're committed to supporting a sustainable native forest sector.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania will continue to factor Commonwealth policy changes into contract arrangements, ensuring the sector can operate with certainty while reforms are being implemented. Sustainable Timber Tasmania is currently negotiating new native log-supply contracts as many existing agreements expire in 2027. These negotiations are ongoing and will take into account the changes to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) framework and we will not be exposing Tasmanian taxpayers.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you for recognising the uncertainty at the moment and the signing of contracts at this point which would put the state at risk. Do you recognise that signing contracts until there is full certainty would put the state at risk of potential liability?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not going to insert myself into commercial arrangements and negotiations in the middle of Question Time - as much as you'd like the theatre of it.

We will seek advice from all parties, we'll work with the industry, we'll work with the Commonwealth to ensure that we manage the Commonwealth changes, of course, and support our sustainable native forest industry and maintain employment in regional areas.

Dowsing Point - Housing Development

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.37 a.m.]

The announcement about the Dowsing Point housing redevelopment presents a great opportunity for the state. However, it is hard to ignore the similarities between this announcement and previous commitments from your government where big promises have failed to stack up against the actual results. In 2018, the Liberal government announced that the rezoning of 72 hectares of Crown Land across the state would be fast tracked for social and affordable housing, but only six homes were built in the six years from that announcement. The 450-lot subdivision at Huntingfield, which formed part of the fast-track announcement, has, to date, had nothing built on it and blocks have only recently gone to market. Given the housing crisis continues to worsen day by day, we cannot see a repeat of these massive failures. How will this promise be any different from the last?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and I welcome his very strong support for the Dowsing Point opportunity - if I gathered that from your question. It's a very strong bipartisan support between Commonwealth and state government. I recall writing to the Prime Minister around this opportunity back in December 2023 and it was subject of my state of the state address in March this year.

I take on board what you've said about some challenges we've experienced in other examples. Our minister for Infrastructure and Building Tasmania, in actual fact, has acknowledged this and said we've learned the lessons of the past and need to do better. That's why we've created Building Tasmania that will lead the charge of this particular project. We will learn from the past and where areas have not progressed as well as they should have done by any stretch of the imagination. The minister has acknowledged that, I acknowledge that, that's why we're setting up Building Tasmania and that's why we're going to get on with the job.

Premier Meeting with JBS Salmon Company

Mr GEORGE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.39 a.m.]

On 5 March I asked you in Question Time about a meeting that you held with JBS, the owner of Huon Aquaculture, the night before. You said, 'Good guess, but I didn't meet with the Salmon company yesterday'. I quote from *Hansard* when you said, 'you briefly popped into my office and said hello, but they were engaged with the Minister for Primary Industries and Water'. Your diary disclosure now shows a meeting with JBS's CEO and the director of corporate and regulatory affairs that evening. Would you like to correct the record? Did you or did you not have a meeting with JBS that evening, just before the Australian Pesticides and Medicines Authority's (APVMA) decision to suspend the use of florfenicol?

ANSWER

Thanks for the question, honourable member, and your due diligence in looking at our diaries. I very much appreciate that. We are a very transparent government when it comes to our diary -

Ms Finlay - You are not a transparent government.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, we are, honourable member, Ms Finlay.

Members interjecting.

Ms Finlay - Get out of here.

The SPEAKER - I ask the honourable leader of the Opposition to withdraw her remark just then.

Ms Finlay - 'Get out of here?'

The SPEAKER - Mm-hm.

Ms Finlay - Well -

The SPEAKER - I ask you to withdraw the comment.

Ms Finlay - Happy to withdraw.

The SPEAKER - Thank you. The honourable Premier has the call.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If you'd like me to leave Question Time, I'm more than happy to.

Mr Mitchell - Just answer the question.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable member for Lyons, this is your second warning.

Ms Finlay - You are a liar and you are being known for it. You are being found out.

The SPEAKER - Deputy Leader of the Opposition, this is your first warning.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As I've stated before, it's exactly how it occurred, honourable member, thank you for the question. There was a diary appointment in my diary to meet with the company and CEO, if my memory serves me correctly. I wasn't able to make that meeting - as I understand I was in the Chamber. That's why I popped in to say hello, to excuse myself so I wasn't being rude.

Supplementary Question

Mr GEORGE - Given that the company officials stated quite clearly, for all to hear in the reception area, that they were here to meet the Premier, did they actually get that wrong? Or did you get it wrong?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. I ask the House to settle.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No doubt that's what they said, because it was in my diary to meet with them. I wasn't able to meet with them. They met with the minister instead of me. I don't like breaking diary commitments, particularly at short notice. Sometimes it happens to all of us within -

Mr Willie - Just election commitments.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr Willie. Sometimes it happens within the day, because of our Chamber commitments. I walked in, said, 'G'day, I'm sorry, but I'm required elsewhere'.

TasInsure - Cost

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.43 a.m.]

During the election you said that TasInsure wouldn't cost Tasmanians a cent. The costing you submitted to Treasury literally said 'zero dollars'. You said you were taking on the insurance industry and then you gave \$100,000 to an insurance executive to tell you what everyone else had been telling you for free. Now, you've announced that at least another \$4.2 million will be wasted on this nonsense that will do nothing to fix the problem. How much have you wasted on TasInsure? How much do you plan to waste in the Budget?

ANSWER

The other day, I had a media conference where I clearly outlined the investment we're making: a \$4 million investment - \$2 million across 2026-27 and 2027-28 - for TasInsure, specifically the work for the market initiatives and the establishment of TasInsure. This work will inform decisions on the final governance and legislative framework for TasInsure and the services and functions that TasInsure will deliver.

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I thank you for the question. Can I say very clearly that we will deliver on our commitments for cheaper and fairer insurance for Tasmanians and be happy to be judged on that at the next election.

What you need to decide is: what is your alternative? Because people are still hurting out there when it comes to insurance - small businesses, people not able to get insurance, people underinsuring, people not insuring at all - and there needs to be a fix. We're the only state in Australia that's prepared to tackle this challenge.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. Allow the Leader of the Opposition to do his supplementary, please.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - Nobody believes the Premier anymore, but the question was: how much has he wasted on TasInsure to date? There have been draft bills and inertia within government, spending money with insurance executives? How much has he wasted on it so far?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My understanding is that we've invested \$150,000 on Mr Trowbridge's work, which has been a very good investment, because we are going to deliver on our commitment at less expense and less risk to the Tasmanian taxpayer.

TasInsure - Trowbridge Report

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.46 a.m.]

Your hand-picked insurance consultant said it took him merely a few moments' reflection to come to a conclusion that TasInsure would be 'unachievable', 'high risk, high cost and a low chance of delivering' what you said. You appointed Mr Trowbridge on 27 January 2026. When did he tell you your thought bubble wouldn't work, and when did you decide to dump it?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I'm advised that we received Mr Trowbridge's report in and around 28 February. Since that time, we've been working on the TasInsure implementation pathway to deliver on our commitment for cheaper, fairer insurance at less expense and less risk for the Tasmanian taxpayer.

Gifts to Ministers by Sporting Bodies

Mr GARLAND question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.47 a.m.]

In the last recording year, approximately \$130,000 in gifts were declared by government ministers, and more than half came from sporting bodies. Tasmanians love sport, but they do

not expect ministers to be showered with more than \$21,000 in basketball tickets and apparel and then pretend that that has no bearing on decisions. When ministers also take in more than \$32,000 in football tickets and hospitality, Tasmanians are right to ask whether this government's budget priorities are actually being shaped in the corporate boxes of sporting venues. While politicians may accept high-value corporate hospitality if they publicly declare it, the separation of powers dictates that judges and magistrates must reject almost all gifts, to preserve absolute impartiality. Judges and magistrates wouldn't do it, so why should ministers be retaining any gifts?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I think the honourable member for his question and his research as well to form the question. Governments of all colours, persuasions - state, federal - have opportunities of hospitality and gifts, as you say. The most important matters, from my point of view, is those gifts are declared in an open and transparent way.

We have a very robust system for declaration. That will continue. There are good opportunities at certain events to engage with constituents, engage with others, inform ourselves of matters concerning them, the economy, businesses, and it's a good opportunity to engage. The system is very open and transparent and the system works, with ministers receiving hospitality or gifts and ensuring that we declare that, like we're open and transparent about our diaries, which I believe went out to the ether and online late last week.

TasInsure - Election Promise

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.49 a.m.]

During the election you promised that starting a new government business selling insurance would reduce premiums by \$250 a year and reduce grocery prices. Now, you've even tried claiming that your watered-down policy will save Tasmanians more than \$250 a year. How much will the new TasInsure reduce insurance premiums by every year? How much will it reduce grocery prices by? What evidence do you have to back up your claims?

ANSWER

Very clearly, we have a comprehensive body of work that's guided us to how we achieve our policy objective of cheaper and fairer insurance at minimal cost to the Tasmanian taxpayer and minimum risk. Now, while we've changed that mechanism from state-owned company to state-owned statutory authority, the commitments remain the same in terms of cheaper and fairer insurance. I believe we can do even better, potentially, than the \$250, through competition and through transparency.

You mentioned cheaper grocery prices. Most people with an understanding of the economy clearly understand that when inputs go in that are increasing in cost, then the end product to the consumer is more. In business - and businesses insure - the costs have gone up. Therefore that's a challenge to small business. Some within the supply chain are less affected than others, but ultimately the cost of goods are more. We see it in grocery prices with respect to the fuel inputs, for example, on consumers. That's how small businesses' inputs and margins

and the economy actually work. The less pressure we can take out of the costs of a supply chain in manufacturing a good, transporting a good, retailing a good, the better it will be. One of the big costs at the moment for small businesses is insurance.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - The Premier's making new claims that his policy will save Tasmanians more than \$250. What evidence does he have to back up that claim?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, we've done the work, Mr Willie. Have you read the report?

Mr Willie - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You have read it?

Mr Willie - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Have you read the implementation plan? Yes?

Mr Willie - You are making up claims, and you can't back them up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's not clear. You might've read the report, but you obviously haven't read the implementation plan, which I commend you to, because I believe it's in your best interests to have bipartisanship on this commitment.

Mr Willie - Nobody believes you.

Mr Mitchell - I bet you do.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do. You can laugh all you like, Dean, I hope you've seen the report as well. You didn't see it the other day when you were yapping against it - that's embarrassing for you, but I have no doubt you've actually availed yourself now of the report.

Recognition of Visitors

The SPEAKER - Before I give the call to the Leader of the Greens, I think I'll let the House settle a little bit, but I'd like us all to please welcome in the gallery students from Fahan School years 9 and 10 students. Welcome to parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

GBE RTI Public Log

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.53 a.m.]

Premier, yesterday marked two months since this parliament passed a motion, which you agreed to, requiring Government Business Enterprises (GBEs) to publish Right to Information

(RTIs) on a public log. Still, though, many GBEs have no such log. Why not? Have you issued a requirement for GBEs to comply with this motion? When can we expect all GBEs to be publishing RTI decisions?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for your question and your scrutiny. I wrote to all GBEs with respect to this matter. I'll follow up on other questions that you asked in that particular question but all GBEs understand the commitment and the requirement because I wrote to them all.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Premier. When can Tasmanians expect to see GBEs publishing such a public log for RTIs?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll seek advice on that. If we can find the information for you this evening, I know the Leader of the House will be more than happy and willing to provide that.

TasInsure - Election Promise

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.55 a.m.]

You made TasInsure the centrepiece of your election campaign. It was your signature policy and you convinced people to vote for you based on the false promises you made. Tasmanians are struggling with rising insurance costs, and some of them voted for you because you told them you were going to reduce their premiums by \$250 a year and reduce grocery prices too. How could you take advantage of people like that and how can Tasmanians ever trust another promise your government makes?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Firstly, I will table the TasInsure assessment by John Trowbridge of 28 February 2026 for the benefit of Mr Winter. I will also table the TasInsure Implementation Pathway, Tasmanian Government 2026, for the benefit of Mr Willie as well. He might like to read it.

Papers tabled.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Firstly, we listened. The most important objective of any member of parliament and any political party is to listen to concerns. I've been listening to Tasmanians for years now about the challenges of insurance, both the cost of, and the consequences of underinsuring, and not insuring at all. I believe most of us would know examples of where there has been a need for an insurance claim and there's been an underinsuring, in terms of fire or whatever it might be. For those who are not insuring, it is beyond them to be able to invest in insurance, as difficult as that is. What do we do about it? We come up with a policy commitment for cheaper and fairer insurance. In this case, we said we would intervene because Tasmanians were being slugged with higher premiums as a result of the risk, in other states,

regarding fire, flood and other natural disasters. We can, through isolating risk in Tasmania through TasInsure, and indeed the opportunities of pooling as well, ensure that we can bring those premiums down.

We have an implementation plan. I own the change between government-owned company and government-owned statutory authority. I accept that. It's different, but the objective is the same. The promise is the same, and that's cheaper, fairer insurance.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - How can Tasmanians trust anything his government says again when he has clearly broken what he promised at the election and he's trying to cover it up?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can promise to the Tasmanian people that every single day that I get up I want to make this place a better place. I promised the Tasmanian people that we would intervene and deliver a better insurance system for them.

Yes, as I've said, the vehicle has changed from state-owned company to state-owned statutory authority, but the commitment remains the same with the benefit of expert advice. My suggestion to you is to either come up with an alternative, because it is a problem, because you highlighted it in your previous questions. You acknowledge the problem, but you haven't got a solution. I believe the best solution that I can offer you is strong bipartisan support for the way forward.

TasInsure - Election Promise

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.59 a.m.]

During the election campaign, you stood with a grocery store owner in my electorate in Rosetta and when asked if he thought your policy would deliver cheaper grocery prices, he said, 'No'. How do you not understand the economy?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I won't repeat what I said in the previous answer to the last question. When inputs go up, in terms of cost, the end product -

Mr Willie - When you made the claim, the grocery store owner didn't back you in.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The end product increases. I understand it with respect to my own business, when you grow crops and the fuel prices go up, et cetera - not that farmers get the benefit of that, the supermarkets do, at the end of the day, farmers are price takers. Generally, can I say that when you have an increased input into a particular product and it's high, that is reflected somewhere along the supply chain most probably at the retail end.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - Will the Premier finally admit that his policy will do nothing to reduce grocery prices?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Can I say this to you? You recognise this as a challenge, you recognise this is a problem because you've said so today. We have actually alleviated some of the concerns that you presented with regard to cost and risk the Tasmanian taxpayers, okay? We've alleviated that because we've done the homework of ensuring that Mr Trowbridge has the expertise and advice, alright? How do we make a policy commitment even better at less expense and less risk to the taxpayer, but delivering on the core promise of cheaper insurance? That's what we will deliver.

My suggestion to you, Mr Willie, is to either come up with an alternative, which you haven't. I commend the report to you and you can finally read it today.

Investment in Essential Services and Infrastructure

Mr VERMEY question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.02 a.m.]

With ongoing global national economic uncertainty, persistent cost-of-living pressures and increasing demands on government spending, why is it important that the Tasmanian government continues to make responsible investments in essential services and infrastructure to ensure Tasmania maintains a strong economic and caring community?

ANSWER

Thank you for the question, member for Clark. I appreciate that very much, as unexpected as it was, because I thought that we don't normally get an opportunity to ask questions. We have said that this will be a difficult and a tough budget, and it will be, but it will provide for a growing economy and a caring community.

What I can say about this budget, honourable member, is there will be no new taxes, but it will deliver stronger finances and better services. What is needed now to secure Tasmania's future, we're ensuring every single dollar that we are investing is working harder for Tasmania and Tasmanians. This will be a responsible budget that protects frontline services and supports jobs. So a growing economy and a caring community.

Every hospital, every school is funded and protected, there is a very clear objective of ensuring that frontline services are funded and protected. The opposition has spent weeks attacking, but what is their plan? We look forward to the opportunity of the honourable member fronting up next Tuesday with the first alternative in at least 12 years, if not 13.

My suggestion - if Labor are not going to support our savings, you need to explain which new taxes that you will implement and which taxes you will raise on the Tasmanian people. That is your core responsibility as the alternative government. I know, honourable member for Clark, Ms Haddad, said you're still in the rebuilding phase. Mr O'Byrne talks about not enough houses being built, but you've been rebuilding now since 2014, as I say.

You're not ready for government, but what Tasmanians expect from you, is this: an alternative to the challenges that Tasmanians face. Cost of living, insurance, an alternative to presenting a very strong budget for a growing economy and a caring community.

Time expired.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Equal Pay for Nurses

Dr BROAD question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING Mrs ARCHER

[11.05 a.m.]

A number of Braddon constituents have raised with me the issue of nurses being paid less than Allied Health Professionals for doing the same job. The Tasmanian Industrial Commission case of Chamley v the Minister administering the *State Service Act 2000* ruled that nurses must be paid the same as Allied Health Professionals for doing the same job by applying the multidisciplinary allowance set out in the Nurses and Midwives Heads of Agreement from 2010.

The Industrial Commission decision is binding and the EBA is binding, yet other nurses are still being underpaid compared to their Allied Health Professional colleagues and there's been no offer of back pay. Disappointingly, the Health department still provides incorrect information to nurses when these underpayments are questioned. Furthermore, identical positions are still being advertised on Seek, with ads for nurses being offered less pay than ads for Allied Health Professionals. Same job, same pay -

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

Multi-School Organisation Plan

Mr GEORGE question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE, Ms PALMER

My constituent Helen Middleton has a question for the minister for Education regarding her multi-school organisation plan. Will the CEO of the multi-school organisation be working to upgrade our antiquated year-based model of education to one that more flexibly meets the needs of students? Can you confirm if the multi-school organisation is a plan, as many teachers believe, to gradually do away with school principals?

Beauty Point Tourist Park - Delay to Residential Parks Bill

Ms ROSOL question to MINISTER for CONSUMER AFFAIRS, Mr BARNETT

My question is on behalf of constituents who continue to live with uncertainty at Beauty Point Tourist Park. Residents of Beauty Point Tourist Park have been evicted without cause or threatened with eviction, prevented from selling their property and their visitors have been refused access even when needed to provide services, all with no legal protections.

The Residential Parks Bill will provide the protections they need, however, right now residents are unclear on what has happened to the bill. My constituents ask: what is the delay to the bill, why isn't it being prioritised and when will it be debated and passed so they can get on with their lives without fear of losing their homes?

Marinus Link - Update

Mr JAENSCH question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN

My constituents on north-west coast have been following the progress of the Marinus Link project closely and they are looking forward to the economic activity it will generate in the region during the construction phase and also in the longer term. They would like to know what next steps are needed before construction can begin and when is that likely to happen?

Delays in Health Services

Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

My question is from my constituent, Anna. She writes: 'I'm currently recuperating from major surgery to remove malignant tumours from my body and have been advised that due to a massive backlog in pathology services offered by the Tasmanian Health Department, I now have to wait at least six weeks for my category-one pathology results to find out if the cancer has reached my lymph nodes. Please imagine a six-week wait that leaves you with no treatment plan, no referral to an oncologist, no anything up to major and life-changing surgery. It's not news that anyone wants, but it would be nice to know if the cancer has spread or there's anything that could be done now to cut it off at the pass. Without adequately resourced pathology, all I can do is wait, wait, wait and wonder how quickly this disease is going to kill me. How many years will I be around to be a mum to my young daughter? What concrete action are you taking to address delays in the provision of time critical category-one health services in Tasmania?'

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Feral Rabbits in Northern Midlands

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

My question is from Derek Porter at the Northern Midlands. Feral rabbits are out of control in the Northern Midlands. Last year, biosecurity failed dismally. The problem is getting worse every year. When is something or anything going to be done about this problem? Putting bait like Pindone down will not fix the problem. It is also destructive to other wildlife. Destroying rabbit warrens is not effective as they dig burrows in other places. The last successful control was back in 2015 when calicivirus was released. Nothing has been successful in controlling feral rabbits since then. When is something going to be done?

Repeat Offenders in the Community

Mr VERMEY question to MINISTER for JUSTICE, CORRECTIONS and REHABILITATION, Mr BARNETT

Members of my community are concerned about repeat offending and the impact that crime driven by alcohol and drug dependency can have on victims. Can you explain how the Tasmanian government's expansion of the drug court program to include alcohol treatment will help enable offenders address the cause of their offending, reduce the likelihood of reoffending and contribute to safer Tasmanian communities?

Mount Field - Visitor Management Plan

Ms BADGER question to MINISTER for PARKS, Mr DUGAN

My question is on behalf of constituents in the Upper Derwent Valley. For years now, we have known that the issues at Mount Field with tourism are coming to a head, that it is time for a proper plan for visitor management and investment. Has this government walked away from the touted Mount Field master plan that was part of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee reactive monitoring mission done almost a decade ago now and what is happening with the \$7.8-million investment that's been in the last two budgets? I'm sure it'll be back in this budget on Thursday. You've had five options to invest in that have been on your desk since March 2025. What are you actually investing this money in, if at all?

Time expired.

QUESTION ON NOTICE - ANSWER

No. 26 of 2026 - King Island Ambulance Hub

Ms DOW question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

- (1) What progress has been made on the new King Island Ambulance hub?

- (2) Have the development applications been lodged with Council and approved?
- (3) Has the tender for the build been awarded?
- (4) When is the build scheduled to start and what is the expected completion date?
- (5) When can the Island expect a permanent paramedic to be appointed and start?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I table the following response to a question on notice.

Paper tabled.

TABLED PAPERS

Public Accounts Committee - Tasmanian Fiscal Sustainability Report 2026

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I have the honour to bring up the following report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts and its inquiry Review of the Tasmania Fiscal Sustainability Report 2026. I move -

That the report be received.

Motion agreed to.

Recommendations of Final Report of the Commission of Inquiry - Report

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I have the honour to bring up the following report of the Joint Sessional Committee on recommendations made in the final report of the Commission of Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings - Second Interim Report Part 2. I move -

That the report be received.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Move Motion Without Notice

[11.14 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 Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing from moving a motion without

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notice in relation to a parliamentary apology in respect of the RA Rodda Museum of Pathology, after the Matter of Public Importance today.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Broken Promises

[11.15 a.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Clark - Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: broken promises.

It's my pleasure to rise and speak about this very important matter: broken promises. Is it any wonder the trust in politicians is at an all-time low when we have the Premier of our state conduct himself in an election campaign the way he did and then to be caught out post-election knowing full well that what he promised he could never deliver? What he promised was that there would be a new government business established to provide home and contents insurance, small business insurance, community and event insurance, and regional insurance to farmers. The Premier promised that Tasmanians would save \$250 a year on their premiums and that groceries would be cheaper and it would not cost Tasmanians a cent. Did he have modelling to back that up? Did he have expert advice to back those claims up? No, he didn't. He made out in the election like he did. He said to Tasmanians: 'I don't want to provide this information because it will give competitors an advantage'. Which is another mistruth that he gave during the election campaign.

What the Premier did have was a shopfront. He had a shopfront, he had jackets and he had merch. He had big stickers, he had stubby holders and hats and I've still got a hat. It might be a collector's item one day. This is the extent he went to deceive Tasmanians who are struggling with a very serious issue. I know there are households across Tasmania who are dropping their insurance premiums at the moment because they can't afford it. That is the issue that our premier of this state took on and deceived Tasmanians with. He took advantage of their situation, their cost-of-living pressures and the crisis that they're facing in their own lives in not being able to insure their assets.

I think that's a disgrace, that we have a premier who is prepared to go so low and do such things in the pursuit of power. To say anything in an election, knowing full well that he couldn't deliver it, just to get an electoral advantage. He has a reputation of being a nice bloke, but he is absolutely ruthless when it comes to the truth. He's prepared to bend the truth. He's prepared to make things up. In this instance he has been caught out because there is no evidence. There is no evidence that he can make insurance premiums cheaper. There is no evidence that he can deliver downward pressure on grocery prices.

Nobody believes this premier anymore when it comes to this issue. He has broken a promise to Tasmanians, many promises to Tasmanians, and he's trying to cover it up. He won't even be honest about it now he's been caught out. He's trying to say that he's still delivering a core promise. We've heard that before from Liberal politicians, most notably

former prime minister, John Howard, when he was breaking promises. There were core promises and non-core promises and it seems like our premier is going down a similar path.

Tasmanians are smarter than that. They are smarter than being taken advantage of. They are smarter than having a premier blatantly commit insurance fraud in an election. I think this premier will end up finding out the hard way: it will be his reputation that will be in tatters by the end of this. It will be his government that is not believed by Tasmanians anymore when they make promises. Tasmanians have been completely duped when it comes to this issue and I think the Premier owes Tasmanians an apology and some honesty.

Can he find some honesty in that body for once in his life? Because trying to cover this up, I think is worse almost than the crime. The crime was bad enough, but he still won't admit the truth. He still won't admit the truth. He came in here and he was talking a big game about taking on insurance companies and all those sorts of things; he never meant it. He never meant it because he could never deliver it. He was told for free by experts that he could not deliver this and he had to go and spend more Tasmanian taxpayer money to try and get himself out of this mess. He wasted more money getting an expert who only took a cursory glance at the proposal and within minutes decided that it was a silly thought bubble, one of the worst thought bubbles in Tasmanian election history, that could not be delivered. I think the Premier owes Tasmanians an apology and he should be upfront about his broken promises because what he's proposing now is nothing of the sort of what he promised in the election.

[11.20 a.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Attorney-General) - Deputy Speaker, I'm very happy to respond to the false and misguided allegations from the Leader of the Opposition. Let's be very clear: I reject the premise of the question right up front. This government has not broken a promise. The Premier has not broken a promise. The Premier said this morning that he owned it. There was a promise to commit to a government-owned corporation, and it's a government-owned statutory authority. The Premier made it very clear that the objectives of cheaper, fairer insurance remain the objective. The question for the Leader of the Opposition is: does he agree? Will he come on board in a bipartisan way to support that objective?

They've done nothing, absolutely nothing, from day one other than to criticise and tear down, whether it was the honourable Leader of the Opposition or the honourable Mr Winter, who forced the Tasmanian people to an election last year. You should own it. Stand up and own it.

The Premier's responded today. What's happening today is a politically motivated attack from the Labor opposition, and you failed at the first hurdle. We as a government are addressing the things that matter to Tasmanians, like market failure. We made it very clear. There's a market failure across the nation, including in Tasmania, where Tasmanians have been hit hard in terms of insurance costs, whether it's individuals in your home or small business. Now, I represent and advocate for the small business sector, 42,000 of them. They deserve support. We're going to deliver that support. What about the community groups that can't even get access to insurance? These are the calls for concern that we've acted on during the election and since in implementing this policy.

The Premier's made it very clear that it'll be via a statutory authority, not a statutory-owned corporation. He said that. He's been up front, but the Labor opposition won't accept that position of the Premier. What the opposition leader did say this morning, and I'll quote.

Mr Willie said, 'You're doing nothing to fix the problem'. The point is that you recognise the problem, but you haven't been upfront. It slipped out during your contribution today that there is a problem. Why don't you stand up front and recognise that it is a problem, come on board in a bipartisan way to help fix the problem. You will never get to a solution unless you acknowledge the problem in the first place, and you've done nothing to come forward. Zip. Big zip. The big zippo. Zero. Done nothing but criticise from day one. It's a politically motivated attack.

We know. We appointed the expert, Mr Trowbridge, and he says it's a nation-leading approach. No other state is doing this; Tasmania's doing it. We're stepping up for fairer and cheaper insurance for all Tasmanians, whether it's individuals, residential, community groups, businesses - across the board. This is our objective and we plan to deliver. We have a promise to deliver on this and we will. Mr Trowbridge, we've taken his advice. The Premier's tabled the report, tabled the implementation plan. We urge the opposition to read that and indeed others to read it. We're responding to the cost of living. This is a tough time for Tasmanians and small business, in terms of fuel costs, in terms of interest rates, in terms of inflation that's got out of control thanks to the federal Labor government.

This is the time when government needs to focus on the things that matter for Tasmanians and that's what we're doing. That's why we're creating and setting up Building Tasmania so that we can get on with the job of cutting the red tape, streamlining the process, building more houses. You saw the announcement on the weekend with the Prime Minister and the Premier. Mr Vincent was there. A thousand new homes. We're getting on with the job and delivering and it's time for Labor to stop their political antics and come on board.

[11.25 a.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for this MPI, broken promises, because while we'll get to - and I'll talk about TasInsure - it's hard to disagree with the points that the Leader of the Opposition makes in relation to TasInsure - this is not the only broken promise. This is a systemic problem with this government. There is a list as long as your arm and I'm going to go into a few of them. I do want to touch on some of them, because they're not just flippant promises that are thrown out there as a little bit of fodder; some of them are profound, fundamental, moral, and integrity questions in terms of the way forward for the state.

- The treaty process, for example, truth and treaty for Tasmania's Palawa people - an absolutely critical element to restorative justice and ensuring that there is self-determination, the defining report commissioned and produced by Prof McCormack and Prof Warner and the commitment to treaty absolutely abandoned by this government.
- The stadium. I'll talk a little bit more about the stadium later on, but of course, there is the commitment of '\$375 million and not one red cent more', which is obviously completely gone.
- TasInsure - to take words from the Opposition Treasury spokesperson, Mr Winter: TasInsure - 'all shopfront, no shelves'. You know, literally all shopfront, no shelves.

