



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

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Wednesday, 25 August 2021

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

QUESTIONS

NAPLAN Results

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms COURTNEY

[10.02 a.m.]

Preliminary NAPLAN results show Tasmanian students are struggling compared to their mainland peers. Our results are the worst of any state across every age group in reading, the second worst in every age group in writing, the worst in every age group in spelling, the worst in every age group in grammar and punctuation, and the worst in years 5, 7 and 9 in numeracy. In the lead-up to the 2018 election, the Liberal Party pledged that by 2020, Tasmanian students would be at or above the national average in reading, writing and maths. Will you acknowledge that you have broken your promise to Tasmanians and in particular to our young people?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. I concur with her interest in education. Ensuring that our young people are educated to be able to have the opportunities in life is absolutely critical and it is something that this Government is focused on. We are committed to continuing to improve our educational outcomes, particularly in the critical areas of numeracy and literacy. NAPLAN plays a role in allowing us to understand progressing literacy and numeracy at an education system, school and student level. It is important to remember that NAPLAN is a snapshot in time of learning and is only one indicator of student progress -

Members interjecting

Ms COURTNEY - Mr Speaker, the comments from the other side are very disappointing. I am outlining what we are doing as a government to ensure that we are providing support to our young people. I urge the other side to listen and to support the initiative that our hardworking teachers are delivering in all our schools.

We note that NAPLAN was not undertaken last year because of COVID-19, and the NAPLAN results this week are generally stable for Tasmania compared to 2019. This is the same as results across Australia. Across 20 tests over the period, Tasmania's mean scores were up for eight tests and down for 12. There are long-term gains for Tasmania in year 3 and 5 reading, year 3 writing, year 5 spelling and year 5 numeracy. These gains are the result of the dedicated hard work of our teachers and leaders. They should be celebrated and thanked for their commitment and their professionalism.

The introduction of a target by my predecessor, Mr Jeremy Rockliff, that by 2029 all year 7 students will meet an expected reading standard that is above the national minimum will drive further improvement in literacy outcomes. To support this target we have made the year 1

phonics check available in all Tasmanian primary and district schools, providing more data to support our teachers to tailor and plan for students.

We are also increasing the number of in-school quality literacy coaches, hiring an additional 40 coaches across our schools to implement evidence-based literacy programs. In addition, we have announced the establishment of an expert literacy advisory panel, to be chaired by Jenny Gale, the secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Natalie Brown, the director of the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment. The literacy advisory panel will undertake a review of current literacy approaches and supports across our community, including those delivered in our schools, and provide recommendations on how we can continue to improve.

Further, we are piloting a numeracy coaching initiative, which commenced this year with 19 partnership schools, supported by six lead quality teaching coaches. These coaches work collaboratively with teaching teams in the classrooms to strengthen teaching and learning of mathematics.

We are clearly demonstrating that we are taking action. We are investing more in our schools, in additional staff and in additional support staff to ensure that we have student learning across our schools and our child and family learning centres, so that our young people get the best start in life, so that when they come to school, they are well-equipped to learn in a productive and collaborative way.

NAPLAN Results

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms COURTNEY

[10.06 a.m.]

Since 2008, Tasmania's performance in NAPLAN has gone backwards in 14 of the 20 indicators across years 3, 5, 7 and 9. We are performing worse than any state and we are falling further behind on your watch. Eminent Tasmanian economist, Saul Eslake, has said fixing Tasmania's under-performing education system is the only way for Tasmania to grasp the opportunities presently before us. Will you acknowledge that Tasmania's education system, led by you, is under-performing and declining standards have serious consequences for our state?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. One of the hallmarks of this Government has been rolling out schools to year 11 and 12, with one school to go, which will occur next year. This is what this side of the Chamber represents: we are supporting schools and school communities, and we are investing. Our side of the Chamber is the only one that is fully committed to rolling out schools so that all Tasmanians can be schooled to year 11 and 12. We have continued to prioritise education. This is why we took our strong plan to the election earlier this year which continues to invest more than \$133 million of support for teachers and over 62 000 students across the state.

I mentioned before, the in-school quality literacy coaches - an additional 40. We have \$9.2 million for additional professional support staff, including free access to speech

pathologists, psychologists and social workers in our child and family learning centres, so they can be supported.

More school nurses: Tasmanians will remember that the other side cut school nurses from all schools across Tasmania. We are adding them back with additional funding, which will add to our 42.7 full-time school nurses. We are out in the market recruiting as we know how important they are.

We are extending support across schools with our partnership with SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY in schools. We have significant support for more children who are impacted by trauma. We know that for young people who have been impacted by trauma, not only are they significantly impacted and it impacts their ability to learn, it has broader implications for those children around them. This is why an additional 100 students are going to get the support they need. This includes supporting the professional staff so that those children are supported to learn. This is why this side of the Chamber has invested in seeing more than 600 additional staff across our schools supporting our young people.