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- Ambulance ramping - how ridiculous that you can promise a ban on ramping and then put people in taxis to get them to the hospital. This is the shame and the sham that comes with some of these commitments.
- I'm going to talk about the pokies pre-commitment card later on. Of course, industry pressure led to the government abandoning its nation-leading promise to deliver that.
- Marinus - we were going to see a whole-of-state business case 30 days before an investment decision. Of course, that didn't happen and the decision was made during caretaker convention.
- Housing targets - 10,000 new homes is a laudable target, but you're not going to get there by adding crisis accommodation, vacant land, and other fudged figures in there.
- Frontline jobs we're yet to see. We will see on Thursday, I believe, the scale of the cuts to the public service and frontline jobs.
- Of course, there is the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. Promised famously by Peter Gutwein in 2021 to close in 2024. Here we are in the middle of 2026 and we've still got an 'as soon as possible' pledge from this government.

Gone with all this is the promise to govern with heart. We heard the promise from the government that the Premier will govern with heart and yet we're going to see one of the cruellest budgets out this coming Thursday.

The deception really is twofold here. It's not just the fact that the promise was made and then broken. I think it's that the promise is made knowing that it can never be delivered in the first place, and then the broken promise is delivered pretending that there's absolutely nothing to see here. The deception and the delusion is twofold, and I completely concur with the Leader of the Opposition that this goes to the heart of the level of trust and belief in this place and engagement with politics, full stop.

When it comes to a few critical issues - the stadium - '\$375 million and not one red cent more'. I mean, the decisions to proceed with this go against not only the public interest, but the expert advice. That's the case with all of these three issues: stadium, pokies, and Ashley. \$375 million and not one red cent more. We know that this stadium is going to cost \$1.13 billion and Tasmania's commitment is well and truly over \$860 million in capital investment. It's a broken promise. It's a fundamental broken promise for a development that the experts that we in this place commissioned to assess it, said do not proceed with; it's going to diminish the economic welfare of every Tasmanian.

The pokies precommitment card - a laudable commitment from this government to rein in the harm, the predatory harm, that is done by poker machines. Under a little bit of pressure from the industry, from vested interests, it was abandoned, even though the Deloitte expert report showed that it would benefit the economy in a central scenario by \$230 million and

increase jobs by 209 jobs. It's a shame that we're not only seeing promises broken, but we're seeing these promises switched out for actions that are harming the public good, that are not in the public interest.

Ashley is the last one I want to finish on. The UN has raised the systemic human rights violations there. It's a shame and a stain on this state. The government promised to close it and we still haven't got there. It's not good enough. In the interests of our reputation and our children, it must be closed.

Time expired.

[11.30 a.m.]

Mr GEORGE (Franklin) - Honourable Deputy Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his MPI. 'Sorry', I'm told, is the hardest word, and I forlornly hope to hear that word from the Premier today for having misled voters at the last election. We deserved a 'sorry', for with the promise to reduce insurance costs to homes and businesses by at least \$250 a year, the Liberal Party surely duped Tasmanians as they were deciding how they would vote.

If 'sorry' is the hardest word, then the hardest four words in politics must be: 'I broke my promise'. With those four words in Question Time today, the Premier would've at least been forthright enough and honest enough to leave us with the impression that the attributes of MPs can include honesty and forthrightness. My advice to the Premier is to take a deep breath, swallow hard and spit out those words. Let's face it: if the voters know you've broken a promise then they may respect you all the more for simply admitting it.

TasInsure was never going to fly. It took a retired insurance executive just a few moments to recognise that TasInsure could not get off the ground. It took Tasmania's most eminent economist, Saul Eslake, less than 24 hours to point out what a ridiculous idea TasInsure was, how government has no business running a risky insurance undertaking, and how it would inevitably add to burgeoning state debt. Can you imagine the delight of insurance companies worldwide when a tiny state like Tasmania said it was going to take on all the risk while they picked the easy, low-hanging fruit?

All the stickers, banners, jackets that the Premier wore, and the giveaway caps, were never going to make any difference, other than to dupe voters. I hope the Liberal Party paid for the cost. I certainly hope the Tasmanian taxpayer didn't.

TasInsure was a core promise, and it was made for pure electoral advantage. Now, it is possible that the proposed statutory authority the Premier is now recommending, and is intended to work with the insurance industry, may actually find a way to reduce insurance costs. It's a proposition, but it is yet to be proven. I look forward to hearing how a statutory authority is going to, indeed, reduce insurance costs by at least \$250 a year.

That, however, is no excuse for empty promises made for purely electoral advantage. That promise and the breaking of it achieved just one outcome: it reduced the trust of Tasmanians in government and in parliament and in MPs - and that, in my mind, is a sin.

[11.33 a.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Honourable Deputy Speaker, I rise to also talk about broken promises and to reiterate some of the earlier points made. Australians and Tasmanians

understand that there are occasions where governments can't deliver promises, and when governments are open and transparent and explain why they can't, they're willing to accept it. The difference here is that everyone can see that this is a promise that was delivered by a premier who knew the moment that he made the commitment that he was never, ever, ever going to deliver it. This was totally made-up. Everyone with any understanding of the insurance industry or access to any information at all could tell you that this was not possible. Yet he said it anyway.

As I said at the time, and I'll continue to say, he did identify a problem; a real problem that was really impacting small businesses and impacting households. He preyed on a cost-of-living crisis and preyed on cost-of-doing-business crisis and offered people a false hope that this policy was deliverable and possible. Neither of those things were true and it speaks to the character of the Premier and of the Liberal Party for being prepared to say or do anything to stay on that side of the Chamber; say or do anything to earn the support of Tasmanians who were really, really struggling. The catch cry was 'cheaper, fairer, ours', today, it's 'cheaper, fairer'. The idea was ours - that we would own a company that would provide insurance and somehow do so more cheaply than insurance companies or the Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania (RACT), which happens to be owned by Tasmanians.

While I speak about the RACT, I'll point out that the RACT said, the very day the announcement was made, that this was undeliverable, that it had huge risks. Despite that, the government and the Premier plunged on again. Then the Insurance Council of Australia commissioned its own report - 100 pages - telling the government that this was not deliverable. Yet the Premier pushed on anyway. He spoke in this House about the corporate insurance giants and how much money they were making and how he was going to intervene and make things better. That's not what happened. Tasmanians instead have been delivered something very different that is not ours, that will not make insurance cheaper or fairer. The Premier is still in the same position because he's told his supporters that he's actually going to be able to deliver more than \$250 savings, with no modelling and no evidence to support that.

This is not just one promise, though. This is a long list of promises, and the reality and the results are there for all to see. Since this government was given the support of this House in August last year, Tasmania has lost 4700 jobs from our economy. There's a real reason for that, and that is because you cannot believe a single word that this Premier says. We all come to this place agreeing or disagreeing with certain issues, but I think we can agree that politicians should be honest.

This is a Premier that wrote to Dr John Whittington on 2 July and said that he would:

- Not trade the salmon industry in any way shape or form in order to form or retain Government.
- Not introduce moratoriums, bans or arbitrary caps on industry growth and will consider the science and sustainability of any proposal.

He broke both of those promises to an industry that wanted to invest. I met with a business only on Friday last week that is seeking to invest millions of dollars into this industry but can't and won't while this government continues to perpetuate this uncertainty - uncertainty that the

Premier promised he wouldn't have. How do they invest? How do they create jobs? The only way is to shed jobs at the moment.

Of course, there's the greyhound industry that received a letter to Mr Ben Englund that said:

The government is committed to support the longevity and sustainability of the racing industry, which as you know, generates close to \$208 million in economic activity.

You cannot trust a single word that this Premier says. He talks about being 'erratic'. His announcement only 10 days ago that he was going to defund the greyhound racing industry is not possible. There is legislation in this place - that he's been unable to unwind because he can't get his bill through the other place - that tells him he must regulate this industry; it is by a law. You now have the Premier, almost unhinged, saying he's going to cease regulating an industry which his own government made lawful through legislation. He is acting erratically, he does not keep his promises, and Tasmanians cannot believe a single word he says. If you get a letter from Jeremy Rockliff like this, you may as well [*rips paper*] just do this.

[11.38 a.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, Labor went to the last election promising to be an effective alternative government. Now, they're saying they're not ready and they're rebuilding. If they aren't ready now, how could they have been ready back then? And is that a broken promise?

The Rockliff government went to the election promising and committing to strong and stable government, despite the efforts of others to ferment instability and uncertainty. We made a commitment to make minority government work if that was the will of the people. We committed to creating an operating environment where businesses are confident to invest and employ people, and to deliver a strong economy providing jobs and revenue for our state. We have delivered on these promises.

We promised to keep people safe and keep businesses afloat and keep people in jobs throughout COVID, and to accelerate our economic recovery through significant government investment in infrastructure and other projects that we always knew would take years to pay down.

We committed to conducting a Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings, spanning several governments over several decades, and we have committed to all of the commission of inquiry recommendations and are undertaking substantial reforms to the systems that keep children safe in government institutions. We knew that would cost money, and we've delivered and we are delivering on those recommendations.

We've delivered on the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, significant upgrades to all of our regional hospitals and a helicopter retrieval system that links them all so our major hospital in Hobart is a hospital for all Tasmanians when they need it.

We've delivered the Bridgewater Bridge, Midland Highway upgrades, new and improved school facilities, housing initiatives statewide and the list goes on.

We've delivered Tasmania's teams in the AFL, the Tasmania Devils and the stadium project that will drive investment and employment in the south of the state, revenue for our whole state, and lifestyle benefits and opportunities for all Tasmanians that we've been missing out on for far too long.

We did commit and promise to deliver new *Spirits of Tasmania* ferries and they are now in Australian waters being prepared to commence the run in October. We've delivered them despite disruptions due to COVID, the war in Ukraine, the failure of two shipbuilding businesses and challenges from significant governance and management failings of state-owned entities that we have also dealt with and we have also fixed and now we can see our *Spirits* and the facilities that they will use from October this year.

We did promise to deliver a response to fairer and cheaper insurance for Tasmanians and we have now tabled reports, expert advice and a work program explaining how that works. Labor went to the last election and the one before promising to be an alternative government but they're not ready.

Mr Winter clearly didn't think they were ready because he forced the elections on Tasmanians on the premise of budget management, but didn't have anyone in his team who he thought capable of managing the project, not even himself. Instead, he said he'd ask the Independent member for Murchison to take on the job of treasurer, going to an election to fix the budget without anybody in his team who was up to the job. Now, the new leader has made the former leader his shadow treasurer. The man who didn't back himself to fix the budget now has the job of presenting Labor's alternative budget.

I agree with Mr Willie: Labor's not ready. They promised an alternative government knowing that they couldn't deliver so what are they going to do now? The budget will be presented this week. Is Labor ready to respond or are they still rebuilding? Will the Independent member for Murchison be providing Labor's budget reply or are they stuck with Mr Winter who a year ago didn't trust himself to perform that very role?

Will they put cheap politics aside and work with us and the crossbench here and in the other House to support the difficult decisions needed to deliver a responsible budget that balances fiscal discipline with continued investment in a strong economy and a caring community? Speaker, we will find out.

[11.43 a.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - I rise this morning on this matter of public importance, frustrated, angry and feeling like Tasmanians are being discarded intentionally and being treated like trash by this premier.

This premier laughs and smiles as he continues to repeatedly rise to his feet in this place when he is asked serious questions about important matters that impact Tasmanians at their heart. This premier might think that, not only at the point that he announces a policy that he knows that he can't deliver it, it's actually moments and weeks and months before that when he is intentionally crafting political manoeuvres to prey on the pain points of Tasmanians so he can score political advantage. Knowing that he will not and cannot deliver it and not caring about the impact it has on Tasmanians.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

Now we can list a series of broken promises from this premier. It is this premier that leads this government that is responsible for these broken promises to Tasmanians because he is standing up and facing and actually the architect of the pain that is being inflicted on Tasmanians, whether it be things in my electorate, my community that he is impacting. Whether it be across all Tasmania, whether it be in sectors and industries which are actually people in Bass.

They've promised the Tamar bridge, the Tamar irrigation, they've promised the Legana park and ride. They've promised out in the far northeast, childcare for communities that can't go to work, that can't support their communities, that can't grow, because this government promises something and then blatantly walks away from it. It's not the provision of a building for childcare, it's the impact on the people, the families, the mums and dads, the aunties and uncles, the grandparents that can see their families struggling in a regional community and can't do anything about it.

At a statewide level, it's the greyhounds, it's salmon, it is TasInsure, all of those businesses across all sectors that are being impacted by a promise from this premier that premiums would go down by \$250 and 'Oh my God', grocery prices will be cheaper. He knew that was ridiculous when he said that. But he fronts up with a smile, he giggles with a jacket on and thinks it's funny. There are Tasmanians, this government says and we know, that are under pressure because of rising costs of insurance premiums, but what you have done to these Tasmanians who thought you were genuinely, caringly, offering a solution, actually trusted you and believed in you. Don't be fooled, now Tasmanians know and they are seeing you for what you are.

This premier trades on being the nice guy: you are not a nice guy when you do this intentionally to Tasmanians. You are now revealing who you are and how you operate and that you don't, as one of the members said when you came to become Premier, that you were going to lead with heart. You do not have a heart for Tasmanians. How can you genuinely wake up every day feeling okay about yourself when this is how you trade for political advantage, how you trade for votes, and how you trade for leverage and for power? What you are doing hurts people. The families that work in the salmon industry who were promised that you wouldn't trade away on them, on the west coast, in our regions, they are trying to support a family, they are trying to build a community, and you are undermining them. The greyhound families, whatever you think about the greyhound industry, you wrote, weeks before the election, to them and said that you had their backs and now these families, amazing Tasmanians who have for generations done something that they loved, you've taken the rug out from under them. And all of the small businesses and the households that thought there was insurance pressure coming, you have ripped that away from them as well.

Then in this place today you continue not to tell the truth and the Deputy Premier backs you in. Deputy Premier, the implementation plan, the consultant did not say that what you would do would be nation leading. You say that. You tell Tasmanians things that are not correct. They are cautious, they are conditional and they say there might be possibilities. On the document of 28 February on the implementation plan, those things were not true.

Tasmanians need to expect that their Premier will tell the truth. They know he won't. They know that this premier will trade away on anything for his advantage, treating Tasmanians like trash, disregarding them, disrespecting them so he can hold his seat as a Premier of Tasmania.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Formal Apology - RA Rodda Museum of Pathology

[11.47 a.m.]

The SPEAKER - Before I give the call to minister Archer, I acknowledge the enduring distress, deep pain, grief, trauma, and anger that this matter has caused and continues to cause for families and loved ones. They also recognise that many in our community may also have these feelings and that today's motion may impact people both in parliament and those watching online. I therefore ask all members today to please be cognisant of the potential impact of their words, their contributions are kept relevant to the motion before us and that other forms of the House are used to raise other matters of importance to you. To anyone in the parliament feeling overwhelmed, anxious or isolated today, please reach out for support as we have arranged for support to be on hand in this parliament for everyone today. For members of the public watching online, there are a range of free supports available including Access Mental Health, a support, triage and referral phone line delivered by the Tasmanian Department of Health, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Anyone in Tasmania can call Access Mental Health on 1800 332 388 for counselling support over the phone. Other supports include Lifeline on 13 11 14, or Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636.

FORMAL APOLOGY

RA Rodda Museum of Pathology

[11.49 a.m.]

Mrs ARCHER (Bass - Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House:

- (1) Recognises that, between 1966 and 1991, human organs and tissue samples obtained following coronial autopsies were stolen and held at the R.A. Rodda Museum of Pathology at the University of Tasmania, without the knowledge or consent of the deceased's senior next of kin or family members.
- (2) Acknowledges that these historical practices represented a serious failure to respect both the dignity of the deceased and the rights of families, and breached the trust placed in public institutions by the Tasmanian community.
- (3) Accepts shared responsibility for past failures of laws and policies of successive governments that did not prevent, identify, or address these historical practices.
- (4) Apologises for:

- (a) The appalling historical practices which led to human remains being stolen and held at the R.A. Rodda Museum without the knowledge or consent of family members; and
 - (b) the enduring distress, anger, pain, grief, and trauma that many individuals and families have experienced, and continue to experience, because of these practices, including how these practices were disclosed, investigated, communicated, and acted upon by relevant authorities.
- (5) Affirms the need for the Tasmanian Government to continue to be transparent, accountable, and ethically responsible in all matters involving the care, custody, and dignity of human remains, with robust legal, clinical and governance safeguards in place to prevent any recurrence of such practices.

I speak to this motion to address a troubling and historical wrong enacted against Tasmanians spanning over three decades where 177 human remains from coronial autopsies were stolen and kept at the RA Rodda Museum of Pathology in Hobart without family or coronial knowledge or approval. Although these historical practices ended 35 years ago, the deep impact this has had on the families and loved ones of the deceased continues to this day.

It's important to remember that these were not just body parts or specimens or human remains. They were people. They were mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, brothers and sisters who were missed by their loved ones, and there is no doubt the pain of losing them has been exacerbated by what occurred later. It's important that as a government, as a parliament and as a community we recognise that.

As part of this apology, I would like to read out the names of those individuals who we have been able to identify and whose families have given their consent for me to do so:

Elaine Nellie King.

David William Maher.

Elaine Elsie Erskine.

Anthony James Santi.

Amy Absolom-Harris.

Damian Lawrence Smith.

Lewis John Barnes.

William Arthur Williams.

Gladstone Frederick Williams.

David Bonnitcha.

Daniel Tiffin.

Cindy Tiffin.

Amedeo Minnucci.

Ramona Straatsma.

Reginald William Turvey.

Susan Kaye Pritchard.

William Caplice.

Stanley Rex Wignall.

Kenneth Perry Fulton.

Dion Jarman.

Annette Joseph.

Shane Anthony Dale.

Peter Malcom Cleaver.

It's important to note that this is not a complete list, but if any additional families would like their loved ones recognised on the parliamentary record at any time in the future, I commit to updating the House to reflect that.

I acknowledge those in attendance today, including affected individuals and families, and those who have supported families through this difficult process.

These actions occurred within a broader system of governance and oversight that, at the time, failed to prevent, identify or address these practices. We acknowledge the shock, anger, grief, and trauma experienced by families on learning, often many years or decades later, that the remains of their loved ones had been stolen.

In many cases, families became aware of these matters through public processes, and some families were not able to make informed choices about how their loved one was laid to rest. Many families were also not provided with information as to why human organs or remains were stolen, and the absence of this information continues to compound grief and distress and has exacerbated the hurt and anger they feel. For many, this has caused renewed distress, disrupted the grieving process and damaged trust in institutions that should have acted with the utmost care, respect and integrity.

The experiences of pain, distress and loss are not the same for everyone. Each family's loss and each person's response is unique. Some have sought answers, some have sought accountability, some have sought only acknowledgement and respect. There is no single or expected response. All responses deserve to be met with care.

We recognise that no apology, however sincerely offered, can undo what has occurred, restore what was lost, or fully repair the harm caused. For many, this harm is ongoing, intergenerational, and immeasurable, and the knowledge that their loved ones were treated without dignity or respect continues to cause distress and harm. For some, this apology comes too late, and for others, it may not provide resolution or closure.

The Tasmanian government and the Tasmanian parliament unreservedly apologises to all individuals and families affected by the human organs and tissue samples stolen by forensic and hospital pathologists employed by the Department of Health and provided to the Rodda Museum. The institutional failures that enabled these practices and the harm caused can never be undone. We are sorry that your loved ones were not treated with the dignity and respect that they deserved. We are sorry that consent was not sought or obtained, and that your rights as families were not respected and that systems intended to protect families and uphold ethical standards failed to prevent, identify and stop these practices. We're also sorry that many families did not receive the support, guidance or information they needed at the time, and that this lack of support and clarity compounded an already distressing experience.

While delivering this apology is an important step, the responsibility to act with care, transparency and sensitivity does not conclude with the words spoken in this Chamber. Rather, it includes how affected individuals and families are treated beyond today, how concerns are listened to and how ongoing questions are addressed.

In that context, further investigative work has been undertaken by the Department of Health in recent months to identify, as far as possible, other pathologists who may have been involved in these practices during the relevant period. While this work has occurred within the limits of historical records, I can advise that in addition to Dr Royal Cummings, who was identified by the coroner's report, the investigation has found that five other individuals were likely involved; with four able to be fully identified and one partially. Of the individuals able to be fully identified, two are deceased. The findings of this internal investigation, including the details of those identified as likely being involved, have been provided by the Department of Health Secretary to the Director of Public Prosecutions for his consideration and to identify any possible further actions that can be taken to hold them accountable. I can advise that none of these individuals are now employed by the Department of Health, nor are they currently employed as pathologists in Tasmania.

The investigation has also identified that a further four people were likely involved in the practice, but no records of the names of those individuals have been able to be identified due to the inadequacy of record-keeping at the time. This work does not alter or extend the coroner's findings, but reflects our commitment to due diligence, transparency and informed accountability in responding to this matter.

I can also assure the parliament and the community that contemporary legal, clinical and governance frameworks, including strengthened consent requirements, oversight arrangements and professional standards are now in place to prevent those practises from occurring in the future. Specifically, the *Coroners Act 1995* has strengthened the requirements for coroner authorisation and the creation of a statutory role of state forensic pathologist has ensured that no human remains can be removed or used without consent. The Tasmanian Law Reform Institute is currently reviewing Tasmania's coronial act, with the aim of further strengthening the operation of the coronial system and ensuring it is responsive to the needs of those affected

by it. I can confirm that families will have the opportunity to contribute and share their thoughts and experiences in relation to this important work through the consultation that will occur as part of the review.

Finally, we affirm the state's ongoing commitment to transparency, accountability, and ethical responsibility in all matters involving the care, custody, and dignity of human remains. These principles are fundamental to public trust, and they must guide our actions now and into the future.

To those affected, we thank you for coming forward and for asking difficult questions. Your advocacy matters. Your voices assist us to learn from past failures and do better. Your experiences have informed and will continue to inform the government's response to these historical practices. The significance of your presence here today and the strength it takes to be present as this apology is made is a powerful reminder of why this apology matters.

Once again, on behalf of the state, we are deeply sorry.

[12.02 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Clark - Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I welcome the family members and supporters who've joined us in parliament today. I'm glad that you have been able to be here with us, but I deeply wish it was under different circumstances. I also welcome those watching and listening in. This is difficult, but very important. I encourage anyone affected by today's apology or by the findings more broadly to make use of the support services available through the department. I appreciate this is incredibly troubling and a very difficult time for many people.

Today, this parliament is considering a motion that acknowledges one of the most profound failures of public institutions in our state's history, a failure that resulted in human organs and tissue samples being unlawfully stolen after coronial autopsies between 1966 and 1991: a failure that caused immense grief and trauma for families across Tasmania and a failure that fundamentally breached the trust people place in public institutions at some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives.

I rise today to offer my sincerest condolences to every family member affected by these practises. I acknowledge the strong advocacy of the 21 directly affected family members and their supporters whose persistence has helped bring us to this moment, along with the many other families affected by this injustice. For many years, families sought answers. Many fought simply to have the seriousness of the matter recognised, and many carried an enormous emotional burden while doing so.

I want to express my sincere sympathy for the grief and trauma experienced by these families and the many others affected by this failure. I acknowledge the unimaginable pain these distressing historical practices have caused and the profound shock of learning that the remains of loved ones were stolen without knowledge or consent. This harm has deeply affected individual families and has been felt across our wider community. In recent months I've been contacted directly by family members seeking support on this matter. I want you to know that we are listening to you. We see you and we care deeply about the injustice that has been done to your loved ones and your families.

The motion before the house today matters because it does more than simply acknowledge what happened; it acknowledges that public institutions failed Tasmanian families and profoundly breached the trust placed in them. Importantly, it accepts shared responsibility for the fact that these practices were not prevented, identified or stopped for decades. That is significant because institutional failures of this scale do not belong to one government, one minister or one individual alone. They occur across systems, cultures and administrations and time, and while the individuals involved may change, the responsibility of the state to acknowledge harm does not. Accepting shared responsibility is important because it recognises the institutional failures are not resolved simply by identifying one individual or one moment in time.

Systems either detect and prevent wrongdoing, or they fail to do so. In this case, those systems failed for far too long.

Tasmania has, at different times in its history, had to confront painful truths about the conduct of institutions and the treatment of vulnerable people. Those moments are never easy but a mature society does not avoid difficult truths because they are uncomfortable. It confronts them honestly, acknowledges harm and works to rebuild trust.

That is why this apology matters. Public apologies cannot undo harm. They cannot erase grief. They cannot return lost trust overnight. But institutions have an obligation to acknowledge truth honestly when they fail people.

Silence compounds trauma. Avoidance compounds trauma and families deserve to hear clearly from this parliament that what happened to their loved ones was wrong.

From 1966 to 1991, human organs and tissue samples from members of our community were stolen and retained. The people at the centre of this were deeply loved children, siblings, parents, partners and friends. They were people whose families trusted that they would be treated with dignity and respect while in the care of our institutions.

That trust was broken and that theft has devastated individual families and shaken trust across the Tasmanian community. I believe it's important that we reflect carefully on what that means.

I believe the persistence shown by the families throughout this process reflects something deeply human. The determination to ensure that people they love were recognised not as records within a system, but as human beings where dignity matters.

Families encountering coronial systems are often experiencing some of the worst moments of their lives, grieving, traumatised and vulnerable, and they place enormous trust in doctors, pathologists, hospitals, coroners, and the state itself. Most people navigating those systems are not in a position to question processes or challenge institutional authority, nor should they have to be. That is precisely why public institutions carry such a profound ethical responsibility because people entrust them with care at moments when they are least able to protect themselves.

In this case, those institutions failed that responsibility, and for the many families, the trauma did not end there. For many people, the first indication that something had happened came through media reporting or letters from the coroner. Families who believed their loved

ones had been laid to rest properly were suddenly confronted with the unimaginable reality that some of their loved ones' remains have been unlawfully retained.

Many families have spoken about feeling forced to grieve for their loved ones all over again; to effectively hold a funeral for them for a second time. That re-traumatisation matters, and it's important that this parliament acknowledges not only the original practices themselves, but also the distress caused by the way these matters were disclosed, investigated, communicated and acted upon. That is reflected appropriately in the motion before the House.

I also believe there is another difficult truth we need to acknowledge. The coroner observed that these practices continued for a very long time and ended only comparatively recently. That should give all of us pause because it reminds us that harmful institutional cultures can persist quietly for decades if they are not scrutinised properly.

Practices can become normalised within systems even when they should have never been accepted; and institutions can lose sight of the humanity of people at the centre of their processes.

That is why transparency matters. It's why accountability matters. It is why ethical oversight must never be treated as a secondary institutional convenience or entrenched practices. That lesson extends beyond this specific case. Medical education and research play an essential role improving lives and strengthening healthcare, but scientific or educational value can never override dignity, consent and humanity.

People cannot become disconnected from their humanity simply because they are within a system, a process, a laboratory or an institution. The people at the centre of this were human beings, they were loved, and they deserved better than what happened to them.

I want to recognise the efforts of all my parliamentary colleagues from this House and the other place, who have worked directly with affected families and continued to raise this matter. I also want to acknowledge that the government has made significant efforts to today's approach and apologise sensitively.

Families have been consulted, support services have been put in place and there is clearly been an effort to ensure today is approached with care. That matters because apologies like this cannot simply be procedural. They need to recognise the humanity of the people at the centre of the harm.

Whilst we know that a central instigator of this abhorrent practice is the deceased forensic pathologist Dr Royal Cummings, and he cannot be held to account personally for his wrongdoing, we support the ongoing efforts of the Department of Health, Tasmania Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions, to investigate this matter further and take action where that is still possible.

Families deserve transparency and they deserve confidence that every effort has been made to fully understand what has occurred. Significant changes have occurred since these practices took place, including legislative reform through the *Coroners Act 1995* and strengthened oversight arrangements. There are now rigorous processes in place through the state forensic pathologists and broader safeguards to ensure this can never happen again. That is important.

So too is maintaining public trust in our institutions because families must always be able to trust that their loved ones will be treated with dignity, care and respect. Tasmania is a small state. Our institutions are close to our communities. People often know one another personally. Trust matters deeply here. That makes failures like this particularly painful, because these institutions are not distant bureaucracies, they are part of the fabric of community life. That is why rebuilding trust matters.

To every family affected by this, again, I offer my sincerest condolences. Your loved ones matter, your grief matters, and your advocacy has ensured that this painful truth has finally been acknowledged publicly. Today cannot undo the harm that was done, but it can acknowledge it. It can reaffirm the simple principle that every person deserves dignity and respect in life and in death.

For everyone entrusted with public responsibility, today should be a reminder that institutions must earn and protect the trust of the community. In this case, public institutions failed families at some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives. We cannot change what happened. We have a responsibility to acknowledge that the failure has happened, to learn from it and to ensure that public institutions entrusted to us always treat people with dignity, humanity, transparency and care. I join with minister Archer and my parliamentary colleagues in supporting the motion before the House.

Members - Hear, hear.

[12.14 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I acknowledge the families and friends of the people we are speaking about today who are joining us in the House for this apology, and I recognise the deep pain you may be feeling and the strength it has taken for you to be here with us today.

I rise on behalf of the Tasmanian Greens to add our voice of apology for the grotesque crimes of successive state institutions and individual employees. It is a fact that for 25 years, medical professionals, state institutions, conducted procedures and hid the theft of human remains of 177 people's bodies. Between 1966 and 1991, families went to the funerals of people they loved whose bodies had already suffered the indignity of an autopsy, believing that these people would finally rest in peace. This was the reality for 177 families. What they subsequently found out, to people's shock and distress, was that over a 25-year period, pathologists working in state institutions had taken parts of the bodies of the person they loved without approval and even without the knowledge of next of kin. The immense pain and suffering that this caused grieving families cannot be fully described by someone who hasn't lived that experience, but we know from the stories that people here today and others have shared that this is a grief that has multiple dimensions and continues to be lived by people every day today.

These institutions stored parts of the loved ones of families in bottles and jars on display for people to view at a cabinet at the University of Tasmania's RA Rodda Museum of Pathology in Hobart. They were props and specimens. This is not a failure of administrative processes. It was a systematic desecration of human dignity under the guise of law and medical science. It was an outrage against the living and against those who'd passed away.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

The coronial report from last year forced this truth into the light and for decades, families had visited the graves of their families and friends, children, brothers, sisters, parents - grieving families entirely unaware that a part of the person that they loved, who they were taking the time to visit and remember, was sitting on a shelf in central Hobart. It's hard to imagine, then, the visceral shock of families when they came to understand what had happened. We know and we hear that that trauma goes on today.

In preparing for today, I read a lot of personal stories, just like other members in the Chamber have done. John Santi's experience, whose brother died in a motorcycle accident, is very hard to forget and he shared with the media, with Tasmanians, the fact that:

We buried him 50 years ago, only to find out 50 years later that these people had stolen his brain. I went to my brother's grave site every second week and then to realise he wasn't even all there. When I met the funeral people at the cemetery to rebury that piece of his brain, they passed it to me in a shoe box. I opened up the shoe box, and it was his whole brain. To have to rebury a loved one twice in 50 years is inconceivable.

John's is one of many stories. We also hear of people who are attending graves of children who weren't all there for many years. Today's apology is not about abstract historical practices or the failures of laws and policies. We are making this apology to families today because state-employed pathologists systematically, deliberately, and unlawfully stole specimens from the bodies of deceased Tasmanians. They removed organs and took tissue samples. They did this behind closed doors using the absolute cover of coronial autopsies. Then they handed those stolen remains over to the Rodda Museum.

In coroner Simon Cooper's words:

It appears pathologists may have actively sourced specimens from autopsies to give to the museum, as well as taking body parts that had been held for forensic purposes under the *Coroner's Act*.

Under the laws that applied at the time, and under current laws, body parts sourced or retained or stolen as part of investigations into the cause of death cannot be used for medical research or education without the knowledge or consent of relevant family members. Not only were the actions of those pathologists and others deeply offensive and deeply harmful to families, let's be clear, they were also illegal. I want to recognise that the minister has been very consultative and respectful in coming to the wording of this motion, and she's made herself and her department open to MPs for feedback. I take her at her word that she's also had that level of openness, inclusion and engagement with family members and the people here today.

The Greens offered various suggestions for making this motion more trauma-informed, which have been adopted. I thank you, minister. I have some additional observations in passing, and it goes to something that the Leader of the Opposition just said about the culture in institutions, which is hard to see until you unpack things.

It's important that we don't inadvertently absolve the responsibility of state institutions and individuals for the terrible actions they took. Yes, human organs and tissue samples were 'stolen and held at the Rodda Museum', but they did not steal themselves. Forensic pathologists employed by the Department of Health actively took them. And yes, actions 'represented

a serious failure', but it was not the failure of a mechanism or a system; it was a betrayal by human beings who held public authority. On the failures of laws and policies - laws and policies do not enact themselves. Successive governments, health administrators and institutional leaders explicitly chose to look the other way for 25 years.

It's also a fact that for nearly three decades, families across this state buried children, parents and partners believing in their deepest moments of grief that they were laying them down to rest whole. Instead, state institutions treated their loved one as property and curated their body parts into an institutional collection.

Today is a wholehearted apology for that, without caveat. I make this apology and I say I'm deeply sorry for what happened on behalf of the Greens. This motion apologises for the enduring distress, anger, pain, grief and trauma that families have experienced. I also need to mention and explicitly name the horror of how these families found out and the additional trauma that that caused. When, in January last year, Tasmanians opened their local newspaper to find a public court notice that listed 177 names of people deceased, I can't imagine the visual shock that that would have caused, decades after a tragic loss, to find that the state had secretly harvested your child or your parent and held their remains in a museum. When that news was revealed in papers around Tasmania, state institutions inflicted a secondary trauma onto affected families decades after the initial grief.

The state did not just commit an historic crime - the state, unfortunately and terribly, bungled the disclosure and re-traumatised these families all over again. For the last 15 months, family members have fought through institutional walls to get basic answers. That is not an historical practice; it has been a contemporary failure of care and accountability.

Today we are affirming our commitment to transparency, accountability and ethical safeguards, and I believe I can say for all members, that we expect that for that commitment to be genuine, it must be backed with concrete actions. A formal apology does not wipe the slate clean, and I acknowledge and accept the commitments that the minister has made in her apology and other statements she has made. We will certainly be working with the minister, with the government, to make sure that the action she has committed to will come to bear.

The Attorney-General does need to ensure that Tasmania Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions thoroughly investigate every breach of the law that occurred and hold any surviving responsible individuals or culpable institutions legally accountable.

We also urge the government to look to properly resourcing the Coroner's office to make sure they have the capacity to enact compassionate changes - be it processes or the training that's needed for trauma-informed communication with families.

It's our responsibility as parliamentarians to ensure that the government doesn't take this moment in this place to apologise and not take the steps. I don't imply that that would be the case, but we are committed to working with the government to make sure that doesn't happen.

I also want to recognise - and she's just left the Chamber - a part of the reason we're here today is because of the advocacy on behalf of families of the honourable Meg Webb MLC, the member for Nelson, and in the House the member for Braddon, Mr Craig Garland. To the families sitting in the Gallery and watching from home, the Greens acknowledge your pain, we acknowledge your anger and your hurt, and we acknowledge the absolute rightness of your

disgust. We acknowledge that these are not feelings that can just go away with an apology. Only time helps to heal grief, if it does, and I'm sure it's even more the case with the grief and loss born twice over. On behalf of the Greens, as a member of this parliament, and following Greens before me, we are sorry.

In conclusion, I want to reflect the words of health ethics and professionalism expert Dr Dominique Martin. She said:

I suspect we're not done with finding out things that have happened in the recent past that we nowadays would be quite concerned about. What matters is that [patients and families] have a choice in it, that they have control over that, and usually they have some knowledge of how things will be treated. I think it matters particularly from an ethical perspective, because it speaks to how we think about and treat living people.

I conclude with my deepest apology and commend this motion to the House.

Members - Hear, hear.

[12.27 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I rise in support of this motion and in support of all Tasmanians, all Tasmanian families who were wronged by these historical practices in our state. Just as this parliament has formally apologised to victims of child sexual abuse in government institutions and to women who are victims of past forced adoption practices, it is our duty as members of parliament to speak out when we learn of troubling and historical wrongs and of very clear failures. I want to thank members who have spoken today, for minister Mrs Archer, and everyone's words - delivered with empathy, kindness, but most importantly, very, very strong justification.

Today, we acknowledge the deep hurt of individuals and families who had their loved ones' remains stolen - stolen from them and stolen from you. That is why this apology is so needed and so important. Stolen and kept at a museum without their consent, without their knowledge, and without your knowledge. The trauma for families continues today. I feel that hurt and that anger. I felt it in the corridor. Hurt and anger of which you deserve, and quite rightly deserve to feel.

As the members said, they weren't specimens. They were family members - mums, dads, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. People who were loved, and people whose grief has been made worse by what has occurred. I am deeply sorry that this has happened. I'm sorry for your loss, and I'm sorry for the prolonged pain that this has caused you and continues to cause you every single day.

These practices were wrong. No practice, as has been said, can be justified in the name of science. Respect for loved ones in death is fundamental to our society. It's what sets humans apart and it is deeply rooted in many cultures and religions. There was no respect given to those who had parts of their body stolen. There was no dignity in the treatment of their bodies or the treatment of their families. The practices at the Rodda Museum were abhorrent in practice and in law, and very clearly devoid of empathy. Rights were ignored, trust was breached and a lack of governance and oversight failed to prevent it. While there have been changes to legal,

clinical and to governance to prevent it happening again, that does not make it any easier for the families that are here today or watching online.

As the minister said, we hear your grief, your anger, your shock that this has happened. We feel your hurt and we understand this has caused renewed stress and has broken your trust. We recognise your need for answers and for accountability, and that was made very, very clear to me from the people that I spoke to today.

No apology can undo what has happened, but we can prevent it happening again to any other person or family. While the period of this atrocity sadly continued over many, many years, it is beholden on our government, this parliament, of the day to apologise on behalf of those past governments. As the Premier of the Tasmanian Government today, I offer our unreserved apology to all Tasmanians who were hurt, still hurting and impacted by the taking of human organs and tissue samples by forensic and hospital pathologists employed in the Department of Health and provided to the Rodda Museum.

I offer our unreserved apology for failing to treat your loved one with the dignity and respect that they deserved and you deserved. I am so very sorry this happened to you and your families, and I'm so very sorry that our systems let you down so appallingly and have compounded your grief and your distress to this day.

I want to thank you, families and loved ones, for coming forward, for being here today, and I acknowledge those that, for their own reasons, are unable to be here today. You have helped us all to learn from past mistakes and to do much, much better, and to not only ensure that this must never happen again, but also to act from this point on with very clear action to ensure your need for answers - and there are still answers that you deserve - but also for accountability that you also deserve on behalf of your loved ones.

Again, on behalf of the state of Tasmania, we are deeply, deeply sorry.

Members - Hear, hear.

[12.34 p.m.]

Prof RAZAY (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to support the government's motion and acknowledge all the families and friends in attendance today. Families place enormous trust in medical professionals and institutions during the most vulnerable moments of their life - at times, the worst day of their lives. That trust is based on transparency, respect and compassion.

In this case, families were betrayed. Every person deserves dignity in death and every family deserves the right to make informed decisions about the remains of their loved ones. Treating a person's body with care, compassion and honour after death recognises their humanity and acknowledges the value of the lives they lived. It also provides comfort and reassurance to grieving families.

This dark chapter in our state history is a clear violation of the ethical principles that underpin the medical profession, including the values expressed in the Hippocratic Oath. As a doctor, I find it particularly shocking that this most awful breach of trust took place in our recent past. This simply should never have happened.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

Today's apology is an acknowledgement of the deeply distressing failure in ethical and professional responsibility, but that doesn't change the fact that this breach of trust has caused profound emotional pain. The investigation and intense media attention has forced families and friends to relive the day they lost their loved one. Each new detail, headline and public discussion serves as a painful reminder of their grief, their heartbreak. These families deserve support and care. This apology from the honourable Health minister cannot undo the harm caused but it's welcome and a necessary first step toward taking accountability.

To the families today, I deeply feel the pain and suffering that you have endured over the years and I am deeply sorry.

Members - Hear, hear.

[12.38 p.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, the minister's words today, this motion, the contributions so far and what we will come to hear are an important recognition of the wrongs associated with the RA Rodda Museum collection.

Fundamental to any institution, be it government or university, is the responsibility to uphold dignity. In circumstances where individuals' remains were taken and retained without consent and the wishes of families ignored, that responsibility was profoundly breached. In this case, the dignity of human life and the respectful handling of the body after death was violated. The collection, retention and display of human remains without due consent represents a serious ethical failure. As a former health practitioner, I'm deeply dismayed by this breach of trust. It stands in stark contrast to the ethical standards that underpin healthcare and it is both shocking and profoundly disappointing of a learning institution such as the University of Tasmania.

I acknowledge the families present in the Gallery today and others who are not here or who could not make the journey today, who have been directly impacted by these actions. government institutions, universities and individuals failed in their duty to your loved ones and to you. I recognise that you have felt and still feel disrespected, dismissed and unheard, not only because of the indignities inflicted on your deceased family members, but also through aspects of the more recent coronial project processes.

Last year I was contacted by a family member and I want to acknowledge that conversation. He shared the deeply distressing experience of learning, years later and in an unforgivably callous way, that parts of his relatives body had been taken after death without consent. The impact of that discovery has been enduring. While I cannot imagine to speak on behalf of affected families, I sincerely hope that today's acknowledgement through Minister Archer's apology on behalf of the government and the parliament represents a meaningful step towards healing.

I also acknowledge the persistent and important work of Meg Webb MLC, whose efforts ensured that this apology was not allowed to fall off the agenda. I commend, too, the care taken by minister Archer and the Department of Health staff in bringing us to this point. As a crossbench member, I see it as my duty to work proactively to ensure that atrocities associated with the RA Rodda Museum are never repeated. It is not simply a matter of whether laws existed or now exist to prohibit such conduct, although they certainly do now.

The deeper issue we must confront is the culture of silence that allowed those in positions of power to act without accountability, that is the challenge before us. In that context, I acknowledge the museum curator in 2016 who raised concerns and effectively blew the whistle on these practices. If we are serious about preventing such failures in the future, we must ensure robust whistleblower protections, and that is something within the power of this parliament to deliver.

What remains deeply concerning for the families and for all of us is that it took a decade from those initial concerns being raised by the museum curator to this apology today. That delay speaks to a broader culture of silence and an aversion to transparency that must be addressed. I urge the government to remain open to considering appropriate redress schemes and to act on the lessons learned, not only from these historical events but also from the more recent coronial project responses.

This is a sombre day, but an important one. It is a day on which the government and the parliament formally acknowledge past wrongs. It is important not only to speak these words but to bear witness to this apology, an expression of respect that was not afforded to the deceased who were the subject of these outrages. These are difficult but necessary steps toward healing. We must continue to confront the wrongs of the past, wrongful then as they are now.

I hope this moment contributes to recognition of the deep and ongoing trauma experienced by families and loved ones. Most importantly, this must never happen again. From this egregious experience, we must learn and ensure that injustices are never repeated.

Members - Hear, hear.

[12.44 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, today carries a weight that all of us in this place must reflect on. To the families, to your friends and supporters who are here today, I want to acknowledge the strength that it takes to be present for this moment and I want to say really simply and really clearly, I'm deeply sorry: Sorry that, at your time of loss, when care and dignity should have been everything, trust was placed in institutions and that trust was not honoured.

Sorry that the impact of those failures was not confined to the past, but has continued in different ways over time. Your loved ones were not treated with the dignity they deserved. Something so deeply personal in loss, something so deeply connected to love and to memory, was handled in a way that no one should ever experience.

In acknowledging that, I also want to recognise that for many of you, it was not a single moment and it's been experienced again over time. When you learned what had happened in the way that you were told and in how you have had to live with it. Not only then but in the way the institutions responded, in the way that you didn't feel heard and in the way that you felt disrespected in the process that followed.

Today, this apology really matters because for all of us telling the truth plainly and without qualification matters and because it reflects a willingness of this parliament and this place to listen and to learn and take responsibility for something that was never okay.

It also requires much more than our words today, much more than an apology, and we owe you the confidence that the way human remains are treated now is governed by clear, ethical and transparent safeguards and that consent is properly understood and respected, that as families, you are communicated openly and with genuine care and when issues arise, that they are dealt with early and not left unresolved.

Trust can't be assumed, it has to be built and rebuilt through actions as much as words. So to the families today, I can't even begin to expect that anything said in this place will take away your pain that you've carried for so long, but I hope that you see and feel today that this parliament, that together we're prepared to face this honestly and to say without hesitation that you deserved better, that your loved ones deserved better, and that really matters.

I support the motion and thank the minister for her work and offer you my deepest apology.

[12.48 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Deputy Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I acknowledge and thank those families and individuals here in the parliament today for this willingness to be here to listen and for those online and elsewhere listening.

I rise to concur and associate my remarks with those that have been shared already in strong support for the motion before us provided by the honourable Bridget Archer, Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing and to formally and unreservedly apologise to the individuals and families affected by these abhorrent and completely unacceptable historic practices.

For those families, many of whom are here today, and many more who carry this experience privately, I acknowledge the profound hurt, the shock and the distress that has been caused. As is now known, between 1966 and 1991, samples of human remains were removed during post mortem examinations and stolen for the Rodda Museum.

These actions were taken without the knowledge or consent of the families. This should never have happened. What occurred was not simply a failure of process, it was a failure of care. It's a failure of respect, a failure to honour and a failure of dignity to provide dignity to those who had died and the rights of those who loved them. It was also profound breach of the trust that families place in public institutions at moments of grief and vulnerability. For many families, these actions disrupted mourning, challenged deeply held cultural, spiritual, and personal beliefs and altered the way they understood the loss of their loved one. At the centre of this matter are the actions of pathologists, who stole human remains and removed and retained specimens without consent, and the systems that allowed this to occur and continue over many years.

While these practices were historical, their impact is not confined to the past. For many families, the discovery, often decades later, that parts of their loved one had been taken without their knowledge or consent has reopened grief, disrupted mourning, and caused deep and lasting trauma. Some families have described feelings of shock and disbelief. Others have spoken of anger, betrayal, and a loss of trust in institutions that were meant to protect them. We recognise that for some families, questions remain unanswered and that uncertainty itself has been part of the harm.

We also acknowledge that this harm did not occur in isolation. It was enabled by systems of governance, oversight, and professional practice that failed to prevent, question, or stop these actions. We also recognise that this matter raises broader questions about oversight, accountability, and the obligations of public institutions to act transparently, particularly when exercising powers at times of profound vulnerability for families. Since that time, significant changes have been made to legal, clinical, and ethical frameworks. Consent requirements have been strengthened, oversight has improved, and standards have evolved.

We also acknowledge that a number of affected families have raised concerns about the coronial process which brought the events to light. Families have spoken about the emotional burden of navigating complex legal and institutional processes while continuing to carry profound grief and trauma. Many have expressed concerns about communication and the extent to which they felt heard throughout the process. It is important to recognise these experiences respectfully. As a parliament, we acknowledge the independent role of the coroner and the importance of the coronial jurisdiction in investigating deaths and matters of public concern in accordance with the law.

However, acknowledging the independence of the coronial process does not prevent us from reflecting on whether the broader legislative framework, practices, and procedures surrounding that process adequately meet the needs and expectations of families engaging with it at times of immense vulnerability. That is why I instructed the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute to review the *Coroners Act 1995* and the Coroner's Rules 2016 with a particular focus on any desirable changes to the jurisdiction, powers, practices, or procedures of the Coronial Division to better support those who interact with it, as well as the broader community, and how information and support can be improved for families, friends, and others connected to a deceased person who is the subject of a coronial inquiry, including in relation to autopsies, cultural and spiritual beliefs and practices, and access to counselling services.

I'm pleased to note that the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute last week released a discussion paper as part of this review. This process provides an important opportunity to ensure that the lessons from the Rodda Museum matter are fully absorbed into future coronial practice. While respecting the independence of the coroner, the review focuses on improving the legislative framework under which they operate and the practical processes of the Coronial Division going forward. Importantly, the discussion paper provides a clear pathway for affected families and indeed the broader community to share their experiences and insights, and to form an important part of the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute's work to inform future reforms.

In respect to everything that's been said today, I want to put on the record my sincere thanks to the honourable Bridget Archer, Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing, for her leadership, for her diligence and her care. I want to acknowledge and thank the Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, for his support. I want to acknowledge all members in this place and in the other place. I especially acknowledge the work, the research, the collaboration with government of the honourable Meg Webb MLC.

To the families, in conclusion, thank you for your courage in coming forward. Thank you for sharing your experiences, often at great personal cost. Your persistence has ensured that these events were not left unspoken or ignored. Your voices continue to shape the way Tasmania reflects on this history and learns from it. Your voices have ensured that this history is acknowledged and that it is not repeated.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

On behalf of the parliament and the state of Tasmania, I strongly support the motion. I offer personally this apology to you sincerely, unreservedly and with deep respect. We are sorry.

Members - Hear, hear.

[12.57 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, my fellow honourable members of parliament and most importantly, the families and supporters who are here with us in the Gallery in their parliament today. I acknowledge that it must be incredibly difficult for you to be here today, but I want to thank you for being here. Some of you have travelled long distances to be here and I want to thank you for your tenacity and your strong advocacy on behalf of those you love.

Today we come together with heavy hearts as a parliament and with a solemn duty. I acknowledge for those with us today and those watching from afar that today's discussions may be difficult for you, and I encourage you to access the supports that have been made available through the department.

This motion before this House is for the families who are here with us today and those who cannot be here. Those who have carried grief, confusion and anger for a number of years, and for the memory of those Tasmanians whose organs and tissues were stolen, retained and unlawfully displayed in the Rodda Pathology Museum at the University of Tasmania without any formal consent or knowledge. These Tasmanians were deeply loved. They were your children, siblings, parents, partners and friends. It is still difficult to comprehend that this unethical and appalling practice occurred between the 1950s and the early 1990s, which is not that long ago. This reflects a dark time in Tasmania's history. I find myself once again in this place saying that as a state we must do better.

For many of you with us today, learning of this injustice and violation of your human rights and the human rights of your loved ones was a reopening of grief. It was a second loss. It was a betrayal of trust by public institutions that should have protected you and your loved ones, and respected you and your families. We acknowledge the shock, the hurt that many of you have described. We acknowledge the anger, the confusion, and the dark shadow that this has cast over your lives.

To the families who are here with us today, your presence is an act of courage. You have come to demand truth, to seek recognition and to hold public institutions to account. We see you, we hear you, and we are profoundly sorry. I wanted to acknowledge for many of these Tasmanians and their families that their death was traumatic. As we know, families and loved ones -

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

FORMAL APOLOGY

RA Rodda Museum of Pathology

Resumed from above.

Ms DOW - As we know, families and loved ones involved in coronial investigations endure enough, let alone having to deal with this breach of human dignity, rights and trust in public institutions years later.

I want to acknowledge one of my constituents who's here with us today. When I was first made aware of what happened at the Rodda Museum, I was incredibly shocked and found it very difficult to understand how this could have happened. But it wasn't until my constituent came to see me in my office to tell me about his experience and the traumatic death of his loved one that I began to understand the extent of the pain and suffering on families and loved ones. This is indeed an issue of humanity. For my constituent, the communications they received notifying them of what had happened to their loved one's remains were woefully inadequate. This continues to be a distressing time for my constituent and for many others, and there is a need for ongoing support across our communities for all those who've been affected. I ask that the minister take that into consideration today. What happened was wrong. It was a breach of ethical standards, a failure of legal and public institutional safeguards and a failure of the state to protect the dignity and rights of all Tasmanians.

On behalf of this parliament, we accept responsibility for these failures. We acknowledge that the systems and institutions that should have upheld the highest standards of care and respect did not do so. We are sorry that your loved ones were treated in ways that denied their dignity. We are sorry that you were not told the truth, and we are sorry that you were forced to relive your loss in such a painful and public way.

An apology must be accompanied by action. Words alone cannot heal what was taken, but they must be the beginning of meaningful change. Part 5 of this motion before the parliament today affirms the need for the Tasmanian government to continue to be transparent, accountable and ethically responsible in all matters involving the care, custody and dignity of human remains, with robust legal, clinical and governance safeguards in place to prevent any reoccurrence of such practices. I look forward to the government outlining further how they intend to achieve this.

Human dignity and human rights are enduring in life and death, and if we are to restore faith and trust in our public institutions, this must be our foundation from which to begin. I commend this important motion to the parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

[2.33 p.m.]

Mr GARLAND (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I'd like to thank all of you up in the gallery for coming along today. I know how difficult it is and I understand the grief and the trauma that you have been through. It's been ongoing and hopefully this will in some way bring some form of closure to you today.

I would also like to mention Meg Webb for a continued advocacy. Stephen Karpeles, my previous adviser, he's been strong on this and right there right through it. I'd also like to thank the other members here who've made a contribution today and minister Archer for bringing this important motion on.

What has happened? I think it can be summed up as a heinous crime. To have family members' body parts stolen and done whatever with without the consent of the family members, without them knowing, it's absolutely abhorrent. If we can do one thing, and that is make sure this never happens again, that will be a positive. The fact that it's taken so long to have these people here is a blight on this parliament. Sincerely and heartfelt - I cannot comprehend what it must have been like to have this been relived day after day in the media and then finally here. Hopefully this in some way will bring some form of closure.

It was a violation, a violation of those people that had no say over what happened to them and it's been a big kick in the guts for everybody that's been involved with that, even people that are advocating on behalf of the deceased and the family members concerned. I don't know really what else to say other than let's not let it happen again. This is the first step in acknowledging and making things easier for those people affected by this. Thank you all for who have contributed and, once again, thank you for coming along. I know how difficult this must have been to do this. So, thank you, honourable Speaker.

Members - Hear, hear.

[2.35 p.m.]

Mrs ARCHER (Bass - Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Honourable Speaker, I want to begin by thanking everybody who has spoken here today for their important contributions and also thank all of the families for sharing their individual stories and experiences and for engaging throughout this apology in whatever way has felt right for you. I want to again acknowledge how painful this would have been and continues to be and also reiterate, as other members have said in their contributions, support is available both here in the parliament today and also when you leave here.

In summing up, I again want to acknowledge on behalf of the Tasmanian parliament that between 1966 and 1991, human organs and remains obtained following coronial autopsies were stolen and held in connection with the Rodda Museum of Pathology at the University of Tasmania without the knowledge or consent of senior next of kin or family members. No scientific, educational or institutional purpose can justify this. As members have reflected, the findings of the coroner clearly established that these practices represented a serious failure to respect the dignity of the deceased and the rights of their families, a failure to obtain consent and a breach of trust placed in public institutions by the community.

We also recognise that these matters were not investigated or addressed in a timely or trauma-informed way. As I said earlier - and this is the most important point - these were not just body parts or specimens or human remains. They were mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, brothers and sisters. They were people, your people, and I again say to everyone affected by these horrific practices, we're sorry.

The SPEAKER - Thank you, minister, and as well as the supports that are here in parliament today to everyone who is watching online, there are a range of free supports available for you as well that includes Access Mental Health, Lifeline and Beyond Blue.

Motion agreed to, *nemine contradicente*.

The SPEAKER - We now move on to orders of the day and so, to everyone in the Gallery, that is the conclusion of the apology and we thank you for being here for all this time. Thank you.

**JUSTICE AND RELATED LEGISLATION
(MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL (No. 2) 2025 (No. 39)**

Second Reading

[2.39 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Attorney-General) - Honourable Speaker, I know it's hard to move from that motion to the justice miscellaneous amendment bill. This is where we're at as a Chamber, so I will progress through you, Speaker. I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

The bill contains minor and non-controversial amendments that update and clarify a number of different acts, 11 of which are within my justice portfolio and one that falls under the responsibility of the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management. The amendments arise from requests from the former chief justice, Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM), Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Tasmanian Electoral Commission (TEC), former ombudsman and outputs within the Department of Justice who frequently deal with particular legislative provisions.

The bill has previously passed by the House of Assembly on 8 April 2025 and progressed to second reading in the Legislative Council on 29 May 2025, but lapsed with the calling of the 2025 Tasmanian state election. The bill tabled today is the same as the bill which progressed to the Legislative Council, including the amendments I moved in the House.

I'll now outline the reasons for each of the proposed amendments in turn. This bill amends Section 2B of the Criminal Code, as requested by the Director of Public Prosecutions to make the definition of sexual intercourse retrospective. The change in the definition of sexual intercourse in the Criminal Code in 2017 was not made retrospective. To address some practical problems that have arisen since 2017, this bill provides for the expanded definition of sexual intercourse to be taken to have applied in relation to a crime since 4 April 1924 being the date when the Criminal Code commenced.

Making the definition retrospective avoids any confusion as to what constitutes sexual intercourse for the purposes of sexual offences across the relevant time period under the Criminal Code. Importantly, this change does not criminalise any conduct that was not otherwise unlawful. It does, however, simplify and clarify the charges that are laid, particularly where an offender is charged for unlawful conduct of the same nature that occurs both before and after 2017.

The bill also makes a necessary amendment, with the insertion of section 466 to provide that the definition of sexual intercourse, being retrospective, does not affect proceedings that have already been determined. The bill also responds to a request from the Director of Public Prosecutions to include further relevant offences into the operation of section 14A of the code.

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These include both offences in the originally tabled bill, plus two more recent offences that were included after I moved amendments to the original bill on the floor.

The offences are:

- Section 124A - penetrative sexual abuse of child or young person by person in position of authority.
- Section 124B - indecent act with or directed at a child or young person by person in position of authority.
- Section 124C - indecent assault of child or young person by person in position of authority.
- Section 125A - persistent sexual intercourse of child or young person.
- Section 125C - procuring child or young person for sexual abuse.
- Section 126 - penetrative sexual abuse of a person with a mental impairment, and
- Section 170A - persistent family violence in respect of some of the preceding offences.

These are offences in which, subject to any limitations in the provisions, consent is relevant. For some child sexual offences, for example, a similar age defence provides for the consent of the relevant child if the other person is within a prescribed similar age range. The similar age defence reflects that young people may engage in consensual sexual relations which would be unlawful if engaged in by an older person.

Section 14A of the Code provides for when a mistaken belief by the accused as to the existence of consent is not honest or reasonable. For example, a mistaken belief is not honest and reasonable if the accused was in a state of self-induced intoxication or was reckless or did not take reasonable steps to know the complainant was consenting. This improves the consistency of the law in the protections for victims and restrictions on offenders relying on alleged mistake as to consent.

Amendments to the *Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Act 2021*. Under the *Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Act 2021*, the Director of Public Prosecutions may apply for a high-risk offender order in relation to serious offenders who do not meet the threshold for being declared a dangerous criminal but may nevertheless pose a risk to the community if no supervising conditions are in place when they are released post sentence.

This act also allows for an interim high risk offender order (HRO), the purpose of which is to provide the public with temporary protection until such time as a final decision can be made as to the appropriateness or otherwise of the HRO order. The Chief Justice has requested an amendment to the *Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Act 2021* to clarify the criteria to be relied upon when making an interim high risk offender order. Currently, under the act, a judge must assess such an application using the same criteria as when making a final assessment about an HRO order, which is too high a standard to meet for an interim HRO order where all evidence is not yet available. This bill amends section 37(1)(b) to clarify the criteria a judge is to consider when an application for a high risk offender order is made to the supreme

court and distinguishes the criterion which interim HROs are based on the criteria that apply to a final HRO.

Amendments to the *Electoral Act 2004*. Currently, the *Electoral Act 2004* provides that it is an offence to vote at an election in a division after having voted in election in respect of another division held contemporaneously with the first mentioned election. The intention of this offence provision is to preclude an elector from voting in more than one division at either a House of Assembly election or a Legislative Council election. The bill amends section 186(1) to clarify this and avoid any confusion in the rare event that there is a dual polling day for House of Assembly elections and periodic Legislative Council elections.

Amendments to the *Evidence Act 2001*. Section 194M of the *Evidence Act 2001* operates in relation to specified sexual offences and precludes adducing or eliciting evidence that discloses or implies the sexual reputation of the complainant unless leave is granted by the judge or magistrate where particular requirements are met. The Director of Public Prosecutions requested that section 194M be amended to include a reference to the crime of persistent family violence under section 170A of the Criminal Code to avoid negative implications for victims of persistent family violence and to remember the omission of this section from when the crime was inserted into the Criminal Code in 2018. This bill extends the operation of section 194M of the *Evidence Act 2001* to include the crime of persistent family violence.

Amendments to the *Family Violence Act 2004*. The *Family Violence Act 2004* contains a serial family violence perpetrator declaration framework which is designed to identify perpetrators who repeatedly commit family violence offences. Currently, the act provides for a process for a serial family violence perpetrator declaration to be reviewed, but only on application to the relevant court by the Director of Public Prosecutions or the declared offender. This bill amends section 29D to provide for Tasmania Police to make applications for review of declarations that have been made in the magistrates court. This will be a more efficient process as police prosecutors make applications for such declaration in the magistrates court and therefore, have ready access to the relevant material for review purposes.

Amendments to the *Forensic Procedures Act 2000*. Fingerprint evidence is obtained in Tasmania under the provisions of the *Forensic Procedures Act 2000*, an act which is administered by the Department of Justice. Forensic procedures legislation seeks to facilitate the sharing of forensic materials such as DNA and fingerprint information with other Australian jurisdictions for law enforcement activities, consistent with an agreement made with the then Police Ministers Council in 1998. Similar forensics procedure legislation was enacted in other states and territories in the early 2000s with the intention that a fingerprint print may be used subject to the requirements of the legislation to match in relation to offences in any jurisdiction. Under section 63 of the act, it is an offence to disclose information obtained by a forensic procedure, that it is forensic material taken by police to discover the identity of a person. There are exceptions within section 63 to enable Tasmania Police to undertake investigations, including:

For the purposes of investigation of any offence or offences generally.

The amendment to section 63 is an 'avoidance of doubt' clause to clarify that the meaning of 'offence' is an offence under the law of Tasmania, another state or territory, or the Commonwealth. This is the understanding across jurisdictions since similar legislation was

enacted around the country in the early 2000s, so that a fingerprint may be used, subject to the requirements of the legislation, to match in relation to offences in any jurisdiction.

The need for this amendment arose as it was noted that section 27 of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1931* was a general provision that provides 'references to localities, jurisdictions, and other matters and things shall be construed as references to such localities, jurisdictions and other matters and things in and of this State.' In other words, the issue the amendment is intended to clarify is to avoid any concern that the reference to the offence in section 63 is a 'thing' limited to Tasmania. This bill takes the same approach to the previous bill following my amendment on the floor to the previous bill to reflect a simpler, clearer approach to this issue. It is important to note that the amendment does not reflect any change in the long-standing practice of the model legislation introduced across Australia in relation to management and sharing of fingerprint information in relation to offences.

I wish to flag my intention to move an amendment to this bill on behalf of the government to further amend section 63 of the *Forensic Procedures Act*. This amendment addresses a matter raised by the Department of Police, Fire & Emergency Management. This amendment will enable the provision of forensic results to the National Criminal Intelligence System administered by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC). The National Criminal Intelligence System connects data from ACIC and law enforcement agencies to provide a comprehensive, unified picture of criminal activity. The Department of Police, Fire & Emergency Management has entered an information-sharing agreement with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission for the National Criminal Intelligence System. The agreement sets out the applicable terms and conditions, including Tasmania's provisioning and access obligations and security requirements. This amendment is required to ensure the Department of Police, Fire & Emergency Management can meet its agreed information provisioning obligations. Criminal intelligence is a central tool in modern crime control that can be used by law enforcement to understand the rapid changes in crime and criminality. The development of intelligence relies on the sharing of information between law enforcement agencies, which this amendment will help to facilitate.

Amendments to the *Gas Safety Act 2019* and the *Occupational Licensing Act 2005*. The current existing legislative licensing requirements for automotive gasfitting work under the *Gas Safety Act 2019* and the *Occupational Licensing Act 2005* do not cover the technology of vehicles that derive energy from hydrogen fuel cells. The reason is that hydrogen-consuming fuel cells produce electricity to propel vehicles, and so do not fall within a traditional internal combustion engine in the existing legislation. This means there is a regulatory gap as the technology and associated servicing industry developed. This bill amends section 3 of the *Gas Safety Act 2019* to expand the definition of 'automotive gas fuel system' to include hydrogen fuel cells. Further, the bill amends schedule 2 to the *Occupational Licensing Act 2005* to cover the qualifications, training, and safe work standards for those working on hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

Amendments to the *Health Complaints Act 1995*. The definition of health service within the *Health Complaints Act* is 'a service provided to a person for, or purportedly for, the benefit of human health'. It has been recognised that it would be preferable for this definition to be amended to capture certain procedures. For example, some cosmetic medical procedures where there may arguably be no benefit to physical or mental health. This bill amends the definition of 'health service', to ensure that Tasmania can implement the national Code of Conduct for healthcare workers who provide a health service who are not registered under the national

health practitioner regulation law and who fail to comply with proper standards of conduct or practice.

Amendments to the *Integrity Commission Act 2009*. Under this act, a joint standing committee on integrity is established with a number of functions, including monitoring and reviewing the performance of the functions of an integrity entity and reporting to parliament on such performance. For the purposes of this part of the act, an integrity entity includes the Integrity Commission, the Ombudsman or the Custodial Inspector.

This bill amends section 23 to future-proof the act to cover potential changes in the future composition of the parliament. Currently, the act requires the committee to consist of three members from each House of Parliament, and from the members of the House of Assembly, there must be at least one member of any political party that has three or more members of the House of Assembly.

The bill allows fluctuation in the number of committee members - between six or eight - should there be up to four parties with three or more members in the House of Assembly, while maintaining equal representation from both Houses. There is also an associated amendment to the quorum requirements for the committee.

Amendments to the *Justices Act 1959*. The Director of Public Prosecutions requested that section 71 and 72 of the *Justices Act 1959* be amended to reinstate the crime of fraud under section 253A of the Criminal Code in the operation of these sections, to reduce the backlog of criminal matters in the Supreme Court.

In 2020, the *Justices Act 1959* was amended by the *Justices Miscellaneous (Court Backlog and Related Matters) Act 2020*. This legislation was to address certain issues rather than waiting for the finalisation of the *Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) Act 2019*. Two of the particular notes are:

- duplicating the list of minor offences and electable offences in the new Magistrates Court legislation; and
- increasing the property value thresholds for minor offences dealt with summarily from \$5000 to \$20,000, and for electable offences that can be dealt with summarily from \$20,000 to \$100,000, in line with the provisions in the later act.

Amendments to the *Justices of the Peace Act 2018*. The *Justices of the Peace Act 2018* introduced a new and more comprehensive framework for the appointment and regulation of the conduct of Justices of the Peace (JPs), in particular to increase the transparency of the process of appointing JPs. In administering this act, the Department of Justice has identified some small amendments that are required to meet the original intention of the act, including:

- Requiring prospective JPs to undertake training.
- Clarifying when a JP may commence the exercise of their powers of office.
- An application for reappointment to be made 12 months before an appointment expires, and instead of six months before or six months after, as is the current requirement.

- The period of reappointment to be extended from the current two-year period to a period of five years.
- Validating the act of appointed JPs who are no longer appointed as a JP - whether through expiration or appointment or reason other than suspension - but who is unaware of this act and acts in good faith.
- Enabling the Secretary of the Justice Department to contact JPs more regularly in order to efficiently maintain the register of JPs.

My department has been in contact with all three of the Justices of the Peace associations in Tasmania in relation to the matters that this bill covers, and each has indicated support for the amendments. I note that the three associations have since amalgamated to form the Tasmanian Association of Justices of the Peace Inc. I thank that association for the great work that they do.

In addition, I thank those stakeholders who were consulted, where necessary, during the drafting of this bill. Given that the amendments are non-controversial and minor clarifications, a public consultation process was not required before presenting this bill to parliament. Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

[3.00 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to be able to make a contribution to the debate on this bill Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill (No. 2) (No. 39 of 2025). I note, as the Attorney-General did, that we debated this bill back in 2024 - did we? Last year again, maybe. It's at least the second, if not third time that we've debated these changes. I indicate that the Labor Party will be supporting the bill.

As we heard in the second reading contribution, there are many kind of administrative changes undertaken by the amendments in this bill, so I will probably contain my comments to the more substantive changes to the Criminal Code and ask the Attorney-General some questions on some of the other changes. I would note as well that last time the parliament considered this bill, there were several government amendments, and this new iteration of the bill encompasses those amendments that were moved last time, apart from the amendment to the *Forensic Procedures Act 2000* that we'll deal with in committee on this bill.

I do note that many of these amendments have been requested by people working in the justice system across various different roles: the Director of Public Prosecutions, the now former Chief Justice and former ombudsman, the Electoral Commission, Consumer, Building and Occupational Services (CBOS) division of the Attorney-General's department, the Integrity Commission and the Department of Police, Fire & Emergency Management.

First of all, the bill amends the criminal code and deals with the definition of 'sexual intercourse', making that definition retrospective and including references to a number of sections that make that definition relevant. Those are:

- Section 124A, which is penetrative sexual abuse of a child or young person by a person in a position of authority.
- Section 124B, which is indecent act with or directed at a child or young person by a person in a position of authority.

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- Section 124C, which is indecent assault of a child or young person by a person in position of authority.
- Section 125A, persistent sexual abuse of a child or young person.
- Section 125C, procuring a child or young person for sexual abuse.
- Section 126, penetrative sexual abuse of a person with mental impairment.
- Section 170A of the Criminal Code, which is the persistent family violence offence that was introduced in 2020 by the former Attorney-General, Elise Archer.

I note that the parliament also renamed many of those sexual offences against children and young people to more appropriately have them reflect the severity of that type of heinous offending. For example, I think it was section 124A - I'm sure I'll be corrected if I'm wrong - that used to be named 'maintaining a sexual relationship with a child or young person' or something along those lines. Which, in terms of our expanded and expanding understanding of the severity of sexual abuse, the many different insidious forms that it takes, was a really inappropriate style of naming and offence. These offences were therefore renamed to represent what they are - persistent sexual abuse of a young person.

I note that generally passing legislation to have a retrospective effect is quite unusual and rare in parliaments here and across the world, but in this instance it is understandable. As our understanding of sexual violence grows and broadens, it is important that our legislation remains contemporary. I do note that the changes made in this bill won't allow reopening of old offences and that it would deal with conduct that would, regardless of this amendment, still be criminal conduct back when it was when it was committed.

The retrospective application kind of broadens a range of offences that a person may potentially be charged with for conduct that was criminal at the time and remains criminal, but doesn't make any formally non-criminal conduct criminal. I note that in the debate last time, the Leader of the Greens, Dr Woodruff, also spoke about the importance of the work that's been done in the sexual and family violence sector in lobbying for many of these types of changes, particularly observing the history of the definition of sexual intercourse prior to 2017, which, again, was a pretty outdated understanding of sexual intercourse and sexual abuse and was limited to penetrative sexual intercourse by male genitalia only.

I think most members here and most members of the community would understand that sexual abuse, rape, sexual intercourse, sexual assault are far more complex than that. I add my gratitude as well to the people working in the sexual and family violence sector over many years and decades for their continued work to ensure that our sexual offence legislation remains contemporary and meaningful.

The second lot of amendments that this bill deals with is amendments to the *Dangerous Criminal and High Risk Offenders Act of 2021*, amending section 37 to clarify the criteria required when a judge is assessing whether or not to make an interim high-risk order, and I understand these changes, obviously when the parliament debated that legislation back in 2021, there was a very meaningful debate around the seriousness of the court being able to apply parole-like conditions to somebody who has completed their sentence and we supported that bill at the time, but not without raising many of the kind of concerns around curtailing of civil liberties involved in parliament, making those changes and making available to the court

the ability to apply a high-risk offenders order that could well be quite enduring on somebody who, in other circumstances, would be considered to have completed their sentence and their time incarcerated.

I note that, I think this was one of the areas where there was a slightly amended second reading contribution, and I just wondered whether the Deputy Premier might, in his summing up, be able to provide us with an update on the number of high-risk offender orders, either interim or full. The high risk offender orders have been issued since 2021 when that regime was adopted.

The *Electoral Act 2004* is amended as well. I believe that probably stemmed from the 2024 state election, which fell on the same day as the upper House elections and forgive me, I've forgotten which upper House electorates went to the polls that year. I think it was Pembroke and somewhere up north - apologies, Legislative Council colleagues - but, of course, members would remember that that was an early election called around 14 months early by then-premier Gutwein coming out of COVID and the election ended up being held on that first Saturday in May, the same day as their routine upper House elections. Arguably, electors in those Legislative Council divisions who voted in that the upper House election as well as their lower House election could potentially have been in breach of section 186, one of the *Electoral Act 2004* and this change clarifies if and when that occurrence happens again, that voters won't be in contravention of that section of the act if they simply vote in those two different jurisdictions that they are voting in. A bit like we do at federal elections, I guess. We're voting for upper House and lower House members at the same time.

The bill then goes on to amend the *Evidence Act 2001* and that again deals with that persistent family violence offence that was included in the code in 2021. I might be wrong about that date. It includes its relevance in the operation of section 194M.

We heard the Attorney-General explain what that effect will be in the application of the persistent family violence offence when section 194M is at play. The bill also amends the *Family Violence Act 2024*, and that will mean - and I believe this has been a request of the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management - but it will allow police to apply for a review of serial family violence perpetrator declarations where the original declaration has been made by the Magistrates Court.

Where the Magistrate Court has imposed a serial family violence perpetrator declaration on an offender, currently only the DPP or the defendant can appeal and this will expand that to police. On that change, I ask the Attorney-General for any update that he can provide to us and it might be that he needs to take this on notice and seek advice from his Police minister colleague.

Part of what is really important in this change is similar to what I said earlier about our expanding, developing and continuing expansion of our understanding of sexual violence. The same can be said of family and domestic violence, that as our understanding of, again, the complexity of that style of offending continues to grow, that our legislation needs to keep up and remain contemporary.

There is a planned review of the *Family Violence Act 2004* underway at the moment, but I wondered if the Deputy Premier, again perhaps through minister Ellis, might be able to give us an update around police family violence training. That's something that's been raised in this

Chamber as well as in budget Estimates many times year on year, and I hope it's okay for me to refer to your former position, honourable Speaker, when you were Minister for Police as well as Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and the Minister for Women. I'm aware that there was significant work happening in the department at that time around ongoing training for police in family violence.

It's important to note that there are police in Tasmania - I certainly know that there is goodwill at the senior levels to ensure that anybody presenting to police with an allegation of family and domestic violence is taken seriously and listened to, but the reality of people's experience can be very varied. It's been described to me by constituents as feeling a little like a Russian roulette or a random draw.

People can attend a police station and be met by a police officer who has a good, full, thorough and nuanced understanding of family violence, including non-physical forms of family violence and how they can often be indicators of a precursor to physical forms of family violence down the line. But equally, unfortunately, there are still some parts of Tasmania where there isn't that nuanced and thorough understanding and people have sometimes been turned away, particularly when the form of family violence that they're reporting is a non-physical form of family violence and they've not been taken as seriously as they need to be.

In the most serious of circumstances, attitudes like that can be fatal and I put on the record again, a tragic death that most members here would be familiar with, and that was the death of Olga Neubert, who was murdered by her estranged partner who had been very threatening to her. Allegations of stalking and other non-physical forms of family violence were present in her relationship. Unfortunately she wasn't taken seriously because there hadn't yet been physical family violence. Then, of course, the first physical form of family violence that she encountered in that relationship was a fatal one. It is really important that as we update legislation like this, that we also make sure that the systems in place to support our community, including victims of family violence, remain thorough as well. I would be very grateful for any advice that the Attorney-General can provide us about what is happening in the police department in terms of making sure that police family violence training is regular and ongoing.

The bill also now amends the *Forensic Procedures Act 2000* to clarify that the meaning of offence in section 63 means an offence under the law of Tasmania or another state or territory, or the Commonwealth. As the Attorney-General explained, that's an avoidance-of-doubt clause that has been adopted in similar wording in other states and territories. I note that the Attorney-General has an amendment foreshadowed which would enable information sharing of forensic results between Tasmania and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, and that that is a national agreement as I understand it, around information sharing between that federal agency and the states and territories, including Tasmania through GPFEM. If the Attorney-General has information at his fingertips, it would be great to know which other states have adopted a similar change to comply with that agreement with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission.

The act amends the *Gas Safety Act 2019*. That's section 3, schedule 2 of the *Occupational Licencing Act 2005* to cover emerging technology of vehicles that use hydrogen. The *Health Complaints Act 1995* is also amended to amend the definition of health service in section 3 to ensure that we can be compliant as a state with the National Code of Conduct for Healthcare Workers who are not registered under the Health Practitioners Regulation National Law. As

we heard in the second reading contribution, that might include some cosmetic procedures and the like.

The *Integrity Commission Act 2009* is also amended to clarify the membership of the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity. I'm happy to now serve on that committee, and I note that it conducts important work within its terms of reference, chaired by the member for Launceston. I note that this change would ensure that when parties other than the three currently represented in the House of Assembly, if and when other parties have three or more members elected in the House of Assembly, which going on this week's polling results, looks entirely possible, that that party would be also represented on the integrity committee and some associated changes to allow for numbers to be comparable between the lower House and the upper House, and for quorum to be adjusted accordingly as well.

The *Justices Act 1959* is amended as well. We heard in the second reading contribution some of the court backlog issues that have led to the request for this change. I would really be very grateful for an update from the minister on the progress of the Criminal and General Division Bill 2019. I was newly elected then. I remember debating that. I remember the positive response across the justice system that that bill was received with from everybody involved in the justice system. The courts were looking forward to the changes promised in that bill, defence lawyers, prosecutors, everybody was feeling very eager for the promises that that bill contained, yet we're quite a long way down the track now. As I understand that that bill hasn't been formally enacted. It would be very beneficial to hear from the Attorney-General what the reasons for those delays are because, as I understand it, many of the things that were contained in that bill when enacted will go to some of the issues that lead to court backlogs; there are significant backlogs, as we see year after year in the annual reports of the Magistrates Court and as well as in the Supreme Court. It would be great if we could hear an update from the Deputy Premier about when he expects that the *Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) Act 2019* will be proclaimed and be in force, and if he's able to provide some guidance to the Chamber about what the delays have been.

Finally, the bill goes on to amend the *Justices of the Peace Act 2018* to streamline the administration of that act. I put some thoughts on the *Hansard* last time we debated this bill about those changes that I don't intend to go back over today, other than to, again, express my gratitude to people in Tasmania who serve in the role of JP. I know that, depending on where you live and how available you are and how many people know you're a JP, it can be quite a hefty administrative task. It's a community service that benefits all of us that people choose to do that training and be available to the community to do the things that Justices of the Peace do. I note that the changes in this bill reflect the ones in the one we've previously debated and will allow for the more efficient registration of JPs, the department to be able to contact JPs more easily, and to make sure that all of those records are up to date.

I'm pleased to be able to support the bill and look forward to some further advice from the Deputy Premier in his summing up.

[3.22 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Speaker, I rise to speak for the Greens on the Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill (No. 2) 2025, and can indicate that the Greens will support this bill. I will speak to some parts of this bill today.

Beginning with the *Criminal Code Act 1924* amendments that we have here, which are around amending definitions of the term 'sexual intercourse' and making them to apply retrospectively. This amendment is one that we will obviously support. It's something that's been needed for a very long time. We know that there have been many people in the family violence sector, those sexual assault services and advocates who've been waiting for this for a very long time, because this means that there will be more clarity around these cases, when they come to court and what the offences are.

We note that there have been some definitions that have been applied differently for offences that were committed before 2017 and those that have been committed after 2017. This has created some confusion for jurors, particularly in cases where a person has been charged with offences that have occurred prior to and subsequent to 2017, and the different definitions have applied in those situations. What this amendment does by making these definitions retrospective is it makes that clearer in court situations and legal proceedings.

The code is also amended to extend provisions that provide for circumstances where a mistake as to consent is not a viable defence. They're also amended to include reference to the position of authority, procuring a child or young person, mental impairment and persistent family violence offences. The extension to the position of authority offence seems to be unnecessary because consent is not a viable defence for that offence, but obviously we support the legislation for the avoidance of doubt.

I know that there are many amendments to many acts here, but I want to particularly speak about the amendment to the *Electoral Act 2004*, where it's currently an offence to vote in both assembly and council elections on the same day and I know that's already been discussed, the importance of correcting that error, because we know that there have been times when assembly and council elections have been held on the same day and people have voted in both those elections. This bill will correct that so that people can vote in elections and that's an important change.

In relation to the *Evidence Act 2001*, which amends the rules of evidence in respect of sexual evidence, so that it also covers persistent family violence and also the amendment to the *Family Violence Act 2004*, which allows for a review of a serial family violence perpetrator declaration where the original declaration was made by the Magistrate's Court. These are good changes, good amendments that we support, and I note that these have been changes that have been called for for a very long time. This legislation has come before the House before and then we've had elections and we've had to come back to it again and it's now a significant period of time since the election and only now are we debating this legislation that makes these changes in relation to family violence.

Family violence is a significant problem in our community and we've just had examples this week of how terrible it is, how persistent it is, and how much it continues. It's beyond time that these changes and amendments to the legislation happen and we're pleased to see it being debated today, but we Greens would have preferred that this legislation was being debated much sooner so that these changes could be made to the legislation, so that we're doing everything that we can, as a parliament and as a society, to address the scourge of family violence that we're experiencing.

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In relation to the *Forensic Procedures Act 2000*, the amendments in this bill will allow for inter-jurisdictional sharing of forensic material for criminal investigations, court proceedings, immigration matters, identification of deceased and criminal history checks.

In relation to the *Gas Safety Act 2019*, this bill amends the definition of automotive gas fuel systems to include fuel cells to allow hydrogen fuel cells to be covered by the act. It seems like we're slowly coming to terms with the fact that the end of fossil fuels must come and is coming and this recognition of the definition of gas fuel systems to include hydrogen fuel cells is part of what needs to happen as part of that, and the Greens would obviously like to see us, as a state, doing everything we can to transition out of fossil fuels. We know that we need to, we know that the climate is changing rapidly, and we need to change also, so this amendment here is just a tiny part of that and so we support that.

There are changes to the *Health Complaints Act 1995* which allow for health services to be prescribed by regulation to ensure Tasmania can implement the National Code of Conduct for healthcare workers who are not registered under the National Health Practitioners Regulation Law. We support this change.

In relation to the amendment to the *Integrity Commission Act 2009*, this is an amendment that will allow for either six or eight members on the Joint Standing Committee. Currently, only six members are allowed. The Greens always welcome scrutiny and so we support this amendment. But I note here that the Greens have asked for the Public Accounts Committee to be expanded so that the Greens could be members on that committee and that's been denied. Here, we do have a joint standing integrity committee that we will be able to increase in numbers, that's a good thing, but there are other committees we have in this parliament that we would like to see increased so that there's more opportunity for scrutiny from a broader cross-section of the parliament.

The *Justices Act 1959* includes fraud as a crime that may be tried summarily by a magistrate without a jury and the *Justices of the Peace Act 2018* amendments allow the Secretary to set training requirements for Justices of the Peace. At the moment they have to be set by regulations, but this will allow for the secretary to set those training requirements. The amendments will prohibit the Justices of the Peace from exercising their powers until they are provided a registration number, extend the time-frame that a Justice of the Peace has to apply for a reappointment from six months to 12 months in advance of the expiration of the appointment, and it also extends appointments from two years to five years.

There are extended validation provisions in the amendment that will mean that in circumstances where a Justice of the Peace's term has expired but they were unaware of it but have continued to act in good faith. Those provisions will cover those circumstances. This amendment removes the limitations on the ability of the secretary to require information from a Justice of the Peace. Currently, the secretary can require information no more than once every five years unless there's a reasonable suspicion of contravention of the act or misconduct. This will remove those limitations. It will require each Justice of the Peace to be issued with a unique registration number.

In relation to the *Occupational Licensing Act 2005*, this aligns with the comments I made earlier around the *Gas Safety Act 2019*, the amendments there. This amends the definition of automotive gas fuel systems to include fuel cells to allow the hydrogen fuel cells to be covered by the act. Again another one of those many changes that we need to be making as we prepare

for the transition from fossil fuels, or make the transition from fossil fuels. As I said earlier, the Greens will be supporting this legislation.

[3.32 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak in strong support of this legislation. I commend the Attorney-General for bringing it forward to our House. I note as well that I've already spoken on this bill about a year ago, before the unnecessary election that we had in the middle of last year. I would advise any audience members or people looking at *Hansard* to consider my earlier contribution, which I won't be repeating today. I will be emphasising some of the things that are important to me as Liberal member for Bass, and to reiterate the comments and strong messages of support that I provided during that debate. I acknowledge as well around the Chamber the solid support for the measures contained in this legislation, the Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill.

It is, as a miscellaneous bill, one that makes a large number of amendments to a large number of acts of parliament. I also note that these amendments are generally of a technical and non-controversial nature, have been heavily consulted and are strongly supported by various stakeholders in the legal profession and around the community. While it's not a bill that will be making the biggest, loudest headlines, it's a necessary piece of legislation that the Attorney-General has brought before us and it will help address a number of issues, problems that need to be fixed, but also opportunities to make greater legal clarity available for practitioners that work with this range of laws.

The amendments before us are guided by people who are closely involved in the day-to-day operation of the justice system. As the documents behind the bill, including the Attorney-General's second reading speech, make clear, feedback has been provided from prosecutors, police, judicial officers and statutory bodies who encounter ambiguity, inefficiency or gaps when the law is applied in practice.

I want to briefly focus on the amendments to the *Criminal Code Act 1924* and the *Evidence Act 2001*, because they go to the issues that involve some of the most vulnerable people in our community. I always speak with a great deal of passion in this space. My first thoughts are never for the offender; they're always for the victims, in all cases when I consider legislation of this nature.

To read the bill is challenging reading for any member of the community, whether you're a politician or not. The description of offences, for example, in the Criminal Code, for sexual intercourse, the description for the different kinds of ways that sexual intercourse can occur is awful to read, because in each case I am, of course, thinking of the ways in which people hurt each other. It's awful. It's truly awful, but this is the job that this generation of politicians must deal with, and it's the one that's been left to us by our predecessors.

I think, of course, as I said at this time one year ago when we debated the same bill in the previous parliament, I gave a lot of credit to the late honourable Dr Vanessa Goodwin, who was an exceptional attorney, whose career as first law officer of this state was cut way too short. She was a pioneer in not just bringing legislation before our House, but also in responding to large gaps. May I just quickly deviate and say today's bill deals with some smaller gaps, but in her time, as she brought forward the updated definitions for some of these awful offences, these were big gaps. I'll always remember - and I never understood, as a person who grew up in this state - how it survived so long that we had an offence on our books that used language

like 'maintaining a sexual relationship with a young person'. With its syntax and grammar, it's perfectly okay, but in the unintended subtext of that language, it could leave a person with the mistaken idea that consent was ever possible between an adult and a young person. I could go on, but that would be a sanitised example compared to some of the others, wouldn't it? So, I give a lot of credit to her. I worked with her closely in opposition and in government. I always greatly respect the legacy that she created and I'm grateful for her work in this space. When her bills were brought through this House, by and large, they were strongly supported.

I'm pleased to see the updated definition that was introduced during that first term of the Hodgman government made retrospective. I won't go into the legal reasons why - I did that in my previous contribution and it's been already outlined in the second reading speech. However, to make a quick point, while the definition is being made retrospective, it's not a problem. Legislators should always be careful when asked to adopt a law that is made retrospective; for all of the right reasons, we should look at those very, very carefully.

The point I want to make here is the one I made one year ago, which is that these were always crimes - at least they were always crimes in our generation. Even if there was a point in our history as a state - and there are examples where these things weren't strictly codified and described in the way that they are today - they were always wrong. They were against nature. They were against what many people would talk about as natural law. It comes back to that idea that it's wrong to hurt another person, and it's especially wrong to hurt a young person, or a vulnerable person, or someone who trusts you. So I'm supportive, both as a Liberal member, as well as a member for Bass representing my community. I'm pleased to see this language being made consistent and with retrospective effect. I think that is entirely appropriate.

These offences do need to be properly described, and so as the law catches up with historical offences, I wouldn't want to see outdated descriptions for those offences relating to those people being caught up with in today's court cases. Like I said at the outset, I think always of the victims, and I want to see them achieve justice - justice to be done and justice to be seen to be done.

These things are important to ensure consistency and fairness. It's especially vital to ensure that victims going through proceedings of these kinds, and suffering from and recovering from these offences, are protected. It's also important that accused persons are also treated fairly and appropriately, noting that people are innocent until proven guilty, that it is a court, not the court of public opinion, which should settle someone's guilt or innocence; that offenders or accused offenders are judged against clear and settled rules.

It's also worth noting that, again, while this bill makes some important clarifications in this area, it does not, in the Attorney-General's bill that's before us, it does not of itself expand criminal liability or create new offences. I'll say it again, and I'll say it for the last time - these things have always been wrong. The new definitions with the contemporary language I applaud, but regardless of whether a person is charged with the offence definitions with the newer language or the older language, it's always been wrong. It's important that we note that.

Briefly, I turn to the amendments regarding dangerous criminals and high risk offenders, this is another example of careful and sensible reform. These amendments clarify the criteria for interim HRO orders so that judges are able to act, when it's necessary, to protect the

community without being held to an evidentiary standard that is unrealistic at an interim order stage.

I discussed this again in my contribution during the previous parliament in that debate. It doesn't erode rights. It is, though, about making sure that the law provides our court with a more realistic threshold for making interim high risk offender orders. The reason we have high risk offender orders is to protect our community from dangerous people. Measuring risk and then managing that risk. Showing concern for our community, for our families, for our older people, for our children, and then ensuring that the protections that only this parliament is able to provide are provided, in a proportionate way.

The bill provides that interim high risk offender orders will be able to be made if the information provided before the court, 'would be likely to justify, if proved, the making of an HRO order'. This ensures that safeguards remain in place while providing the court with a more appropriate and, I would say, workable threshold for the making of an interim decision, recognising, as I think we would all agree - I hope we would - that further evidence may well become available for the assessment of an enduring high risk offender order that is not an interim order.

As Liberal Member for Bass, I want to see our community protected from people where there is a known, recognised and, hopefully, measurable risk of harm to our community. Speaker, and to my colleagues, I would say, there is hope. I do believe that people can change. I've seen people change, people who have done bad things can become better people. People who have done very bad things can become better people, can become good people. I take that opportunity to say that I hope that we can agree on that, and we probably do. However, when society has been presented with a significant crime and significant harm has occurred, it's reasonable for this parliament and it's reasonable for the community to have an ongoing level of concern and monitoring around an instance of somebody who has a dangerous past. That's the process that we entrust to our courts, to independently make those judgments.

As I said earlier, people can change. That's one of the important principles that society needs to be mindful of, while at the same time ensuring that somebody who has a recognised past of hurting other people is held back from opportunities to hurt other people into the future, if professionals and judicial personnel are able to demonstrate that that risk continues into the future. The community's safety trumps personal freedom.

Briefly, as I close, the bill also deals with a number of other practical matters around public institutions. I won't be speaking about those in detail, but in relation to elections, integrity oversight and the administration of justices of the peace. I'm supportive of the Attorney-General's amendments in relation to those matters. It is important that our democratic and integrity institutions are supported by legislation that keeps pace with change, or keeps pace with better understanding today of well-intentioned laws that were put in place in a previous time.

I appreciate what the Attorney-General's done here today. I support it. I also noted in the earlier contributions, the well-rounded support from the Labor Party, the Greens and no doubt others. For those reasons I'm very pleased, and certainly commend the bill to the House.

[3.46 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Attorney-General) - Honourable Speaker, I'd like to thank honourable members for their contributions, the shadow attorney-general, Greens member for Bass, Ms Rosol, and my colleague and friend, member for Bass, Mr Ferguson. Very thoughtful. Obviously, supportive remarks supporting the bill, for which I'm very grateful, but also very thoughtful contributions. I'll address some of the queries that were made and some of the remarks shared very shortly.

In short, this is an improvement to our laws. This will improve the justice system in Tasmania. It backs in the rule of law. It highlights the importance of the separation of powers in terms of our judiciary, in terms of the parliament, in terms of the workings of our government as the executive. They all need to be in balance, and there's a considerable improvement in this law.

I acknowledge the fact that we've been here before. It's been raised in my second reading speech and in other contributions. In fact, it was tabled, I'm advised, around October 2024 and then back in April 2025. Then, of course, we had that election in mid last year, and that was lapsed; it lapsed with the calling of that election. Here we are today, and this is definitely an improvement to our laws and the justice system.

There's been mention made of past contributors, including former attorney-general, Vanessa Goodwin. I'd like to pay a tribute to the late Vanessa Goodwin, who was a dear colleague and a dear friend, I know, to many in this place. She was also the minister for corrections and rehabilitation. I had the honour, the privilege and pleasure of filling in for her after she resigned from this parliament, as an acting corrections minister for some eight months. She was a cheerleader and a reformist in so many ways, not just in the justice system, but in our corrections system. Even last week when I was at Risdon and had some visits in recent times, I've heard of her work and her interest in caring for and supporting those in our prisons. She spearheaded the Breaking the Cycle initiative, an excellent program in our prisons. Of course I want to acknowledge her and indeed, the former attorney-general, Elise Archer.

There's a lot of work that's gone into this. I will thank my department up front - Bruce Paterson who I think everyone in this Chamber knows well - with the team. Felicity Poulter, and Nicole Lugg and Alice Lynch as well helped with this bill over a long period of time.

I want to thank the various stakeholders, those that have made contributions to make this improvement in our laws and the justice system. Lots of different angles during the debate on this. I want to appreciate and acknowledge the former Chief Justice Alan Blow, who I caught up with last night and had a wonderful chat with at Government House to acknowledge the 200-year anniversary of the Legislative Council. I know, honourable Speaker, you were there, with many others. I acknowledge the contribution of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the former ombudsman and, of course, the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management and I'll have more to say about them shortly. Other government departments and legal and community stakeholders were directly consulted as part of the targeted consultation process that occurred with respect to this bill. Of course, as I've said in my second reading speech, it's been noted in the second reading debate, it amends 12 acts of parliament, this bill, to improve our legislation in Tasmania.

These amendments are simple and many of them are technical, but they are of great significance when it comes to improving how our legislation operates and improving our justice system. As has been recognised in the contributions to the second reading debate, the bill makes amendments to the *Criminal Code Act 1924* to clarify the law in relation to sexual offences and it is important, and as my colleague, the member for Bass, Michael Ferguson, made very clear, it is important that we get this right. It is important that we have those definitions correct; it doesn't change the past laws and crimes in that sense, but it makes the consistency in terms of how those sexual offences are considered, and specifically by the director of public prosecutions, because it was that feedback that we received from the DPP that stimulated this amendment.

The law should be clear when it comes to crimes such as these and it must not create barriers for victim-survivors to seeking justice. We've had a lot of discussion in this place and more recently on the weekend with respect to victim-survivors and in terms of those who suffered forced adoptions; I'm really pleased that we've been able to take a nation-leading approach with respect to those mothers who've suffered so terribly as a result of those forced adoptions. I'm pleased we've been able to lock in a redress scheme and that that'll be acknowledged in the budget with \$4 million this Thursday and applications open on 15 June. Thank you for the nodding and encouragement and support. I know it's been quite a process and I want to thank all those that participated in that process. It hasn't been easy, but I thank my department as well.

I have already flagged the intention to move an amendment to the bill on behalf of the government and I will speak to that further shortly, but first of all, I would like to just address some of the queries and questions.

Firstly, Ms Haddad's had some questions about the high-risk offender orders and the interim high-risk offender orders that have been made by the Supreme Court since December 2021. I can provide the following answers in terms of those orders, there have been 16 high-risk offender orders, I'm advised, and six interim high-risk offender orders and these figures are current as of 14 April this year.

In terms of the question from Ms Haddad regarding when did the serial family violence perpetrator framework commenced and what does it involve: the amendments to the *Family Violence Act 2004* empowering courts to declare individuals as serial family violence perpetrators for a period of no longer than five years, came into force on 1 July 2024 and, as part of the declaration process, I'm advised magistrates can request pre-sentence reports from Community Corrections. I should note that I was at the Community Corrections offices in Launceston on Friday and I note for this parliament it was Community Corrections Week last week and Corrections Week for our corrections officers; it was wonderful to be able to pay a tribute to them in Risdon on Monday last week and then Community Corrections in Launceston on the Friday and online across with other community corrections officers on Friday. Congratulations and thank you for your service. It's a very difficult and challenging role but doing a wonderful job.

That timeframe, as I said, in terms of reports from Community Corrections, a time-frame of six weeks in relation to risk assessments, and reports from Tasmania Police as to someone's suitability for electronic monitoring time-frame is four weeks and thus there are a number of other matters where reports have been requested but no declaration made. Conversely, I'm advised due to the nature of the legislation, there are matters where magistrates have indicated

they are comfortable that an individual has met the threshold and made the declaration without requesting additional reports.

In terms of the question regarding the Police minister and details of police training to respond to family violence: the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Services works closely, I'm advised, as part of the Safe at Home response to family violence and are actively involved in the government's work to address this society-wide problem. But I do need to note that I will need to take that on notice and to come back to the honourable member in this place in terms of more particulars and an answer with respect to those specifics and the particulars of that question as it relates to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management.

I did want to make a note, because there's been quite some discussion on family violence, and understandably so. We've just been commemorating Domestic and Family Violence Month, and just a few weeks ago with a vigil outside this place. I'm pleased that government has initiated and are leading the way with strengthening our responses to family violence in Tasmania, *Family Violence Act 2004* and related legislation discussion papers. That's been out for some time. There's targeted and public consultation on the paper on the *Family Violence Act 2004*, which commenced on 17 November last year and concluded 2 April this year.

I can update the House that we've received more than 60 submissions to this review and the department's working very assiduously now and closely to identify the potential reforms and improvements to our response to family violence in the state. This is likely to involve a range of reforms and will include legislative reform. I thank all those individuals who attended forums, made contributions or written submissions. The responses have been strong and the department is taking the time needed to consider all the views and experiences shared.

As my opposition spokesperson, Ms Haddad, identified, family violence is a complex, multifaceted challenge in our community and I'm confident that this consultation process will assist in our response in both the short term, medium term and the long term.

Of course, we can't just stand here and think this has just all suddenly happened in recent months or years; it's been going for so long. I commend the former premier, Will Hodgman, for his standing up and I think it was with Rosie Batty in 2015, and kicked off the Family Violence Action Plan at the time. I know the former premier, Will Hodgman, was very committed and devoted to taking a positive approach in this way. It was recognised by Rosie Batty and many others for the leadership that was shown at the time and I think since. We certainly want to continue our efforts, I know on behalf of all of us in this place, to make a very positive difference with respect to what is totally unacceptable in the community.

There were questions regarding how other states and territories authorise this disclosure. The amendment is modelled on Western Australia's legislation. In Western Australia, there's a power to prescribe by regulation a purpose to disclose forensic result information under section 73(1)(n) of the *Criminal Investigation (Identifying People) Act 2002* Western Australia; and regulation 5A of the *Criminal Investigation (Identifying People) Regulations 2002* prescribes the purposes of the Australian Crime Commission's national policing information functions under the *Australian Crime Commission Act 2002* of the Commonwealth.

The Department of Justice could not find a similar authority in any other state or territory. However, South Australia and New South Wales have a regulation-making power to prescribe the purpose of disclosure under their respective forensic procedure legislation. Queensland has

a broad authorising disclosure power to perform a function of the police service and this would cover the disclosure of information for the purposes of the NCIS.

Before I answer one other question, I also want to address the Justices of the Peace. In my view they are the unsung heroes of our justice system. They are volunteers. In Tasmania we now have more than 750 Justices of the Peace, and my colleagues and Cabinet know that I bring forward their nominations on a pretty regular basis. I want to say thank you to the JPs all around Tasmania.

I was there with them at their more recent statewide seminar. It was a wonderful opportunity to pay a tribute to them. They are absolutely amazing. The High Court Judge, Robert Beech-Jones, came down. I want to acknowledge Lorraine Smith, the President of the Justice of the Peace Association, who helped organise that with other members of the committee. It was an excellent day over at Rosny at the Police Academy. They travelled, their own efforts, to get there and it was a wonderful seminar and, as I say, guest speaker, being a High Court judge and I thank Judge Beech-Jones, a Tasmanian in fact, on our High Court who flew down for the event. A tribute to our JPs.

I think this amendment will make it easier and better and deliver improved performances, training and education, which is important for our JPs. I'm looking forward to continuing to work with the association and their members across Tasmania to enhance their capability, help them to do their job, and to do it even better. Those amendments that are set out in this amendment bill will help make that happen.

I did also want to acknowledge the questions from my shadow in terms of the Magistrate Courts bill. I think, in summary, I can say that we want to see that bill enacted as soon as possible. It's a high priority. There's been substantial amount of preparatory work involved and my department is progressing that work in conjunction with the courts and indeed other stakeholders and it remains a high priority.

I did also want to summarise the amendments that I'll be putting in committee and foreshadow for colleagues in this place before we get to the committee that I will be moving in the committee - this will be a government amendment - that the House makes amendments to the Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2025 to insert a new clause A to follow clause 15. In short, the amendments that I'm proposing there would insert additional provisions in section 63 of the *Forensic Procedures Act 2000* to authorise the disclosure of information stored on the DNA database or revealed by the carrying out of a forensic procedure for the purpose of and accordance with the Australian Crime Commission's national policing information functions under section 7A(f)(a) of the *Australian Crime Commission Act 2002* of the Commonwealth.

These amendments respond to an urgent request by the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management to enable Tasmania to fulfil its information-sharing obligations with the National Crime Intelligence System. The National Crime Intelligence System is a joint project administered by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, legally known as the Australian Crime Commission, which of course Mr Pearce would know very well as a former federal MP, and indeed others, with Australian police agencies and the Department of Home Affairs as the technical delivery partner. The National Crime Intelligence System connects data from the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission and law-enforcement agencies by combining information from multiple systems and jurisdictions to provide

a comprehensive, unified picture of criminal activity. The Criminal Intelligence System provides a national view of crime. It enables partners to work across jurisdictions on common outcomes. It involves officer safety, critical-incident decision-making, and enables the detection and prevention of criminal and national security threats. The Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management has entered an information sharing agreement with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission for the National Crime Intelligence System.

The agreement sets out the applicable terms and conditions, including Tasmania's provisioning and access obligations and security requirements. These amendments are required to ensure the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management can meet its agreed information-provisioning obligations. These amendments are required to ensure the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management can do what is required.

Criminal intelligence is a central tool in modern crime control that can be used by law enforcement to understand the rapid changes in crime and criminality. The development of intelligence relies on the sharing of information between law-enforcement agencies in the wake of the Bondi terrorist attack, effective information-sharing between Australian federal, state and territory intelligence and law-enforcement agencies has never been more critical.

As the national criminal intelligence body, a central function of the Australian Crime Commission is to provide systems and services relating to national policing information, including collecting, correlating and organising national policing information, providing access to national policing information and supporting and facilitating the exchange of national policing information.

These amendments will authorise the disclosure of information under the *Forensic Procedures Act 2000* for a very specific purpose, that being for the purposes of and in accordance with the Australian Crime Commission's national policing information functions, such as the provision of the National Criminal Intelligence System.

I'm committed to updating and clarifying the law. I'm also committed to ensuring Tasmania has an appropriate authorising environment for information-sharing with other federal, state and territory law enforcement agencies. Moving these amendments on the floor is the fastest way to ensure the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management can fulfil its information-sharing obligations with the National Criminal Intelligence System and I look forward to it being supported.

I can talk more about that amendment shortly, but you can understand the time-frame following the Bondi terrorist attack and the need for urgent action. That's why this government amendment has been brought forward today with respect to this legislation. In conclusion, through you, Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased to commend this bill to the House, and I look forward to addressing that amendment in the committee.

I commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

**JUSTICE AND RELATED LEGISLATION
(MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL (No. 2) 2025 (No. 39)**

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 15 agreed to.

New clause A

Mr BARNETT - Chair. I move -

New Clause A to follow Clause 15.

A. Section 63 further amended (Disclosure of information)

Section 63 of the Principal Act is amended as follows -

- (a) by inserting the following paragraph after paragraph (d) in subsection (2):
 - (da) the purpose of the Australian Crime Commission's national policing information functions under section 7A(fa) of the *Australian Crime Commission Act 2002* of the Commonwealth and in accordance with that Act;
- (b) by inserting the following paragraph after paragraph (d) in subsection (3):
 - (da) for the purpose of the Australian Crime Commission's national policing information functions under section 7A(fa) of the *Australian Crime Commission Act 2002* of the Commonwealth and in accordance with that Act;

I believe I've spoken about the importance of this and outlined the reasons for it. Of course, the Bondi terrorist attack was a milestone event in Australia and a grievous and sad event, and the anti-Semitism that led to that tragic terrorist attack is to be condemned. I believe this House responded very positively and resolutely in the wake of that attack and made our views very clear.

Since then, of course, we've had much discussion as a community, but likewise as governments. I've been to and had a number of discussions with the Standing Council of Attorneys-General. Of course, national cabinets have met on a number of occasions and of course the police ministers have met on a number of occasions. You've seen the agreements out of national Cabinet flowing from those discussions and the collaboration and one of those key initiatives and important programs to progress is intelligence and the sharing of intelligence and the sharing of information. That's exactly what this amendment does and it allows the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management to act in accordance with those principles that have been agreed at national Cabinet. That's now flowed down to each state and territory. We're now acting on that. This is an amendment to a government bill, which as everyone knows has been in place for some time, but this is a matter of time. We need to get on with the job. That's why we've made an amendment to this Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill and we can get on and do the job, get the job done, and

progress to sharing the relevant information and providing the capacity and the tools and the framework in which our Department of Police, Fire & Emergency Management services can act. Having said that, I commend the amendment to the committee.

Ms HADDAD - I thank the Attorney-General for providing some information in his summing up following my question on the changes made by this amendment. He said that the new section is modelled on Western Australia's legislation, but there weren't other states and territories with similar authorities drafted into their legislation, but that other jurisdictions did have similar authorising powers. I believe, obviously, the purpose of this amendment to allow for the sharing of forensic information from the state Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission is an understandable one and one that I believe most members of the public would expect to be in place. They would expect that, particularly when there are large-scale national potential risks at play, that states and territories and the Commonwealth are able to share forensic information.

I wanted, for the sake of clarity, whether the Attorney-General could provide information about whether the agreement that is referred to between the ACIC and the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management here, are they individual agreements that the ACIC has signed with each state and territory jurisdiction, or is it one national agreement that's come out of either national cabinet or the Standing Council of Attorneys-General?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Thanks very much for the question and I understand where the question is coming from. Yes, the agreement has come out of national Cabinet is my advice and it's a consistent outcome that's required but because each state and territory has a different Criminal Code and different police services that operate in slightly different environments, it's a consistent information that's being considered but the relevant amendments might be slightly different in each jurisdiction. That's the advice I have.

Ms ROSOL - Just to acknowledge that I'm not the portfolio holder for Justice, so my comments come from that place. I'm interested in the time-frames around this because I understand that you say that this is coming out of what happened at Bondi out of an agreement with the between the Australian Crime Commission and the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management.

I'm curious to know when that agreement was signed and what the time-frames have been for that. I understand wanting to slide this into the legislation today so that it can be dealt with while we have a justice bill in front of us, but the amendment was sent out this morning, I believe, and not everyone holds the same position on things around intelligence and privacy and things like that. My questions are around consultation and the amount of time that's been given, what briefing has been offered and the process that's been followed for this because we're being asked to vote on this today, but we only saw it at 11 o'clock this morning.

I understand it's part of a bigger conversation, but I just have questions around that.

Mr BARNETT - If I can address not just the questions, but the sentiment behind the questions as well. I'd like to clarify the advice I have that this supports information-sharing in situations 'like' Bondi. It's been around for some time in terms of the request or the intention of the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. The advice I have, although it's in situations like Bondi, and I've used that as an example coming out of that, but the Department

of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, I'm advised, has been working on the National Crime Intelligence Information Project for some time.

I'm advised, in terms of the information-sharing and the purposes flowing from the National Crime Information Service, legal advice gave rise to the need for this amendment. I'm also advised in March 2026, DPFEM notified the department that this request was now urgent, as some data capability has been provisioned through to the NCIS and a filter has been applied to filter out what is not yet supposed to be shared. It is the intention of DPFEM to comply with its information-sharing agreement as soon as legislation authorising the disclosure is in place. This amendment will ensure that DPFEM can achieve that objective and contribute to a comprehensive national criminal intelligence system in Australia and the rest of Australia will benefit from. So I think it's a bigger picture than just Bondi. I've used Bondi as an example.

Ms ROSOL - Thank you for that, Deputy Premier. I appreciate that. I guess I still have some of those concerns about process in terms of this bill being a couple of years old and this put into it now as it goes through. As it stands, our spokesperson for justice is in the Legislative Council and will be able to have a good look at this. Thank you for that explanation. I appreciate it.

New clause A agreed to.

Clauses 16 to 35 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported with amendment.

**JUSTICE AND RELATED LEGISLATION
(MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL (No. 2) 2025 (No. 39)**

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

**RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AMENDMENT (SAFETY MODIFICATIONS)
BILL 2025 (No. 59)**

Second Reading

[4.24 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Attorney-General) - Honourable Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the bill now be read the second time.

The bill seeks to facilitate tenants taking action to prevent furniture from toppling and harming those in the home.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

The provisions of this bill comprised half of the Residential Tenancy Amendment Bill 2024. The 2024 bill passed this place, but was unable to be considered in the other place prior to the dissolution of parliament earlier this year. The 2024 bill has been divided into two, with the other provisions currently before the parliament as the Residential Tenancy Amendment (Pets) Bill 2025. Actually, it's now passed, but there we go. That's *Hansard* being checked on delivery.

This bill will enable a tenant to fix an item of furniture to the premises, for example, to a wall, to prevent that furniture from posing a risk to residents or visitors, especially small children. Where the affixing of the furniture will not cause permanent damage, no consent from the owner is needed. If permanent damage will result, the tenant will need to seek the consent of the owner. If the owner does not respond within 14 days, the owner is deemed to have consented.

'Permanent damage' in this section of the act is defined as damage that cannot be remedied; damage that affects the premises that has historical cultural heritage significance within the meaning of the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*, and a type of damage prescribed for the purposes of this definition. This specific definition of 'permanent damage' is aimed to ensure that consent is required where the impact of the furniture anchors could not be properly rectified at the end of the tenancy.

The bill provides an avenue of review where an owner does not consent to the safety modification. The tenant can apply to the Residential Tenancy Commissioner if consent is refused.

As is already the case, the reforms will not affect the tenants' obligation 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 the 2024 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.

I'm tabling a minor amendment to the bill today. This amendment sees the removal of the definition of 'approved form' and 'tribunal' from the tabled bill. These definitions have recently been incorporated into the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* through the recently commenced *Residential Tenancy Amendment (Pets) Act 2026*. There is therefore no longer a need to include these definitions here. I therefore propose that the definitions are removed from this bill via this amendment.

Deputy Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

[4.29 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - That ended a bit quicker than expected. Does that mean the minister's still on his feet or -

Mr Bayley - Have you distributed the amendments, minister?

Dr BROAD - Are you going to distribute amendments?

Mr Barnett - We sent it to the Clerks this morning.

Mr Bayley - What about us?

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Dr BROAD - Thank you. Confusion is reigning right here.

I stand to give my comments on the Residential Tenancy Amendment (Safety Modifications) Bill 2025. In this place lately, I keep getting these feelings of déjà vu, and it has actually been quite confusing at times because there's a number of bills and debates that we seem to have had and then had to redo. This is probably going to be similar. We had the pets in rentals debate, and the idea of this was actually in that original debate. Then after the last election, because that bill didn't pass, we had the bill split into two. So we had pets in rentals and now we have the second stage of it, which was the safety modifications.

The Greens are no doubt going to bring some amendments, which they can no doubt speak to, but that will also be a debate that we've had already in this place. We are redoing work over again, and at times it's hard to know what's going on, because we've had bills come onto the blue, drop off the blue. We were supposed to get to this last week, we didn't get to it - but here we are. Let's talk about safety modifications as part of this bill.

What does this bill do? Well, it aims to balance tenant safety and autonomy with the property owners' rights and property protection. The safety modification measures were originally part of the Residential Tenancy Amendment Bill 2024, which lapsed due to the dissolution of parliament, and this has now been reintroduced as a standalone bill.

What are the key reforms? What is a 'safety modification'? A safety modification means affixing furniture to a premises to reduce the risk of injury or death caused by furniture toppling. It's actually quite a discrete goal, and that is things like anchoring furniture to a wall. There have been some incidents, tragically, of things like big-screen TVs sitting on top of cabinets falling onto children especially and resulting in injury and sometimes even death - and that's horrendous. Being able to make safety modifications in a house, in a rental property, so where you are not the owner, is actually something most people would see as reasonable. Before this bill, there wasn't necessarily a pathway to do that without getting specific permission from the landowner. This rectifies that.

Consent rules for safety modification - so, when an owner's consent is not required. A tenant may install a safety modification without the owner's consent if it does not cause permanent damage to the premises - and we probably talk about the definition of 'permanent damage'. Existing rules around alterations and fixtures under section 54 of the act do not apply to these safety mechanisms.

If the safety modification is likely to cause permanent damage, the tenant must request consent before carrying out the work. The owner's got 14 days to respond, and consent must

not unnecessarily be refused. If the owner does not respond within the 14 days, then consent is deemed to have been granted.

We'll just talk about the meaning of 'permanent damage' in the bill. 'Permanent damage' is narrowly defined to ensure only genuinely significant impacts require consent. This includes:

- damage that cannot be remedied; and
- damage affecting premises with historic/cultural significance under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*; and
- any additional damage type prescribed in regulations.

There's also dispute and review mechanisms - the review by the Residential Tenancy Commissioner. If an owner refuses consent and the tenant believes the refusal is unreasonable, the tenant may apply to the Residential Tenancy Commissioner for a safety modification order. The application must be in an approved form and specify the requested modification. The Commissioner may authorise or refuse the modification and must give written reasons. If granted, the order takes effect 14 days after notification.

It can also be appealed to the tribunal - either party, so the tenant or the owner - may seek a review of the Commissioner's decision by TASCAT, but the application must be made within 14 days, and the reviews are heard in the civil and customer stream.

What are the tenants' responsibilities? Their responsibilities remain unchanged. Tenants must still repair damage or compensate the owner if damage is caused when installing or removing a safety modification, and at the end of the tenancy, premises must be returned to their original condition, except for reasonable wear and tear.

Commencement of the legislation to this will obviously start the day it's proclaimed. To summarise, the policy intent is to prevent avoidable injuries and deaths, particularly involving children, as the result of toppling furniture. It ensures tenants can act proactively to improve in-home safety, maintain fair protections for property owners and that the reforms were developed following targeted stakeholder consultation led by the Department of Justice.

In short, this bill creates a clear legal right for tenants to install basic furniture safety measures, it limits landlords' refusal to legitimate cases, provides a fast simple review option without removing tenants' responsibility for property care. If this bill passes as is written, then there will no doubt be some case law to determine what is a reasonable modification or not. No doubt, they will be debating in committee some changes to definitions and we'll definitely participate in that debate. We'll also hear from the Greens who want to massively extend the range of this bill and we'll also debate that.

What's the big picture comparison compared to other states? Tasmania, this proposed bill sits in the middle to progressive range nationally. It could be argued that it's more permissive than Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory, less permissive than Victoria or New South Wales, closely aligned to Western Australia, and narrower and more structured than the Australian Capital Territory. A key change that Tasmania has put in place is the automatic consent after 14 days and a statutory right to apply to the Residential Tenancy Commissioner if refusal is unreasonable.

This is quite narrow and a very reasonable bill. I don't think we should massively increase the scope, but we'll have that debate in committee. I'd like to reiterate this has actually been around a little while, so much so that the second reading speech hadn't been updated because the references to pets in rentals was still in there, so word of advice to the minister is to check the second reading speech before reading it.

I think this is a very reasonable bill and Labor will be supporting it. I think we'll probably have more discussion about the bill in committee, but what we have to be mindful of when developing a bill like this is to get the balance right between the rights of the landlord, the rights of the owner, and the rights of the tenant. I think this bill does strike a good balance. We'll have some debates around the margins around definitions of permanent damage, which I welcome. However, trying to massively increase the scope of this bill I think is probably not a good idea but, again, we'll have that debate in committee. I commend the bill to the House.

[4.37 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to give the Greens contribution on the Residential Tenancy Amendment (Safety Modifications) Bill 2025 and indicate upfront that we will be supporting this bill. We welcome provisions that allow for modifications to affix furniture for safety purposes without approval if it will not cause permanent damage. This bill and this amendment is a no-brainer. It's eminently supportable. As has been flagged, I guess it was originally the second-half of the pets bill and there was a certain logic there in terms of dealing with the risk of toppling furniture and a duty of care in terms of if we're providing new pathways for tenants to have the right to keep a pet in their premises, which we wholeheartedly support and welcome, then it's reasonable that we take steps to address risks from toppling furniture. Noting existing concerns being raised about the inadequacies of the Pets Bill even as recently as today in terms of a tenant wanting to keep a cat in a strata title unit and are being challenged as a result, a rescue cat at that - but that's separate to this bill and I'll leave that comment there.

Similar to last time we debated this bill, we strongly believe that more can be done, and a lot more should be done. Indeed, multiple submissions to the initial 2024 draft bill, including those from Homes Tasmania, Shelter Tasmania, the Tenants' Union and Bolt it Back for Reef, argued for broader provisions allowing for reasonable modifications. These are reasonable modifications in relation to further safety modifications, disability access, energy-efficiency improvements, security improvements, and indeed telecommunications. There's been a very long advocacy from many groups on these issues that I'll come to later on.

The amendments that we have would broaden the scope of the bill to include provisions for modifications that are minor: They are minor, and as I say, for safety purposes, assistance in relation to disability, energy efficiency, security and access to telecommunications, and these are all consistent with the legislation from the Australian Capital Territory. The approach used by the Australian Capital Territory for these modifications differs from the proposed approach in this bill in that in the Australian Capital Territory all modifications can, in effect, be appealed by a landlord to the tribunal.

However, in this bill, safety modifications for affixing furniture can only be appealed, in effect, if they would cause permanent damage. To avoid weakening the safety provisions in this bill, in the amendments we would seek to move we would establish two types of modifications; permitted modifications retain the government's process and include the definition of safety modification currently in the bill, as well as allowing for further permitted

modifications to be prescribed by regulation, and then permitted modifications retain the approach used by government where consent only needs to be obtained if it would like be likely to cause permanent damage.

Our amendments also introduce specified modifications which, like the Australian Capital Territory legislation, includes modifications that are minor for safety purposes, assistance in relation to disability, energy efficiency, security and telecommunications as I mentioned. The definition of specified modifications also allows for further matters to be prescribed. Unlike for permitted modifications, consent needs to be sought for specified modifications, regardless of whether or not they are likely to cause permanent damage. Consent can only be denied for a specified modification if an owner has a tribunal order. An owner can attach reasonable conditions to consent, including requiring a tradesperson to do the works and requiring a tenant to restore the property to the condition it was in prior to the works being undertaken and, of course, conditions can be appealed by the tenant to the tribunal.

I raise at this point the amendment that the minister has flagged that he intends to move pertains to the very same clause that we would need to amend. The amendment that you have flagged, minister, certainly takes me by surprise. I can't find it in my inbox and I certainly wasn't aware that it was happening and so, I'm not sure that I've got the capacity in the time we have to amend my amendment to clause 4 to properly amend your amended clause 4, if that makes sense.

I might just have to take some time while others are speaking to see whether that can be done and we'll certainly do it if it is possible in this House and give it a go and, failing that, I will be working with my colleague in the other place, Cassy O'Connor, to bring these amendments forward. They're really important amendments that improve the rights of tenants to modify their property, or their house, their home, in a way that is appropriate, in a way that is repairable. to make their lives better, to ensure that they feel safer, that they feel more secure, that, if they've got a disability, they've got better access to make sure that they've got up-to-date telecommunications.

I'll flag here and I will talk through some of these amendments further, including the Labor Party's position on them, but I'll just put on the record here now, I may not move them in the committee of this House because they may not fit with what the honourable minister amends when it comes to clause 4.

I want to speak to Dr Broad and his comments in relation to these amendments. Labor didn't support the amendments last time and it clearly seems that they're not going to support them this time. The honourable member, Dr Broad, didn't provide feedback before the debate last time and he hasn't this time and as expressed last time, I find this incredibly disappointing.

These are pretty simple changes to the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*. They're consistent, from our read, with Labor policy. It's a Labor government in the Australian Capital Territory that actually brought these forward. These are not revolutionary amendments, and they ultimately make renters lives better because they can make small modifications to their home to meet their needs. It's disappointing that the member hasn't provided any feedback to see whether we can amend these amendments, work with these amendments to get their support, and instead comes to the House and makes the case on the floor.

During the debate last time, Dr Broad made numerous comments about the supposed deficiencies in our amendments that I would say were flat out factually incorrect. *Hansard* records that Dr Broad claimed:

If someone was to improve the energy efficiency of the place where they had a rental, it says nothing else. It does not say who can do it, the quality of work or whether it needs to be a qualified tradesperson doing it. It simply gives the tenant the ability to improve the energy efficiency of the premises, which could be a whole range of things and would be unintended.

The *Hansard* shows that a lot of these claims, every element of this claim, is actually false. It doesn't simply give 'the tenant the ability to improve the energy efficiency of the premises'. The tenant may make a request and then the landlord can either consent or apply to the tribunal for authorisation to refuse consent. Furthermore, a landlord can grant qualified consent, in which case the burden is on the tenant to appeal these qualifications. This qualified consent under the proposed section 54(d)(3)(b) can explicitly include 'a requirement that the specified modification be made by a qualified tradesperson'. The landlord has the capacity to condition this to make sure that a qualified tradesperson undertakes the work. When the member claims that it does not say who can do it, the quality of the work, or whether it needs to be a qualified tradesperson in doing it, it's outright false. The landlord can condition it.

The member also claimed that the amendments -

Could see tenants having the right to drill holes through walls, put cables everywhere without the requirements of any qualifications to be able to do it. It needs to be much better drafted.

This is also incorrect. In addition to requiring a qualified tradesperson to undertake the work, the landlord can require the modification to be made in a manner that minimises damage to the premises and that the modifications be undone either through the tenant's own initiative or through invoicing the tenant for the landlord's expense for remedying the work and the landlord gets to pick which option. There's plenty of power here in the landlord's hands. The paragraphs under proposed section 54 (d) (3) are a non-exhaustive list. The landlords can impose any reasonable conditions, and again the requirement is on the tenant to appeal these conditions. In respect to the drafting, it was drafted by OPC and based on existing legislation in the Australian Capital Territory.

Dr Broad concluded last time we debated this by saying:

It could have wide implications. There are no protections for landlords and property in the way it is put together. It simply says these things become permitted modification and go for it.

This is nonsense. The amendments provide that the tenant requires consent for the landlord. Yes, the landlord has to apply to the tribunal for authority to refuse consent, but the presumption is that there is no consent until that process concludes. Furthermore, the landlord has broad powers to attach conditions to the consent and the burden is on the tenant to appeal these conditions.

These are the amendments that we would seek to move in the committee of this House, and if not here, as I referenced before, subject to the minister's amendment, certainly upstairs. They are minor modifications, they are minor changes in the context of this act. As I say again, they refer to things that I would hope we can all relate to. We can all relate to wanting to make our houses safer, our homes more disability compliant and accessible for people with accessibility issues, more energy efficient, security in telecommunications.

When it comes to energy efficiency, we know that the rental stock in Tasmania is some of the poorest in the country. Obviously with the climate we've got, we know that this has a significant impact on Tasmanians' electricity bills in a cost-of-living crisis. We simply can't - there are only so many things we can do about that. One of the things we can do is give people the power to increase and improve the energy efficiency of their properties.

What is the problem with this amendment? The amendments would ultimately force - that will mean that the tenant would, if the landlord wanted it, rectify the modification and put it back in its original form.

Last time we debated these amendments, we were written to by a raft of different groups. I acknowledge the long advocacy by groups last time about pushing for these kinds of modifications. There was Council of the Ageing Tasmania, Shelter Tasmania, Disability Voices Tasmania, TasCOSS, Anglicare, the Youth Network of Tasmania, the Tasmanian University Students Association, the Tenants' Union and the Migrant Resource Centre. Almost a full hand of community advocacy and other organisations interested in bettering the lives of people, improving the rights of tenants, making sure the properties we do put on the rental market are the best possible properties they can be, are advocating for these kinds of changes. We commend them to the House if we get there.

While we're talking about a residential tenancy amendment bill, we acknowledge that the review of the *Residential Tenancy Act* has maybe been brought forward a little bit. We urge it to be concluded rapidly and reforms progressed quickly. In the meantime, there's clearly some actions we believe the government should take in the current cost-of-living crisis with fuel prices, food prices and rents the way they are. It is clear that we, in this parliament, need to take more action to assist tenants. We will keep calling on this government to implement a rent freeze pending the *Residential Tenancy Act* and subject to the ongoing war in Iran.

We should also end no-cause evictions. No-cause evictions happen when a tenant is kicked out of their property simply because their lease ends, without good reason. A good reason would be that the landlord wants to move in, they want to sell the property or they need to do significant renovations. But as it stands at the moment, tenants can be kicked out of their properties simply at the end of the lease and then the rent is jacked up. That is a significant issue for renters. With a vacancy rate of 0.2 per cent in Hobart, we know that the market is tight and we need additional protections for renters.

When it comes to other impacts on the rental market, reining in short stay is also something we will continue to put to this government as an action that is desperately overdue. This could be through a permanent ban on conversions of rental properties to short-stay hotels in residential areas or giving councils the capacity to make decisions in their own areas. The former is our policy. But you have to do something, minister. When supply is so tight, it is unconscionable for us to sit back and see more and more supply being stripped from the market. We will keep pushing for those reforms.

In saying that, we support this bill. We'd like to see it widened. We will seek to do that either here or in the other place. It's a logical bill. It's something that advocacy organisations have called for for a long time and it flows naturally from the pets in rentals bill.

[4.54 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Honourable Deputy Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise tonight to make my contribution on the Residential Tenancy Amendment (Safety Modifications) Bill. As other have noted, this has been a long-awaited amendment for safety reasons. It's coming back to us in a slightly different form, in a new standalone format, but I recognise that we have been here before.

As a former Tenants' Union manager, some 20-odd-years ago now, these kinds of issues have been around for a very long time. I am pleased that we are finally getting around to dealing with it. As the honourable deputy leader of the Greens has already noted, we are in desperate need of reform in this particular area. I recognise that a review of the *Residential Tenancy Act* is being progressed but there is a broader range of protections that need to be put in place for tenants. When we are in a housing crisis, we need to be making sure that we are treating our laws in relation to housing, recognising that as a human right and making sure that we are doing all we can in that space. It is my long-held position that we need to have laws that reflect housing as a human right; that residential tenancies are more than just a contractual arrangement for a roof over someone's head. It 's about a home for a person, for a family, for individuals, and our laws need to reflect that. This is exactly what this bill does. It reflects that we need to be safe in our homes and that we can make modifications to ensure our safety in our home, not just a house.

I would also support the amendments proposed by the honourable deputy leader of the Greens in relation to other modifications that provide for a home. When I was the manager of the Tenants' Union, I would often be on the phone hotline and get calls from people who were tenants who wanted to make minor modifications to a home to ensure they had disability access or support within their home. For instance, simple things like a grab rail in the shower, where the landlord had refused that. It's important that we provide for those safety modifications to ensure that people can be safe in their homes, can access and fully participate in everything in their homes. I recall numerous calls from people wanting to make simple safety modifications to the homes they rented for things like a grab rail at the front stairs for older people, for access and things like that. They're very simple things that make it a home, make it accessible for people to continue to stay in their homes longer and be part of the community.

These are things that ought to be in place, so I would encourage members to support the amendments put forward by the Greens, if they do that. I hope that Labor might see this as an opportunity to put in place some excellent reform in this particular area.

I will be supporting the bill, but I flag some amendments in relation to clause 6 of the bill, where we define what permanent damage might be. My amendment, which I'll speak to in greater detail later on, is really to provide clarity to both tenants and landlords about what that might be.

The Tenants' Union's submission is that 'permanent damage' is somewhat ambiguous in the bill as it's currently drafted, and that 'significant damage,' with some level of clarity around what that might look like, would be useful in the interpretation, the practical day-to-day

interpretation of what that might be. Significant damage would refer to works that involve structural change to a premises where repair to any damage caused by the work would require substantial remediation. If the damage is to a heritage-listed property, all the damage that is prescribed in another way.

I'll also be moving an amendment to clarify 'what must not be refused unreasonably', replacing that with more specific grounds, again for the benefit of tenants and landlords who are going to have to negotiate these on a day-to-day basis. In reference to:

If the safety modification would or would likely disturb material containing asbestos -

Obviously very important:

If the safety modification would or be likely to affect heritage premises -

Again reflecting the intent in the bill already:

And if the safety modification would contravene by-laws in a strata title.

That provides greater clarity for the grounds for refusal to tenants and owners, and also to appeal bodies [inaudible] currently exist in the bill as drafted.

I support the bill but I hope that we can use this opportunity to strengthen it with some additional clarity around what those definitions might be, but also that broadened definition to provide for important provisions to ensure that people can have a home, not just a house.

[4.59 p.m.]

Mr VERMEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to make a brief contribution on the Residential Tenancy Amendment Safety Modifications Bill 2025. At the outset, I declare an interest as an owner of rental property. I make the declaration because the bill directly falls within the rights and obligations of tenants and property owners. We will see Labor, Greens and Independents agreeing, in a sense, to this targeted bill. At its core, it is about allowing tenants to take reasonable steps to make their home safer, and practical for children and the vulnerable people in the household.

This is not an abstract issue. It has been the subject of strong advocacy of children safety organisations from families who know, in the most painful way possible, what can happen when furniture is not secure. I particularly acknowledge the advocacy of Kidsafe being clear in its support for reforms that make it easier for renters to secure furniture and televisions to walls and floors. Its message has been simple and practical: homes should be made safer for children, regardless of whether a family owns or rents.

I acknowledge the advocacy of Bolt it Back for Reef, which has campaigned strongly for change following the tragic death of Reef Kite, a toddler who died after a chest of drawers toppled on top of him. That advocacy has helped to bring national attention to the need for tenancy laws to recognise that securing furniture is not cosmetic - it's a genuine child safety measure. Having three boys running around the house, I know exactly about making sure things are tied down.

The bill deals with safety modifications, specifically the affixing of an item of furniture to the premises to avoid the risk of injury or death from that furniture moving or toppling over. That might sound like a small change, but for families with young children, it's a very real safety issue. We all know that heavy furniture, bookshelves, drawers and cabinets pose a serious risk and if they are not properly secured, tipping-over incidents can happen quickly and can have a tragic consequence. This bill recognises that renters should not be prevented from taking basic, reasonable steps to reduce that risk in the home that they live in. The bill does this in a balanced way: where the safety modifications will not cause permanent damage, the tenant will be able to make that modification without needing the owner's consent. That is appropriate if the modification is minor, safe, lawful, and can be properly remedied at the end of the tenancy. There is no good reason to create unnecessary delay or red tape.

Where the safety modification is likely to cause permanent damage, the tenant must seek the owner's consent before proceeding. That also reflects a fair balance. Property owners have a legitimate interest in protecting their property, particularly when the premises may have heritage significance or where the damage cannot be redeemed.

Importantly, the bill does not leave either party without recourse. An owner must respond to a request in 14 days and if they do not respond, consent is taken to have been given. That is a practical provision, because safety matters should not be allowed to sit unresolved indefinitely. At the same time, if an owner refuses consent and the tenant believes that refusal is unreasonable, the tenant can apply to the Residential Tenancy Commissioner for an order authorising a safety modification. The Commissioner will then consider the circumstances and determine whether the refusal was unreasonable. There's also a right to appeal to TASCAT. That means there is independent oversight and procedural fairness for both tenants and owners.

I also note that this bill does not remove the existing obligation on tenants to rectify damage caused during the tenancy. Tenants remain required to return the premises to the condition it was in the beginning of the tenancy, allowing, of course, reasonable wear and tear. That is important. The bill is not a free-for-all for alterations to rental properties. It is a narrow and practical reform about safety modifications. It preserves the obligations on tenants to act responsibly and to make good any damage where it's required. This bill should also be seen in the broader context of making our residential tenancy laws more modern and workable. Tasmanians should feel free in their homes they rent. At the same time, property owners should have the confidence that their rights are understood and respected. Good tenancy laws need to strike that balance. In my view, this bill does that. It gives tenants a practical pathway to secure furniture and prevent avoidable harm. It gives owners a clear process where permanent damage may arise.

It provides a time frame for decisions, it provides a review by the Commissioner, it provides an appeal rights through TASCAT, and it maintains the existing responsibility of tenants to repair damage or compensate the owner where appropriate. This is the sort of reform that is modest, practical and focused on real-world outcomes.

I also acknowledge the consultation undertaken in the development of these reforms, including the stakeholder bodies and local government.

These issues affect tenants, property owners, agents, families and the broader community, so it's important that the different perspectives have been considered. The government has brought forward a bill that recognises the importance of safety in rental homes

without undermining the legitimate interests of property owners. For those reasons, I support the bill.

[5.06 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Attorney-General) - Honourable Speaker, I want to thank all honourable members for their contributions and indications of support for the bill but also acknowledge the amendments that have been recommended by the relevant members in this place. I'd like to pass on an apology with respect to the second reading speech and note that the Residential Tenancy Amendment (Pets) Bill 2025 has been passed and, in fact, commenced just a couple of months ago. I had the pleasure of launching its commencement here in Hobart. I want to put that on the record to Dr Shane Broad. Thanks for picking that up, and I apologise in terms of the second reading speech.

I want to indicate that we've had some very good discussions. I think all the views that have been put are valid and fair and reasonable. I want to pay a tribute, of course, to the family of young Reef Kite from Western Australia, a young toddler who was killed with toppling furniture many years ago. Of course, the family of Reef has campaigned so hard and for so long. I pay tribute to that family for helping make a difference across Australia, not just in WA Western Australia, here we are in Tasmania progressing with this important legislation.

I want to give colleagues a heads-up with respect to the importance of a home, and I'm reminded of *The Castle*; a great Australian movie, I think it was 1997, and the Kerrigan family and 'You've gotta be dreaming!' It just highlights the importance of a home, of a family, of being together under the one roof. I think it was the member for Clark who talked about the importance of having a roof over someone's head. I've said that before, as a housing minister and a member of this government. That's an ambition, that's an aim, and that's what we want to achieve in Tasmania - is that everyone should be able to have a roof over their head. I'm very pleased that Mr Kerrigan had support in the High Court in that movie and section 51(xxxi), which was the definition of 'just terms'. Of course, in the High Court it was deemed that there could not be compulsory acquisition because the house was more than a house, it was a home. That's where we're all combined, in one, in unity, to support homes and houses to be homes, where families can live safely. This is a safety modification amendment bill where the aim is to protect our toddlers and our kids, and indeed, pets - anything where safety is required and deemed necessary. That is the objective of this bill.

We've had the pets in rentals bill. We had a big debate last year. I'm so pleased it went through. I'm thankful for all members in this place for expressing your views and having support for that. That's now been passed. This is the second tranche, as it were - it was split in two - and here we are. Thank you for that.

In terms of the foreshadowed amendment, putting it very clearly - it's in relation to the amendment that we are moving here today. The government is seeking to reduce the number of definitions included in the bill from three to one. The bill currently includes definitions for 'approved form' and 'tribunal'. These definitions are no longer needed as they were added to the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* by the recent Pets Amendment Bill. By removing these two definitions, we're avoiding the duplication of identification definitions in the *Residential Tenancy Act*. Put simply, we are removing duplication, not changing the effect of the bill. I want to put that on the record, and I apologise to members in this place if that wasn't distributed or circulated more quickly. My advice was that it was circulated, but I understand

that it may not have been. That's a second apology. However, I've summarised that it doesn't change the intent, in fact, it improves the bill.

I would like to address some remarks of Dr Shane Broad. Thank you for your encouragement and supporting the importance of the bill. I think a similar view of staying in the lane, but happy to listen to the views of the Greens and the member for Clark. Thank you for putting forward the amendments, giving the government time to consider those Greens amendments, and likewise the member for Clark's amendments. We won't be supporting those amendments. I want to acknowledge the intent, however, and I want to acknowledge the ambition to improve safety in terms of the Greens' amendments with respect to disability access, energy efficiency, improved safety, telecommunications access and, indeed, security and other prescribed reasons. I can understand where you're coming from. I want to put that on the record, but we have a *Residential Tenancy Act* review happening right here, right now, that I have been encouraging members of the public to participate in. That is the place where we can have full discussion and debate with respect to those matters. The bill before us relates to toppling furniture to protect and provide safety for kids, such as Reef Kite in Western Australia, who sadly passed away and was a toddler.

I have released the modernising of the *Residential Tenancy Act*. That's now available for public comment and feedback, and I encourage that. We've had some debate in this place earlier last year and there was some ambition to get that done as soon as possible. I understand that. I take my role very seriously and so the department's worked hard to pull together that discussion paper. It has been released. There will be several months of opportunity for feedback from tenants' unions and others. From a government perspective, we are hoping to achieve improvements to the law but still a balanced approach. I absolutely respect, through a democracy, the opportunity for people to put forward their thoughts and views. Then we, as legislators, have to try and do what is best for Tasmania. In short, a balanced approach, I think, is the best, but let's get the feedback. We'll work our way through that, and I've indicated that before the end of the year we hope to have something that we can put back to the parliament where we can have an excellent debate and discussion about what's best for Tasmania.

We've just had on the weekend the importance of housing in Tasmania. We've talked more generally about the importance of having a roof over the head. I want to say thank you to the Premier and the Prime Minister for the announcement of a thousand potential new homes. That's what we're looking at Dowsing Point. That's very encouraging. You have a federal Labor government working with a state Liberal government, working together to get the job done. I see that as very encouraging and hopefully others in this place do as well.

I'm concerned, if we have an imbalanced approach, then a potential perverse outcome could occur where there's in fact less roofs over people's heads rather than more roofs. Of course we want more roofs over people's heads in Tasmania. I want to recognise this is not just a similar situation here in Tasmania - not just happening here in Tassie. It's happening all around Australia. Right at the moment with the high interest rates, we've just had a federal budget where frankly the impact on rentals, I'm very concerned in terms of the impact of that budget on rentals going forward or the lack of them, it's going to put a lot of pressure on the rentals.

I'm likewise very concerned about the high interest rates, as I've said before, in terms of the inflation dragon getting free. Who pays the price? Well, I know who pays the price. It's the

Tasmanian residents and householders, and likewise small businesses pay through the nose with higher interest rates. It's really tough for them to get on -

Mr Bayley - Why aren't you worried about short-stay accommodation, minister?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, you have raised that. You've consistently -

Mr Bayley - It's something you can do something about.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable member, through the Chair, please.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, the honourable member has raised short-stay accommodation. You've also raised no-cause eviction in Question Time, I think last week, and again today in the debate. I respect all those arguments and views that you've put. As I say, we've got a public debate, an open discussion, on the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*. That is the place. Please put in your submissions, make comments, et cetera.

Mr Bayley - Not for short stay it isn't.

Mr BARNETT - Hmm?

Mr Bayley - It's not in place for the short-stay conversation. That's outside of that space.

Mr BARNETT - What we've got today is - I'm just talking about - we've got the toppling furniture legislation, which I think we're all agreed on, but then we've got amendments from the Greens and the member for Clark. I'm just being upfront that we don't support the amendments from the Greens, or the amendments from the member for Clark for the reasons that it's, in short, out of scope. We think they're legitimate. We appreciate the intention. It's important to have that debate, but right here, right now with the toppling furniture legislation, now is not the time.

I've made mention of the scope of that, in terms of the Greens, in terms of extra scope regarding disability access, energy efficiency, telecommunications access, security, all of that has consequence. You're talking about drilling, cabling, fixtures, external equipment involving cameras, security, door bells, locks, lighting. It's not just a piece of furniture being attached to a wall in terms of making that good and the consequences that flow from that.

With respect to the member for Clark, and I can address these in committee, not a problem, but in terms of replacing the concept of permanent damage with significant damage, all of this has consequences. Again, in short, as a government, we want to get a balance and a balanced approach, but now is probably not the time, that's my point, to put forward and debate and then try and pass this in this particular bill. There will be a time, I've already given that commitment. We're going through a discussion process, get that feedback and then we'll bring back to the parliament and indeed democracy. Everybody can bring back to the parliament, whatever they wish.

In short, thank you very much for the contribution. Thank you for your encouragement regarding the actual bill before us. I look forward to progressing further in the committee stage. Having said that, I commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

**RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AMENDMENT (SAFETY MODIFICATIONS)
BILL 2025 (No. 59)**

In Committee

[5.21 p.m.]

DEPUTY CHAIR - It appears that the minister's new clause A to follow clause 3 seeks to replace the existing clause 4. Can I confirm that's the case with the minister?

While the practice of the Committee of the Whole House is for a new clause to be moved to the point of consideration at which the new clause is to be inserted in the bill, on this occasion the proposed new clause seeks to replace the existing clause 4. Accordingly, the committee must first agree to remove clause 4 before the minister can move a new clause in its stead. I also note that the member for Clark, Mr Bayley, has circulated amendments to clause 4.

Erskine May, at paragraph 29.29 of the 25th edition, notes the order in which amendments should be moved. Amendments to a clause are considered before an amendment to leave out a clause and substitute another. Accordingly, the committee will need to consider clause 4 and any amendments to it before it considers whether it should be left out and a new clause substituted.

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

**Clause 4 -
Section 3 amended (Interpretation)**

Mr BAYLEY - Chair, thank you. Clause 4 - this is the clause that describes and defines the safety modification that we're enshrining into the bill and we absolutely support that. This is, indeed, also the clause where we have amendments to expand the capacity for renters to make minor modifications to their properties. These are minor modifications that they would seek to do to improve the safety of their property, to improve disability access, and the member for Clark gave the example of a handrail in a shower, to improve the energy efficiency - I spoke to the fact that Tasmania's rental stock has some of the poorest thermal properties and energy efficiency of any in the country - security and telecommunications. These are all pretty fundamental rights and expectations, I believe, of a tenant.

We had worked up an extensive set of amendments, had worked with them with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) to get them absolutely tickety-boo in terms of fitting in with this bill. They are backed in, as I said in my second reading speech, by long advocacies from a range of groups. I'll read them in again because when we proposed to move this amendment last time round, we were explicitly written to by Council of the Ageing Tasmania, Shelter Tasmania, Disability Voices Tasmania, TasCOSS, Anglicare, Youth Network of Tasmania, the Tas Uni Students' Association, Tenants' Union, and the Migrant Resource Centre. These have widespread community advocacy organisation support and they would make lives better.

Minister, it is disappointing - your amendment has come out of the blue today. I can't find it in my inbox. I might be missing something. It wasn't reflected in your second reading that was on the website. Consequently, the amendments that OPC has crafted for us are for the original clause 4 and not for your proposed clause A, where they would logically follow. In the time I've had, I haven't found a way to quickly, in a hand-written way, amend ours to fit into your clause A. I acknowledge that I could move these now, we could vote on them, I've heard from Dr Broad that Labor would vote against these amendments again this time round, and I've heard from you minister, that you would vote against these again.

I accept they are destined to fail, and in the interests of the time of the House and making sure that we work through this rapidly, I'm perfectly happy to put them and go to a division and record Labor and Liberal's opposition to them, but seeing as we're going to have a whole new clause A, seeing as our amendments ultimately will need to be redrafted, I'm happy to sit on the amendments in this Chamber and work with my colleague, Cassy O'Connor, in the other place to put them up there. We'll have a similar test and the reality is they were going to fail in this Chamber so it would be up to the other place anyway.

I urge you, minister, to give us a bit of a heads up. Maybe the email went to staff and I completely accept that, but sometimes staff aren't here on days like today, so I certainly haven't had any notification of your proposed amendment.

These are things that need to happen. You might be reviewing the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*. We will work with the community, we will work with those community service organisations to advocate strongly into that process to make sure these kinds of changes are picked up, if indeed they're not passed on amendment in the other place. These are the kind of reforms that need to happen. They're pretty simple, they're pretty innocuous and for the life of me I can't understand why this Chamber and the Labor Party can't support them.

The ALP government in the ACT has passed these kinds of modifications in the past and it is part of their legislation. It's broadly consistent with the read of Labor Party policy so it's incredibly disappointing that Dr Broad signalled that they wouldn't support them irrespective.

In saying that, I acknowledge that they will fail this House. I don't want to consume the House's time in going through that process when we're going to have a whole new clause where these amendments would logically sit. With that I won't move them, but I will commit to making sure that we do so in the other place and they are considered up there.

Mr BARNETT - I wanted to say a couple of things in response. To say thank you very much for your gracious and considerate approach in response to your understanding and reading of the situation, with regard to Labor's position and our position.

First of all, I appreciate that. It's gracious and kind of you to do it, very thoughtful. I did share earlier in regard to some of the concerns we had around the impact, good intent and laudable objectives that you have before us. You've outlined those; I've likewise outlined the modernising of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* process allowing for discussion and debate.

To be clear, we support the intent and understand where you're coming from, but it needs good and careful consideration and I use the example of the telecommunications access could involve drilling, cabling, fixtures, external equipment. Security could involve cameras, doorbells, locks, lighting or other devices and accessibility modifications with regard to

disability access can also range from simple fixtures through to more substantial changes to bathrooms, entrances, ramps, or structural elements. These are not all equivalent to anchoring a piece of furniture to a wall. They should be dealt with carefully and comprehensively and the modernising of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* review is the right place to consider those matters that allow tenants, owners, advocates, real estate professionals, trades, insurers, disability representatives, strata bodies and broader community to have their say.

The amendments also risk increasing pressure on TASCAT. That may be appropriate if designed carefully, but it should not be done without proper consideration of the resources, process, time-frames and the likely number of disputes.

I wanted to put that on the record. I can say other things as well, but thank you very much for your considered approach and gracious willingness to progress and I'm more than happy to respond to the member for Clark in due course during committee stage.

Ms JOHNSTON - I recognise that the Deputy Leader of the Greens has indicated that he won't be moving the amendments to this particular clause now and we'll leave it for the honourable member in the other place to do, but that provides time and I want to put on the record the importance of giving consideration to what is proposed here. The purpose of this bill is to address safety issues and concerns and to avoid the risk of injury and death as specified in in clause 4 of the bill. Safety modifications is defined in relation to premises meaning:

The affixing of an item of furniture to those premises for the purposes of avoiding the risk of injury or death to a person from the movement of that furniture.

I would ask that Labor in particular and the opposition take this time, this opportunity, to consider broadening that definition from not just furniture, to the risk of injury and death arising from other circumstances and, as I indicated in my earlier contribution, it's so important when we're talking about housing to be treating houses like a home. They are a home, and where someone with a disability, mobility issues, for instance, cannot access their home appropriately, it's not a home. It's just a roof over someone's head. We're talking about modifications to grab rails in showers so someone can access their shower in their home; safety modifications to include a grab rail at the front door where there's a couple of steps, for instance, you and I might be able to access that, but someone with mobility issues might not be able to access their own front door in their home.

It's not a huge stretch to amend this particular bill, which is specifically about safety modifications, to include safety modifications that might mean that someone can access their home in a safe way, whether that be because they're avoiding toppling furniture, whether that be because they're got aides to assist them in accessing their home, whether that might be for security reasons or other reasons; it's not a stretch within the context of this bill and the purpose of this bill to consider those amendments.

I recognise they're not going to be debated in this particular House but I think there's an excellent opportunity for the opposition to take in good faith and with notice, obviously, the intent of the Greens amendments to this and consider in the other place.

Clause 4 negatived.

NEW CLAUSE A TO FOLLOW CLAUSE 3

Mr BARNETT - Chair, I move -

New Clause A to follow clause 3.

A. Section 3 amended (Interpretation)

Section 3(1) of the Principal Act is amended by inserting the following definition after the definition of residential tenancy agreement:

safety modification, in relation to premises, means the affixing of an item of furniture to those premises for the purposes of avoiding the risk of injury or death to a person from the movement of that furniture;

To speak to that amendment that I mentioned earlier we're moving today and that we're seeking to reduce the number of definitions included in the bill from three to one and the bill currently includes definitions for 'approved form' and 'tribunal'. These definitions are no longer needed as they were added to the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* by the recent Pets Amendment Bill, so they're there. By removing these two definitions, we're avoiding the duplication of identical definitions in the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*. Put simply, we're removing duplication, not changing the effect of the bill, so I put that amendment to the committee.

Mr BAYLEY - Chair, we accept the premise upon which this amendment is moved in terms of removing duplication; there's no need for that and it makes sense for us to clean it up here as best as possible so that it's not left to the other place. I say again, it's disappointing to see this kind of, effectively, tidying up being done by the government on its own bill and it kind of precluding and really mucking with the opportunity to move other amendments as were flagged. This is just a foreshadow. This is now the clause where we will seek to move the amendments that boost the capacity for tenants to make minor modifications in relation to safety, security, telecommunications, disability access and the other issues I've mentioned. In saying that, the logic for dropping those other two definitions is sound.

New clause A agreed to.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Clause 6 -

Sections 54A, 54B and 54C inserted

DEPUTY CHAIR - Because there are a number of amendments being proposed, we will work in the order that the list is here and we'll start with the member for Clark, Ms Johnston.

Ms JOHNSTON - Chair, this is where the rubber hits the road in terms of the bill, in terms of what safety and modifications are permitted. In this section it defines what permanent damage is. I have an amendment to that, which I have circulated to a number of members, relating to the definition of 'permanent damage' and subsequent amendments to the rule for that. I also have another amendment in relation to grounds for refusal. I will deal with those separately because they are discreet parts of this clause.

I move my first amendment -

First amendment

Page 5, proposed new section 54A, subsection (1), definition of permanent damage.

Leave out the definition.

Insert instead the following definition:

'significant damage' means -

- (a) damage resulting from safety modifications to premises that involve structural changes to the premises; or
- (b) damage to premises in respect of which rectification, repair or removal of the damage is not reasonably practicable; or
- (c) damage to premises that are entered provisionally or permanently on the Tasmanian Heritage Register kept under section 15 of the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*; or
- (d) a type of damage prescribed for purposes of this definition.

I understand that the Greens won't move their amendment to clause 2 because that was part of 4.

Mr BAYLEY - That was consequential -

Ms JOHNSTON - Consequential to clause 4?

Mr BAYLEY - That's right.

Ms JOHNSTON - The second amendment there, same page, same proposed new section, subsection (3) -

Second amendment

Same page, same proposed new section, subsection (3), after 'likely to cause'.

Leave out 'permanent'.

Insert instead 'significant'.

As I indicated in my second reading contribution, these amendments are to provide greater clarity in relation to what damage we are referring to. The issue that has been put to me about the words 'permanent damage' and the way that is currently defined in the bill is that really anything can be remedied or rectified. It's very hard for tenants or landlords to understand

what permanent damage might be. As an example, a hole in the wall can be fixed. Those kinds of things can be fixed. Greater clarity is needed to understand what that might be.

The Tenants' Union and other jurisdictions have grappled with this very issue. My amendment is based on their learnings that 'significant damage' and the provisions I would put in there refer to work that involves structural change to the premises. People could understand what that might mean. If you're taking out a wall or moving a door, for instance, that's a structural change. If repair to any damage caused by the work would require substantial remediation - if you knocked a very large hole in the wall, for instance. It is damage to heritage-listed property, as already provided for in the bill, or is damage that is prescribed. That provides the catch-all purposes there, as the bill does currently.

This is important because there will be tenants ringing the Tenants' Union, landlords seeking advice from their real estate agents, trying to interpret what permanent damage means. My suggested amendment provides important clarification around that in terms of what is significant damage. I believe that is more useful when looking at the practicalities of implementing this bill. I encourage members to support this to provide greater clarity to the community. It certainly would include permanent damage because you could imagine that structural damage to a premise would be permanent, but provides that additional clarity. I encourage members to support both these amendments. Should they succeed, I will move subsequent amendments within this particular clause and [inaudible] that one as well.

Mr BARNETT - Chair, I thank the honourable member for putting forward the amendment. We won't support the amendment. We support practical safety modifications that reduce the risk of serious injury or death from toppling furniture. That's why the bill is before us.

But the amendments the honourable member is putting forward, the first two in particular, don't simply tidy up the bill, they change the balance of the bill materially. The bill is intended to strike a balance between the safety of tenants and the legitimate rights and responsibilities of property owners.

The bill has been drafted to deal with a specific and serious safety issue. I've mentioned Reef Kite from Western Australia and the flow-on impact on serious injury or death for toddlers and/or others. It provides a pathway for tenants to make safety modifications while preserving appropriate protections where a modification could cause permanent damage, or where refusal is reasonable in the circumstances.

The amendments before us would substantially narrow the protections for landlords in replacing the concept of 'permanent damage' with 'significant damage', the amendments create a different and broader test by limiting the grounds on which an owner may refuse consent to a shortlist of prescribed matters. The amendments remove the ordinary ability to consider the full circumstances of a particular property. Changing the term to 'significant damage' introduces a number of terms that are not defined. It could be ambiguous or have specific and technical meaning in some context; for example, structural change has been referred to by the honourable member. It is not clear what structural change to the premises may be. Similarly, (b) refers to damage where:

Rectification, repair, or removal of the damage is not reasonably practical.

This is inherently subjective and relatively complex.

I could speak on some of the other amendments that the honourable member has, but I might leave it there on those two. That's why, unfortunately, the government won't be able to support those two amendments.

Mr BAYLEY - Deputy Chair, I thank the member for Clark, Ms Johnston, for bringing these forward. It feels like we're talking at cross-purposes here, minister. You're arguing for permanent damage and damage that cannot be remedied. Ms Johnston's amendment is about significant damage and defines it a little bit more specifically. I would have thought the effect of this clause would be almost the opposite of what you are arguing. This gives a lot more clarity. This is a logical amendment because permanent damage, damage that cannot be remedied, is illogical from a building perspective.

Ms Johnston - You can knock a house down and it can be rebuilt.

Mr BAYLEY - You can build a house from scratch. There's nothing there and you build it. All damage can be remedied. It may just mean that you need to rebuild the whole house or something. To me, this is a logical, definitional change and it actually gives more protections for both landlords and for tenants because it gives more clarity. I believe the definition, as written in the bill, is unworkable. You talked about this amendment being subjective. I think 'damage that cannot be remedied' is also subjective. That's why we have processes, tribunals and others to work this through. I commend Ms Johnston for bringing this motion forward. It makes perfect sense and improves the bill significantly.

Dr BROAD - Chair, I'm uncertain about this amendment. I just have a question for the minister. Is your argument that 'permanent damage' is defined, or has been defined, in a legal sense whereas 'significant damage' has not and, as such, would raise uncertainty in how that would operate?

Mr BARNETT - Chair, I sought further advice to confirm what I advised earlier. That is, that it does provide the tenant with more opportunity for seeking to change, and the opportunity to make that change. It does create question marks around that actual test. When you replace 'permanent damage' with 'significant damage', the amendments create a different and broader test.

By limiting the grounds on which an owner may refuse consent to a shortlist of prescribed matters, the amendments remove the ordinary ability to consider the full circumstances of the particular property. If you go from 'permanent' to 'significant', let's put it another way. The bill's been drafted to deal with a specific and serious safety issue. It provides a pathway for tenants to make safety modifications while preserving appropriate protections where a modification would cause permanent damage or where refusal is reasonable in the circumstances. The amendments would narrow those protections for the landlord. If you change 'permanent damage', as currently in the bill, to 'significant damage', that gives more scope to the tenant to exercise their discretion. It's not what I think the honourable member for Clark was intimating; it's actually the opposite, which is what I said in the first place.

Dr BROAD - I remain uncertain about this clause and its implications. At the moment, I don't think I can support the clause because of that uncertainty -

Ms Johnston - I can fix that for you in a tick.

Dr BROAD - Maybe. If this clause fails and somebody in the upper House is encouraged to put the motion again, I urge the government to do a fuller briefing on the implications of the difference between 'significant' and 'permanent' so that members in the other place could make a decision. Given the limited time we have and the ability to seek a more detailed briefing, I would suggest that is probably the way forward. I'm not ruling out Labor supporting it in the upper House. I just think we need to be briefed properly on this specific question.

Mr BAYLEY - I have a question for the minister in relation to 54A(1)(a), 'damage that cannot be remedied'. Can you give us an example of some damage that cannot be remedied?

A member - A bomb.

Mr BAYLEY - Apart from a fire.

Ms Johnston - You could rebuild after a fire, though. Everything can be fixed. You can knock a wall down and remedy it.

Dr Broad - It's a legal question, has it been defined?

Mr BARNETT - One example that I think is quite a good one is Tasmania/Hobart sandstone walls - drilling holes into an internal sandstone wall. Frankly, you know how serious that could be in terms of the damage that could be caused. It could be very serious indeed.

Ms Johnston - That's structural.

Mr BARNETT - Well, that's a pretty good example and it's a bit of a case study.

Ms JOHNSTON - I thank members for their contributions. I think, whilst I appreciate the intent of the clarification the Attorney-General just tried to give with that sandstone example, if it created significant damage that was a structural issue and couldn't be repaired, then it is captured by my amendment. If it can be repaired and the hole plugged, for instance, it's rectified, it's remedied under this particular provision as the bill stands. So, I go to the point there that, under this particular definition in the bill, 'damage that cannot be remedied' - it's very hard to think of a particular example that cannot be remedied.

Mr Mitchell - Heritage implication?

Ms JOHNSTON - If it's a heritage one, it's covered by the provisions in my amendment as well. If it's knocking down a wall, a wall could be rebuilt again. If it's drilling a hole, that can be plugged, fixed up and patched up. If it's knocking down the entire house, you can remedy that by rebuilding the house. The point of this is that we want to make sure that it's really clear to landlords and tenants that we're talking here about what significant damage is. That's more clearly defined for the purposes of implementing the bill in terms of damage resulting from modifications that involves structural changes to the premises: the damage to the premises in respect of rectification, repair, removal of the damage is not reasonable or practical.

Again, going back to the Attorney-General's point about the hole in the sandstone wall - if the argument from the Attorney-General is that that's not reasonably or practicably remedied,

then my amendment covers that. As the bill stands, it could be rectified. I'd argue that the purpose that the Attorney-General is trying to achieve with this bill is better achieved by my amendment, which has clarity around it, than what is currently in the bill, which effectively means that anyone could argue, 'I can rectify or remedy just about anything.'

Amendments negated.

Ms JOHNSTON - Deputy Chair, I move amendment 3, which I have circulated previously -

Third amendment

Page 6, same proposed new section, subsection (5), paragraph (a).

Leave out the paragraph.

Insert instead the following paragraph:

- (a) must not be refused unless the refusal is on one or more of the following grounds:
 - (i) the safety modification would disturb, or be likely to disturb, material containing asbestos;
 - (ii) the safety modification would affect significantly, or be likely to affect significantly, premises that are entered provisionally or permanently on the Tasmanian Heritage Register kept under section 15 of the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*;
 - (iii) the safety modification would contravene by-laws, made by a body corporate under section 90 of the *Strata Titles Act 1998*, that apply to the premises;
 - (iv) a prescribed ground; and

The purposes of this particular amendment is regarding a safety modification that requires the owner's consent. This subsection removes reference to 'must not be refused reasonably' and replaces, again, with greater clarity around specific grounds about when that might occur. If we're talking about what the whole purpose of this bill is for, it's for life saving, avoiding the likelihood of risk, then we need to be quite specific about when grounds might be refused. This is very clear, obviously, if you're disturbing material containing asbestos, then that is a very reasonable ground on which to refuse.

In reflecting what's in the bill already, safety modification would or be likely to affect a heritage-listed property. That's logical. Or if the safety modification contravenes by-laws in a strata title, it provides greater clarity and certainty around the 'reasonable grounds for refusal' while still achieving the objective of ensuring that we have provisions which ensure that consent cannot be withheld unreasonably, and provides clarity around that.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

We are intending, with this bill, to make sure that people can affix furniture to prevent it from toppling, to avoid the risk of injury in life. That surely must be paramount in our considerations. I think this particular amendment clarifies what 'unreasonable grounds' might be and they're very specific.

Mr BARNETT - The government is, again, not supportive of this amendment and probably more so because the amendment to the clause adds further complexity. It is really quite complex. Where you've got 'the making of a safety modification is likely to cause significant damage' and a tenant therefore seeks the consent of the owner, the owner can only refuse consent on one of those four grounds, as the honourable member's outlined in the amendment, which I won't go through, but there's four specific grounds.

Even if the safety modification would likely cause damage that involves structural changes or damage where repair or rectification is not reasonably practical, the owner can only refuse consent unless one of those four grounds existed. So, not only are the amendments, in my view, complex, they also appear to set a high bar for consent to be refused. By contrast, the government bill at the table centres around permanent damage, which is, at its core, damage that cannot be remedied, then the bill requires that where a safety modification is likely to cause permanent damage, the tenant must ask the consent of the owner and the owner must not unreasonably refuse consent.

The government believes that this provides a simpler and clearer pathway for such safety modifications to be made by tenants. The fact that an owner cannot unreasonably refuse consent provides flexibility where the presence of asbestos or strata title rules may well be a valid consideration. However, there may well be other valid considerations that cannot all be predicted and itemised in the legislation.

These changes are not minor, I put it through you, Chair. They are significant. They're wide-ranging. Changes to residential tenancy law can have real consequences for rental availability and property owner confidence. We've got to get the balance right. They should not be made by amendment without comprehensive consultation with the real estate sector, property owners, tenants, community organisations, other affected stakeholders. The government's not saying these matters can never be considered. The government's saying they should be considered through a process, and through the process in terms of the modernising of the *Residential Tenancy Act* which is currently underway, where the full range of impacts can be worked through. That's the responsible approach, in our view.

We should not use a targeted bill about safety modifications to make broader change to the residential tenancy framework without proper consultation. Trying to get a balanced approach. In light of the time, I'll pause there and thank the honourable member, but we won't support the amendment.

Mr BAYLEY - Thank you, Chair, and thanks to the member for Clark for moving this amendment. I am persuaded. It does give additional, specific grounds in relation to refusal. Really, the 'must not be refused unreasonably' is pretty nebulous and open to significant interpretation, whereas this obviously drills it down to specific reasons, which is exactly what we want - specificity and some real clarity when it comes to the -

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT

Response to Petition - No. 139 of 2026

Answer to Question - GBE RTI Public Disclosure Logs

[6.00 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Treasurer) - Acting Speaker, I table a response to petition No. 139 of 2026.

Earlier in Question Time today, the Leader of the Greens asked the Premier, and the Premier agreed, to provide further information in relation to disclosure logs on RTIs. The further answer is as follows. On 14 April 2026, the Premier wrote to all government business enterprises (GBEs) to remind them of their obligation under section 231A of the *Right To Information Act 2009* to maintain policies and procedures in relation to the disclosure of information and to encourage them to amend their organisations' policies and procedures to ensure as much consistency as possible with the whole-of-government information disclosure policy and procedures.

This included bringing their attention to the government's requirement to publish Right to Information disclosures on disclosure logs within 48 hours of release to the applicant, where legal and appropriate. I'm advised that as of today, TasTAFE, Hydro and Sustainable Timber Tasmania are publishing disclosure logs. Further, I'm advised Tasracing, Aurora Energy and the Public Trustee will introduce public disclosure logs. Frankly, I'm disappointed the remaining GBEs have not complied and have not indicated their intention to comply.

Currently, the *Right To Information Act 2009* does not require disclosure logs. There is no way to mandate their existence or timeframe for implementation within public authorities. I have today written, and I stress when I say 'I', I am speaking on behalf of the Premier, so the Premier today instructed the Justice Department to examine amendments to the act which will compel the enterprises to maintain an active and up-to-date public disclosure log.

Constituent Question - Fair Pay for Nurses

[6.03 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, I ran out of time for my constituent question this morning, so just for clarity, I will read it out again. I only had a paragraph to go, but I think it deserves the full reading.

My question is to the minister for Health. A number of Braddon constituents have raised with me the issue of nurses being paid less than allied health professionals for doing the same job. The Tasmanian Industrial Commission case of *Chamley v Minister* administering the *State Service Act* ruled that nurses must be paid the same as allied health professionals for doing the same job by applying the multidisciplinary allowance set out in the Nurses and Midwives Heads of Agreement 2010.

The Industrial Commission decision is binding and the enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) is binding, yet other nurses are still being underpaid compared to their allied health professional colleagues, and there's been no offer of back pay.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

Disappointingly, the Health Department still provides incorrect information to nurses when these underpayments are questioned. Furthermore, identical positions are still being advertised on Seek, with ads for nurses being offered less pay than ads for allied health professionals. Same job, same position descriptions, yet different pay. Is the minister going to enforce the enterprise bargaining agreement and the Industrial Commission's decision to prevent continual underpayments. or is she waiting for a class action?

I say this because what actually seems to be the case is that we've had one Industrial Commission ruling and instead of that being applied retrospectively to all the other nurses captured in a similar way, the advice from the department is that it doesn't apply. Does this mean that every nurse who believes this applies to them, that they are being underpaid compared to their allied health professional colleagues, will also have to go to the Tasmanian Industrial Commission to seek redress? I don't believe this is the intent of how our legislation and our enterprise bargaining agreement should work. There should be greater clarity on who this applies to and they should be back-paid.

The issue, though, is that this agreement goes back all the way. The nurses and midwives heads of agreement goes all the way back to 2010, and that may be a significant number. However, it does not change the responsibility of the government to pay nurses the same rate as allied health professionals for doing the same job.

I also want to look at what's going on at the moment with the Premier in his response to dumping the TasInsure policy, which was his signature policy during the last election campaign. What I think the government is doing, especially Mr Rockliff, is what I would call a 3D defence. A 3D defence is 'deny and double down'. That is exactly what the Premier continues to do. He denies that there has been a campaign pledge broken, that he has absolutely backflipped on his TasInsure policy. It looks absolutely nothing like the policy he was 100 per cent committed to only a few months ago.

Instead of acknowledging a broken promise and a failure to deliver - because it was undeliverable - he's going the 3D defence: deny and double down. Deny that it's a broken promise and then double down, saying that it would have the same result. This is complete nonsense. What the Premier has announced is not the \$250 saving on insurance that he promised. He highlights that there is a significant problem. Yes, there is a significant problem in insurance. But his solution is not a solution. It is just spin, and doubling down like he did in question time is a simple denial of truth. We are getting to see this regularly now.

The last time we were in parliament, we had the Treasurer, I believe, saying that there was no bailout for TT-Line on the offing, only for there to be \$507 million handed over in the next budget to TT-Line, which for all intents and purposes is a bailout. Why can't this government be transparent instead of denying one week and then handing over half-a-billion dollars the next? That's not transparency, that's not honesty. It brings into question what this government is all about. Integrity seems to be optional, and they seem to be heavily relying on this thing I call the 3D defence: deny, double down.

Rwandan Genocide Commemoration

[6.08 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight with a heavy heart to talk about a commemoration I attended last month. I will also talk about the inspirational work being done by stalwarts in Tasmania's Rwandan community. I welcome into the Chamber Rwandan Tasmanians Faina, Ines and Aubert, and thank them for coming in. I also acknowledge the work of my colleague Cassy O'Connor who, as a former member for Clark, has spent two decades supporting the Rwandan community in Tasmania, remembering their genocide and calling out racism, hatred and genocide at every possible opportunity.

The Kwibuka commemoration was one of the most moving and potent I have ever attended. 'Kwibuka' means to remember in Kinyarwanda and is the official period of remembrance for the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. Across a terrifying 100 days, starting in April 1994, over a million Tutsis were murdered in the most brutal and barbaric fashion. Men, women and children were butchered by their own neighbours, colleagues and friends as Hutus turned on their Tutsi compatriots. Between 150,000 and 250,000 Tutsi women were raped. This is an atrocity that shocked the world and reminded us again of the evil we humans are capable of inflicting upon one another.

We collectively condemn and lament every genocide or atrocity, and say never again. But it happens again, even today in Gaza, Sudan and Yemen.

Kwibuka is anchored by the themes remember, unite and renew. The Hobart event followed these with historical context, personal stories, second-generation testimony and ally advocacy. Aubert patiently talked through Rwanda's peaceful history, the age-old harmony of Hutu, 85 per cent of the population, Tutsi, 14 per cent of the population and Twa, 1 per cent of the population, living together, not as separate distinct tribes but as social classes of the same people. It was colonisation that poisoned the well, first with the Germans and then, after World War I, the Belgians pitting people against people and building generations of animosity, jealousy and hatred among Rwandans in a classic divide-and-conquer approach.

Following independence in 1962, discontent turned violent and eventually manifested into civil war in the 1980s and 1990s, forcing half-a-million Rwandans to flee to neighbouring countries as desperate refugees. In April 1994, the deaths of the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi in a rocket attack on their plane plunged Rwanda into a nationwide frenzy of massacre and mass graves.

In an incredible act of bravery, Bosco, a Rwandan living in Melbourne, told his personal story of survival, the only child in a family of nine to live. Hunted for weeks after the murder of his parents and siblings, Bosco endured three days left for dead in a mass grave. He eventually escaped into the care of compassionate Hutus who sheltered and saved him. Even in the depths of despair and deep evil, there is humanity, help and hope.

Lieven is a second-generation survivor now living in Sydney, who both MCed the Kwibuka and testified about the transferred trauma he has endured as the son of survivors. Even though spared the initial 1994 genocide, he had to evade ongoing atrocities in the following years as those culpable for the genocide turned again to violence, seeking to erase any testimony. Lieven escaped the machete as a one-year-old, eventually seeking refuge and the opportunity of a new life in Australia. He is a very impressive young man. He had the whole

town hall in tears without exception. He then handed over to a distraught Cassy O'Connor to talk, from the perspective of an ally, of the pride we have in welcoming Rwandan families into our community, and the joy and diversity they and every other migrant brings when they arrive here to live amongst us. From here, Rwandans work to remember the genocide.

In November last year, I participated in a small event hosted by the Lord Mayor where Faina presented the results of her Churchill Fellowship, titled 'Exploring international models for establishing a documentation and healing centre in Tasmania to educate the public about the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda'. Faina, a survivor, has undertaken extensive research across Rwanda, Cambodia, Belgium and France examining how documentation and healing centres can preserve genocide survivor testimonies, promote education and foster peace and reconciliation.

Faina dreams of a permanent genocide exhibition here in lutruwita/Tasmania, home of the Black War against the Palawa, a primary textbook example of genocide referenced in 1944 by Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin when he first coined the term. Such is the infamy and appropriateness of a genocide memorial in this state. Faina's research and desire for a permanent memorial to the Rwandan genocide is something we should all be able to support as evil humans demonstrate their deplorable capacity to repeat history and wage unimaginable crimes on each other.

Neighbourhood House Week Tasmanian Arts Funding

[6.13 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Environment) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to acknowledge and thank our excellent Neighbourhood House network. Last week was Neighbourhood House Week and I had the pleasure to visit a few houses. On Thursday, I had the opportunity to visit the Derwent Valley Neighbourhood House and meet the house managers, Dianne and Lexia, as well as some of the many volunteers who support the Derwent Valley community. A little callout to Honey who was there. We shared a lot of interesting hairstyles, which was great fun. Thank you for hosting the Premier, Deputy Premier and myself. Thank you to the Derwent Valley community for all the great work you do.

On Friday I also had the pleasure to have morning tea and spend some time with the many members and volunteers at the West Moonah Neighbourhood House. Under the excellent guidance of house manager Mary Coulson, the West Moonah Neighbourhood House staff and volunteers are doing a great job servicing and caring for the local community.

Following on from Neighbourhood House Week, today I returned to the West Moonah House to announce that the Tasmanian Liberal Government is continuing our commitment to the Neighbourhood House network through almost \$55 million of investment across the forward Estimates. This includes over \$46 million for the 34 Houses, \$6 million the House Capital Investment Program and almost \$2 million for the peak body Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania, which is operating under the current guidance of Acting CEO Michelle Ewington. Further, I had the pleasure to announce that HATCH - the Health Action Team Central Highlands at Ouse - that were joining the Neighbourhood Houses network this week. Congratulations to HATCH president, Dr Pamela Turton-Turner and the whole HATCH team. This is an exciting announcement for everybody involved, local members as well, of course.

I want to just say a special shout-out to all of our volunteers as we recognise National Volunteer Week this week. Just before I move on to National Volunteer Week, I did cheekily also thank Carlo Di Falco for his advocacy as well. I know it was something that was very important to you, along with all of our local members as well.

Turning to National Volunteer Week this week, we often forget that many events - and we shouldn't forget - that many events, music festivals, sporting clubs, St John Ambulance staff, parks teams, and the list goes on - these things couldn't go ahead or operate without the many, many hours volunteers contribute. The Volunteering Tasmania team does a great job in working with, and for, volunteers across our state. A special shout-out to the CEO Mel Blake, who I know is travelling to Canberra tomorrow - that's Wednesday - for the inaugural Australian Volunteer of the Year Award to be hosted by the Governor-General. I wish our Tasmanian nominee, Christine Chilcott OAM, all the best for the awards ceremony. Christine has been volunteering and contributing to many services from sporting to aged care and education across northern Tasmania for over 30 years.

Turning my attention quickly to the arts. I would also like to acknowledge the fantastic announcement that I was able to make with the Premier on Monday. I'm absolutely thrilled that the Tasmanian government is delivering a major boost to the arts - our creative sector, the state's creative economy - with over \$10 million going into our creative industries initiative as part of the 2026-27 Budget. This is really fantastic news. A \$10 million boost to Tasmania's creative industries is such a powerful statement about who we are and where we're going and our ability to tell those truly Tasmanian stories. This investment is about people, our artists, our storytellers, filmmakers, musicians, and creators whose work shapes our identity and shares Tasmania's voice around the world. It's about giving them the confidence to dream bigger, plan further, and to create without limits.

By lifting funding over the coming years, we're not only supporting creativity, we are driving jobs, innovation, and economic growth. We are positioning Tasmania as a leader, ensuring our investment stands strong nationally and signals that the arts matter here. From our growing screen industry to our vibrant cultural and performing arts communities, this initiative recognises that creativity is not a side story; it is central to our future. Tasmania's stories are unique, our talent is world-class, and today we are backing that talent with action. I always love to say the future is bright and it will be created right here.

Advocates for Workplace Safety

[6.19 p.m.]

Prof RAZAY (Bass) - Honourable Deputy Speaker, today I acknowledge a couple whose bravery and determination has transformed personal tragedy into a lasting legacy for Tasmania. More than 20 years ago, Guy and Karen Hudson suffered every parent's worst nightmare. Their 16-year-old son, Matthew, was killed at Launceston's Killafaddy meat works when the forklift he was driving tipped over. Their Matty, a six-foot-tall, blue-eyed boy with a heart of gold, was killed just six weeks out from his 17th birthday. Such unimaginable grief could easily have become unbearable silence, but Guy and Karen Hudson turned their grief into purpose. They chose to speak out about Matty, becoming passionate advocates for workplace safety and for the dignity of workers and their families. Their message is every worker is more than a statistic, every worker is someone's husband, wife, parent, and child, and every life lost at work leaves

behind a family forever changed. Their vision has seen the establishment of the Workers Commemorative Park in Elizabeth Gardens in the Launceston suburb of Invermay, sitting next door to the UTAS Stadium precinct, designed by Niall Simpson, who first drafted the vision for the memorial while an employee at Launceston City Council and continued to work on the project well into retirement.

The park features a commemorative walk, symbolic structures and reflective installation representing the impact of workplace deaths across industries. The Workers Commemorative Park stands as Tasmania only memorial dedicated to all workers who have lost their lives on the job. It's more than a garden or a monument. It's a place for healing, a place of education. It has been set up as a space for remembering, honouring and protecting.

Guy Hudson says it might sound strange, but he wants it to be a happy place, a place where family can gather to celebrate the lives of loved one. For years, the Hudsons have campaigned tirelessly to secure support, funding and recognition for the project.

The road has not been easy. While navigating their own grief and web of legal cases, they have also navigated this project through delays, funding challenges and setbacks, but they have never given up. Their persistent keeping the campaign alive year after year. The project has received local, state, federal government funding and financial support from Unions Tasmania with secretary Jess Munday a staunch supporter of the memorial and the Hudsons.

It's not finished, and the Hudson's desperately want to see their vision completed with the installation of barbecues and toilet block. While similar projects interstate are attracting millions in funding - for example, Victoria has earmarked \$2.5 million for its workers' memorial - Guy Hudson estimates the Tasmania memorial has cost around \$600,000 to date and another \$3-400,000 is needed to see it completed.

The Hudsons are tired. Tired of asking for support only to be met by silence, red tape and a time indifference. Guy says that just getting consent to go ahead with the planning for the toilet block and BBQ area took over a year, so he's reaching out for help, for acknowledgement that the life of his son Matty matters; that the lives of all who have been lost at work matter.

He is asking for all tiers of government to band together to see the project finished. The Hudsons have given so much time and energy to change conversations around workplace safety across Tasmania. Through their advocacy, accountability and reform has been placed front and centre. Their courage has created lasting change.

From unimaginable loss, they have built a special place that provides comfort for so many families. It's time we help them complete their vision in honour of all Tasmanians who left for work and never returned home.

Karinya Youth Transitional Tenancy Program

[6.23 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, I rise this evening to speak about the Karinya Youth Transitional Tenancy program (KYTT). Karinya Youth Services is a Launceston based not-for-profit organisation that has provided support to young people experiencing

homelessness for more than 45 years, including crisis accommodation for young women and the Young Mums (KYM) program.

In August 2023, Karinya launched the KYTT pilot program with funding from the Tasmanian Community Fund. The program provides safe, affordable housing combined with intensive wrap-around case management for unaccompanied homeless young people aged 16 to 24. Wrap-around support is provided across a range of needs including helping young people engage in education and employment, building and strengthening family and support networks, connecting with community and culture and accessing clinical services to support their mental health and overall wellbeing.

Support is provided by a team that includes the case managers, a living and life skills educator, a tenancy officer and a programs team leader. Together they provide collaborative holistic support that is relationship-based. KYTT uses three frameworks for practice and each of these frameworks brings an essential element to the work of supporting young people and addresses their needs across many domains of life that start with housing but extend beyond housing to include: material basics, learning, participation, feeling valued, loved and safe, identity and culture, and physical and mental health.

The overall goal of KYTT is to help young people transition to independence through better health, education, employment and financial stability. As KYTT is a pilot project, Karinya have undertaken an evaluation of the service to identify the outcomes it has achieved. The evaluation was undertaken by Dr Carmel Hobbs and Associate Professor Catherine Robinson from UTAS. During the evaluation period, 80 young people sought entry to KYTT, 64 progressed to case plan stage, and 30 received housing through KYTT. I don't have time to go into all the outcomes of the evaluation, but the evidence was clear, quoting from the KYTT project report:

The KYTT program demonstrates that sustained housing stability improved wellbeing and growing independence are achievable for young people experiencing homelessness when housing is paired with flexible relational support and realistic program design.

Given the current level of need in the youth homelessness space in Tasmania, the service is providing critical support for young people who we know are at high risk of homelessness and often experience significant mental health issues.

I spoke recently about youth homelessness in Tasmania and I want to repeat some of the figures I shared then because they make the case for services like KYTT and the need for us to be investing in them more: Thirty-nine per cent of the homeless population in Tasmania is under the age of 25, while last year over 1400 unaccompanied young people presented to specialist homelessness services in Tasmania, including services like KYTT. According to TasCOSS, 61 per cent of people turned away from homelessness services in the last year were under 25 years of age. The need for more and better homelessness services in Tasmania is clear.

The KYTT pilot has demonstrated the benefit of providing holistic support to young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and the report highlighted another important aspect of youth support, and that's the importance of funding:

The findings highlight the need for continued investment in workforce capacity, referral pathways and a system coordination to strengthen outcomes over time.

Successful programs don't happen by accident. They need adequate resourcing and funding that enable their full, sustained implementation to create good outcomes that last. Programs like KYTT are worth funding; they make real, measurable differences for young people and I would go so far as to say they are transformational.

The Budget is days from being delivered; it should include funding for youth homelessness services, particularly those that include wrap-around support to address the broader needs of young people. This government like to talk about investment that grows our state - well, this is how we invest to grow our state: by investing in services that support people to grow, that support young people to grow. I hope we will see this kind of investment in Thursday's budget. Our young people deserve housing and support that sets them up to do well in life.

National Volunteer Week - Sea Rescue Dodges Ferry

[6.28 p.m.]

Ms HOWLETT (Lyons - Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events) - Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight during National Volunteer Week to recognise and celebrate the extraordinary contribution of our volunteer marine rescue units operating throughout Tasmania. During National Volunteer Week, we're reminded that volunteers are the backbone of our communities and that is truly evident in the in the service provided by our marine rescue crews.

The Premier and I had the privilege of visiting the incredible volunteers of Sea Rescue Dodges Ferry in April last month. Earlier this year, Sea Rescue Dodges Ferry celebrated their 35th anniversary since their formation, a milestone that speaks not just of longevity, but to sustain commitment from all of their volunteers.

Sea Rescue Dodges Ferry was born in 1991, after a series of incidents at sea led to concerns within the community that a rescue crew was needed. A group of about a dozen locals began meeting at a local home to discuss strategies and coordinate a rescue group with little more than determination and a borrowed boat. They trained weekly and soon moved to the local ambulance station, receiving support from the local police. Of the founding group, three remarkable volunteers remain to this day: Joe Fellani, Mark Donovan and Chris Hughes, demonstrating an extraordinary, decades-long commitment to service. Whilst they call Dodges Ferry their base, Sea Rescue, Dodges Ferry has a broad-reaching catchment, from Frederick-Henry Bay to Norfolk Bay, halfway out to Storm Bay, Marion Bay and even at times as far as Mercury Passage.

Many in this place would be aware that Sea Rescue, Dodges Ferry and their volunteers provided much-needed evacuations and community support during the devastating Dunalley bushfires. That is the true spirit of volunteering, stepping forward in times of crisis, expecting nothing in return, and often putting themselves in harm's way to help out others. Volunteer Marine Rescue Tasmania has units throughout the state, and I'd like to acknowledge and name each of these dedicated and professional units and their team of volunteers.

VMR units in St. Helens, Freycinet, Tamar, Kingborough, Ulverstone, Wynyard and Dodgers Ferry provide 24/7 on-water support and resources to vessels and boats. With about 5000 kilometres of coastline, keeping Tasmanians and visitors safe on the water is significant, but it's made possible because volunteers are willing to answer the call. Their efforts support more than 62,000 licenced recreational boat users right across Tasmania. Speaker, these volunteers give their time, their skills and they selflessly stepped forward to help one another.

During National Volunteer Week, it's only right that we pause to recognise and to thank them. To every volunteer marine rescue member across Tasmania, your work does not go unnoticed. You represent the very best of what volunteering means: service, commitment and community spirit. Speaker, I thank them very much for their contribution.

Launceston's Northern Suburbs Community Recreational Hub

[6.33 p.m.]

Mr FAIRS (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, tonight, I rise with enormous pride. Pride in the people of Launceston, pride in the north and pride in what happens when a community is given the facilities it deserves, because if there was ever proof of the old saying 'build it and they will come,' it's the brand new Northern Suburbs Community Recreational Hub at Mowbray. Come they have, in extraordinary numbers. In the month of April alone, in its first full month of operation, 38,000 people walk through the doors of the hub.

That's not a typo: 38,000 Tasmanians in just one month choosing to be active, connected and engaged. The hub's biggest single day saw 5008 people using the facility, an incredible demonstration of demand, enthusiasm and community-ownership. If you wanted to know when the hub is buzzing, it's simple: 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays. That hour has become the unofficial Hub Power Hour, with families, young people, workers and athletes all converging on the courts, the gym, the programs and the social spaces that make this place so special.

This is not just a building; it's a living, breathing community asset and the community has embraced it so wholeheartedly that it's become a point of pride. Litter free, graffiti free and respected by all who use it. That tells you everything you need to know about how much this facility means to the people of Launceston's northern suburbs. I want to pay tribute to the outstanding co-managers of the hub, PCYC North and the Northern Tasmanian Netball Association.

Their partnership is a model of what can be achieved when local organisations are empowered to lead. They have created a welcoming, safe and vibrant environment that caters for everyone. From elite athletes to young people looking for a fresh start, and speaking of young people, I'm especially proud of the hub's work with the government agencies to support vulnerable and at-risk youth. Through structured 10-week programs, these young Tasmanians are reconnecting with community, building confidence and finding purpose through sport, recreation and positive mentorship. This is exactly the kind of early intervention that changes lives, and it's happening right now in Mowbray.

The hub is also rapidly becoming a magnet for sport at a national level. We have already seen competition netball played there with excellent crowds and a fantastic atmosphere. But the interest doesn't stop there; mainland sporting bodies are already knocking on the door,

recognising the quality of this facility and passion in the community. There are real opportunities ahead to host major national events, including the Australian Transplant Games and National Table Tennis Championships. These events bring visitors, economic activity and national attention. The north is ready for it.

The best part of this is we're not done yet. The government has already announced a planned extension to the hub, because when a community response this strongly, we listen, we invest, and we build for the future. The range of activities now available at the hub is extraordinary. Netball, basketball, volleyball, pickleball and futsal, table tennis, rock climbing, fitness programs, youth engagement initiatives, community events, social sport, training clinics, wheelchair sports and much more.

Did I mention the awesome cafe where the burgers are apparently absolutely brilliant? The fully equipped gym? It's a place where grandparents cheer on their grandkids, where teenagers find belonging, where adults rediscover the joy of movement, and where the whole community comes together under one roof. This is what good infrastructure looks like; this is what community-driven success looks like, and this is what happens when we back the north.

The Northern Suburbs Community Recreational Hub is not just a facility, it's a triumph. A triumph of planning, partnership and above all, people. The people of Launceston have taken ownership of this hub and they are using it in numbers that exceed every expectation. To everyone involved, from the staff and volunteers, to the families, athletes and young people who fill the courts and corridors everyday, thank you. You have turned this building into a beacon of pride for the north. As Parliamentary Secretary for Youth Engagement and Sport, I could not be more excited for what comes next. I commend the hub, its managers and entire Launceston community to the House.

Central Highlands Mobile Coverage

[6.37 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Deputy Speaker, I'd like to talk about the Central Highlands mobile coverage issue this evening on the Adjournment. It's something that most of us in the House are well aware of, as we sometimes might take the road from Longford over to the Derwent Valley and go over the mountain. You know you're going to have quite a lot of time where you're not going to be able to get reception on that journey.

The Central Highlands Telecommunications Working Group is demanding urgent accountability from Telstra. This follows a high-level meeting which was held on 28 April and it was very well attended - I believe you were there, Deputy Speaker - where the technical data presented exposed a dangerous rift between Telstra's official mobile network coverage maps and the life-threatening reality on the ground. Despite early 2026 upgrades to their Reynolds Neck and Barren Tier sites, which Telstra claimed would boost capacity by 300 per cent, the region remains plagued by ghost mobile network coverage issues and failing emergency communications.

There is that example of the gentleman who came off his motorbike and was quite badly injured. He had a broken arm, broken ribs, got thrown off the bike and had to crawl back to the highway area and wait for a car to go past to be able to take him to an area that had data coverage for then an ambulance to be called. That's a very good example, I believe, of just how

dire a situation it is for some tourists and people who are affected by not having mobile coverage in that area.

A critical revelation from that meeting indicated that the connectivity crisis is set to worsen. As of 30 June 2026, Telstra will cease selling mobile services in areas where the network reference signal received power exceeds 115 decibel megawatt. This policy will effectively shrink Telstra's service footprint across the Central Highlands, leaving more residents and visitors in digital isolation.

While Telstra has focused on the capacity, the Central Highlands Telecommunications Working Group argues they have ignored the desperate need for expanded geographical range, a primary safety concern for residents, land-owners and tourists alike.

The most alarming evidence presented involved the failure of public emergency calls and service dropouts experienced by emergency service volunteers during active call outs. The Central Highlands Communications Working Group stated:

While we acknowledge the network investment made this year by Telstra, the reality on the ground is that network connectivity has become more unreliable. We will not allow our community's safety to be compromised as we approach the alpine winter season.

This situation isn't improving at all; it's getting worse.

The Central Highlands Telecommunications Working Group's on-the-ground testing has debunked Telstra's network service coverage maps, identifying chronic failures in high-traffic and high-risk zones, including the communities at Bronte Park, Little Pine Lagoon, Miena, Breona, Liawenee, Flintstone and Wilburville; network black spots - which most of us do know as we travel around our electorates - locations along the Highland Lakes Road between Bothwell and Briona and the Marlborough Road between Miena and Bronte Park.

At the meeting, the Central Highlands Telecommunications Working Group secured a firm undertaking from Telstra for a comprehensive network performance review and transformation plan. The plan specifically targets ghost mobile network coverage areas and at peak network congestion periods, including weekends and public holidays.

The group will continue to escalate community mobile network service delivery concerns to federal government, the regulatory agencies, including the ACMA and the ACCC to ensure regional telecommunications standards are fully complied with and not only promised by Telstra.

Scottsdale Defence Facility - Sale

[6.42 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about the Federal Labor government's decision to effectively run down and now sell the Scottsdale defence facility. This decision has caused a lot of concern in my electorate of Bass, in particular across Dorset and across the state. It is a defence site with a very proud history. It's has recently upgraded infrastructure and real capability for the defence of our nation.

This facility was established under the Menzies government in 1954. That facility has contributed to defence food science, nutrition research and human performance capability for seven decades. Importantly, it's also supporting, right now, cadet training and youth development for proud young Tasmanians who live in the district. Many people might be surprised to learn that a regional place like Scottsdale has quietly played a significant role in feeding defence personnel for those seven decades. For most of that time, it was producing ration packs and employing members of the community in my electorate and it has fed the army that, as the saying goes, marches on its stomach.

I'm very concerned that the Commonwealth wants to now sell this and send the staff who are still there to Launceston UTAS campus to do their work. This is especially difficult to agree with or understand. I'd like to point out to the House that the Tasmanian government's own defence industry strategy, which has only been released recently, specifically identified food technology and food processing as a key defence capability area for Tasmania.

It specifically identifies Scottsdale as Defence's main food science and tech facility in our state. It refers to food security, supply-chain resilience and advanced shelf-stable food capability, all of the things that are necessary and for the good for the defence of our nation. People are entitled to ask this question. If this capability is strategically important enough to appear in the state's own defence strategy, why is the federal Labor government abandoning it without warning and without consultation?

Members here will be, I believe, horrified to learn that taxpayers spent \$18 million upgrading this centre in the last decade. It now has better infrastructure and more equipment, only for it now to be talked about to be shut down, and that facility has been modernised by Liberal and Labor governments in Canberra because they have recognised the facility's strategic value to our country. Good on them. It supported nationally significant work in food technology, nutrition science and defence capability as its role shifted from volume packaging of freeze-dried ration packs through to research on human performance and nutrition for defence personnel across the services. The infrastructure itself no doubt remains highly valuable today. The labs are still there, the advanced microwave-assisted thermal sterilisation capability is still there. But it's only as valuable as the level of its utilisation.

I am concerned to discover, having attended a recent consultation - a consultation offered after the decision was announced in Launceston at the RSL, to discover that this facility, while still open and still operational, has been gradually run down rather than properly supported. Little wonder that the community is so frustrated about that.

A quick mention about the local cadet unit. That's their base, that's what those young boys and girls, the young men and women of that army cadet unit call home. That's where they raise their flag. They parade on that property. They're being told that they might just be sent off to a school hall. Those arrangements are not acceptable. I support those cadets and their commanding officers. They are not allowed to speak publicly but I know how they feel. They're disappointed.

As to how we got here, successive governments have, under pressure at times, committed to retaining that facility. At a time when our country is concerned and talking about sovereign capability, Australia should be very careful about closing down an asset that supplies those needs, in particular in relation to food, because once it's gone, it will be gone forever.

National Volunteer Week

[6.47 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, earlier this week, thanks to our minister for Health, Bridget Archer, I had the opportunity to participate in an event in Penguin to mark the beginning of National Volunteer Week and, specifically, to recognise and thank the people who volunteer in a wide variety of ways in health service settings in north-west Tasmania.

The health system is just one part of the life of our community and regions where volunteers have an important role to play, including roles that volunteers are uniquely able to play. People who find themselves in our hospitals and other health settings include those who are experiencing confronting, unplanned and potentially life-changing events for themselves or their loved ones. They may be scared, angry or disoriented due to their circumstances, and they may be overwhelmed by the content and complexity of information or decisions they may be dealing with for the first time in their lives. They may be surrounded by highly trained people with special equipment to monitor their condition, administer medicine or heal their wounds, and every conversation they have may be about their illness or injury. They may be a long way away from their home, family and familiar things, in bright and busy environments with winking lights and beeping machines, not to mention regular blood pressure and temperature checks at all hours of the day or night.

All of these things are part of the essential and highly effective hospital systems we have and that we are so lucky to have. But it can also be impersonal and stressful, particularly for vulnerable people, including older people and children. While our doctors and nurses are very friendly and take great care of all of their patients, their chief focus must be on treatment and recovery. This is an example of where our volunteers can make a huge difference.

Something as simple as having someone to sit with you and talk about things other than the reason why you're in hospital, or to read to you, or to just be there as company. Or the clown doctors who give people a reason to smile, which can be powerful medicine. Other volunteers meet and greet new arrivals and their families, ensuring they know where to go for appointments or to access facilities they need. Some prepare and deliver personal care packages so people can look after themselves and feel a little bit more normal while they're away from home. Others provide beanies, blankets or clothes for people to wear in hospital or to take home when they leave. Sometimes they drive them to their next appointment for treatment.

Volunteers raise money that our hospitals use to provide equipment and facilities that make the stay in hospital more comfortable, and make it easier for families and friends to visit and spend time with their loved ones. Volunteer chaplains offer comfort, support, pastoral and spiritual care for those who need it, including making connections with the supports those people depend on in their own communities. Volunteers also include the community members who serve on consultative and advisory groups, ensuring that the lived experience of service users and the voice of local communities are heard in the planning and design of health communications, facilities and services.

We met and heard from many of these volunteers and coordinators of volunteer services at the thank-you event at the Penguin Surf Life Saving Club on Monday, including updates from the North-West Regional and Mersey Community hospital chaplaincy coordinators, the

Council of Auxiliaries North West, the North West Regional Hospital meet-and-greet coordinator, the Women's Health Advisory group representatives, and the Consumer and Community Engagement Council chair. All gave updates on the services they provide and coordinate. Again, I thank these fantastic volunteers and all who work with them for making a difference to people's lives and life experiences in our health system.

This is just one snapshot of the important roles that volunteers play in one sector of our community in one region of our state. In National Volunteer Week, we celebrate all of our volunteers wherever and however they serve. We encourage anyone contemplating a change in their working arrangements, career or location who wants to make a positive difference in the lives of others to make contact with Volunteering Tasmania, the peak body for volunteering in Tasmania, to learn about opportunities that match what they have to give and make 2026 your year to volunteer. Thank you to all of our volunteers.

Greyhound Racing - Ban

[6.52 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Deputy Speaker, I rise again tonight to call on the government to reverse its dangerous, unethical and deeply harmful policy on greyhound racing. The bill to end greyhound racing was rushed through this Chamber with members not informed about how much it would cost, the details of compensation for participants or the impact on other racing codes. This also went against the Premier's own promise to industry - a promise that he made, broke and put in writing. Like all the others, he has not apologised for breaking this promise.

But since the House last sat, it seems the Premier has given up on progressing his legislation through the other place. His bill to shut down greyhound racing is not listed for debate in the other place and the industry has still not heard from the Premier or the Minister for Racing. They have abandoned these Tasmanians and it's no wonder that Tasmanians are abandoning the Liberals as well. It shows what happens when you do deals with the Greens. Tasmanians will not tolerate leaders or political parties who put themselves in front of the people they represent.

The Premier has now announced that the government will simply defund greyhound racing even without his bill progressing. In effect, the government intends to disregard the law passed in this place and given Royal Assent, a bill that requires it to regulate greyhound racing. The *Racing Regulation Integrity Act 2024* was tabled and moved by the Rockliff government less than two years ago. It's an act to provide for the regulation of thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing to ensure the integrity of persons involved in such racing, to safeguard the welfare of animals and for related purposes.

The bill that passed through this House that sits idle in the other place seeks, in part, to amend the act to remove references to greyhounds. Without those amendments, the government cannot simply defund greyhound racing as it claims, a policy the Premier seems to have made-up himself whilst at AgFest. It is required to regulate greyhound racing by law - a law that this government created. How can the Premier justify a policy that appears to ignore or contradict the very law his government has passed? The Premier's approach is ridiculous and suggests a willingness to disregard the law. He has basically told the other place, 'I don't care if you don't agree with me. I will do it anyway.'

Imagine if this were any other issue. The Greens or the Independent member for Clark, Ms Johnston, would be outraged. There would be uproar. Ms Johnston recently called the Premier 'out of control' when it came to the Wilkinsons Point land deal, and I agree with her on that. But what does that say about a premier whose policy position appears to be now to breach the existing racing legislation? Whatever your view on greyhound racing, the principles and governance of the rule of law must matter. The evidence received by the committee looking at greyhound racing heard two key points on the finances of racing:

- (1) It will cost Tasracing as much to administer racing without the greyhound code as it does to administer all three codes. There is no saving to be had by shutting down greyhound racing.
- (2) The greyhound racing code's net outcome was a loss of just \$3.2 million last financial year. That's compared to harness racing, which lost \$11 million, and thoroughbred racing that lost \$21 million.

Greyhound racing can continue, it can stand on its own two feet, and its revenue continues to grow. I'm confident that it can continue if it has a government that keeps its promises. But these broken promises, these breaches of trust with the Premier and the government of Tasmania impact us all, because Tasmanians feel like they can't trust anything that comes out of politicians' mouths anymore.

When it comes to business confidence, this is having a real impact. Since this deal was done and this government was formed on the floor of this place in August last year, 4700 jobs have been lost from our economy because you cannot trust a single word this Premier says. If he writes you a letter and says that he gives your industry full confidence, you can be assured that he will break that promise as soon as he needs to. When it comes to aquaculture and salmon, he's taking direction not just from Mr George, but also from Dr Woodruff. These are serious concerns. They're emanating right through industry. Every single industry is at risk, and the question people are asking is: what's next? When you have a Premier threatening to break his own laws, breaching promises, and whose word means nothing, what confidence can anyone have to invest in this state?

Neighbourhood Houses

[6.57 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Deputy Premier) - Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. I stand tonight, I'm so excited, I'm over the moon, for our Neighbourhood Houses. The government made that commitment today: in the Budget on Thursday, there'll be \$55 million to continue supporting our much-loved Neighbourhood Houses. It was only a few days ago with the Premier in the Derwent Valley, at the Derwent Valley Neighbourhood House, that we were hearing their wonderful work in providing a more supportive community, a healthier community, a more inclusive community. They're out there doing the job, supporting their local communities. It was a fantastic day up in the Derwent Valley at New Norfolk.

This \$55 million is a fantastic investment. The Budget will invest \$46.7 million in our 34 Neighbourhood Houses, as well as \$6 million for the Neighbourhood Houses Capital Improvement Program, and \$1.98 million for the peak Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania Inc. over the forward Estimates. I thank the Premier. I thank the Minister for Community and

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Multicultural Affairs, Madeleine Ogilvie, for leading the way on helping make this happen. I'm particularly excited about the funding for the Health Action Team Central Highlands (HATCH) at Ouse. I visited there on a number of occasions over a long period of time. To Pamela Turton-Turner, thank you as chair. To Tracey Turale, of course, supported by Wayne and the local community. I acknowledge Carlo Di Falco, and of course, my dear colleagues Jane Howlett and Mark Shelton, who've helped campaign to get that Neighbourhood House established and they will get funding. In fact, the funding for that Central Highlands Neighbourhood House will be \$1 million.

That is absolutely a ripper. It's so good for the Central Highlands. It'll provide support and encouragement for the community to come together. They're already doing a great job, but that's now officially locked in stone. I know they're very excited. I've already had communication from the community and they're really pleased about this decision.

We know it'll be a tough budget; we know that it's going to set Tasmania up to tackle the debt, but it's going to keep Tasmania strong. It'll be an economically strong Tasmania and a caring community and that's what we're looking at going forward. We know it's coming and that'll be delivered on Thursday. This is an announcement made today.

In terms of my Lyons electorate, I'm particularly excited likewise for the Deloraine House that I visited just a few days ago at the end of last week. I think it was Friday. Thank you to Deb and all the team there, all the volunteers - it's National Volunteers Week - they do a fantastic job, including in our Neighbourhood Houses. In terms of the support, it's quite comprehensive. Deloraine House, \$1.3 million; Derwent Valley Community House, \$1.4 million; Dunally Tasman Neighbourhood House, \$1.4 million; Fingal Valley Neighbourhood House, \$1.3 million. Of course the Jordan River Services, \$2.6 million; Midway Point Neighbourhood Centre, \$1.3 million; Okines Community House, \$1.3 million; St Helens Neighbourhood House Association, \$1.4 million.

We don't want to underestimate in any way, shape or form the fantastic contribution that the Neighbourhood Houses make all around Tasmania. There are pressures at the moment: cost of living, the fuel issues, the high interest rates, inflation is definitely up. It's not just in Tassie, this is happening all around Australia. We are so pleased for their work and I know others all around Tasmania are excited about that.

The House adjourned at 7.01 p.m.