We know there is more to do, and that is why we are continuing to invest. We have record funding in the Budget that will be delivered, and we will continue to stand with our teachers to make sure that they are supported to deliver education across Tasmania.

Integrity Commission - Summary Report of Investigation Tyndall

Dr WOODRUFF question to ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Ms ARCHER

[10.10 a.m.]

The Integrity Commission report tabled yesterday contained allegations from the CEO of WorkSafe that you and your office asked the independent regulator what he was intending to do about the Bob Brown Foundation forest protesters. The report also found that any public comments you made about the matter would be required to seek approval by the Government Communications Office within the Premier's office. You have denied these allegations and yesterday threatened to take action against me for discussing the Integrity Commission's report.

The WorkSafe CEO argued he did not act on perceived or actual pressure in making his decision, so it is hard to imagine he would make up the claim that you and your office attempted to influence his actions. Why would Mr Cocker lie? Why would Tasmanians take your word against Mr Cocker's, the independent WorkSafe Regulator, on this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for her question.

I cannot believe Dr Woodruff would come here - although, I am not surprised, because she has parliamentary privilege protection - but I was surprised that she had the stupidity - and I will call it that - to issue a media release yesterday calling into question -

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I take offence at that language. I was repeating words that were in the Integrity Commission's report. I take offence that the Attorney-General would call it stupid to want to make stuff public.

Mr SPEAKER - Minister, the member has taken offence, so I ask you to withdraw.

Ms ARCHER - If the member has taken offence I withdraw the word 'stupidity', the sheer stupidity, but she should know better than to come in here and misrepresent findings in the Integrity Commission report.

Dr Woodruff - No, there is not a scintilla of misrepresentation.

Ms ARCHER - I would like to address this as it is quite serious. Yes, I have threatened to look into this further, because it is a very serious allegation to continue to make when the Integrity Commission has cleared me, Mr Barnett and our staff of any wrongdoing.

Mr Speaker, they have disregarded the Integrity Commission investigation findings. The investigation is, unfortunately, another example of the Integrity Commission being weaponised for perverse, political, ideological games. This is yet another example of the Greens making a complaint - which they are well entitled to do, and I do not have an issue with that - but they need to accept the umpire's decision.

Dr Woodruff - You weaponised the WorkSafe Regulator.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Franklin, you have asked the question. Please allow the Attorney-General to answer it without interjection.

Ms ARCHER - They need to accept the umpire's decision, and that was the Integrity Commission Summary Report of Investigation Tyndall is clear: there were no findings of wrongdoing. The Integrity Commission also stated there was no evidence that the Government attempted to pressure or influence the former independent regulator.

Ms O'Connor - How hard did they look?

Ms ARCHER - I hope that interjection gets on *Hansard*, Mr Speaker. It also stated that Mr Cocker did not act on perceived or actual pressure or influence from any person - including me as Attorney-General, or what was then called Building Construction, now Workplace Safety, or Mr Barnett or our staff - when he decided to issue a prohibition notice.

It found we did not attempt to exercise undue influence over the regulator in relation to the issuing of a prohibition notice. It further found that no ministerial staff failed to respect the regulator's independence in terms of action that could be taken by the regulator in relation to the Bob Brown Foundation and ongoing forestry protests, including in relation to the issuing of a prohibition notice. It went on to state that there is nothing improper in the Government maintaining good relationships with community members who support a policy position.

I have said this on a number of occasions, but for the benefit of the Greens, I will repeat it. In the Integrity Commission's 2017-18 annual report, the Chief Commissioner and the CEO of the Integrity Commission stated:

It is of great concern that public statements have been made by members of parliament about possible or actual complaints to the Integrity Commission.

The report was also very damning -

Ms O'Connor - Suddenly they become allergic to transparency under your Government.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms ARCHER - I suggest the Greens reflect and actually read the report a bit more and find the comments on them as well, because the statements in this place today, and Dr Woodruff's media release yesterday, fly in the face of the Integrity Commission findings. Quite frankly, I find their comments offensive.

Ms O'Connor - Please sue us.

Ms ARCHER - If there was any damage to my reputation, I would not hesitate, because you are wrong.

Mr Speaker, I hope this is a lesson to the Greens, too. When you do make a complaint, do not make it public, do not weaponise the Integrity Commission - and certainly, when the Integrity Commission makes a decision, actually accept the umpire's decision.

Tasmania's Tourism Future

Mr ELLIS question to MINISTER for TOURISM, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.17 a.m.]

How is the majority Liberal Government continuing to secure the future of Tasmania's tourism industry through these challenges?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his interest in this very important matter. We have all worked hard to keep Tasmania safe during COVID-19. Importantly, we have been able to keep our businesses open and we have been able to have our employment bounce back.

We have stood alone in the country since early last year, where we have not had to have rolling lockdowns. In fact, every other state and territory jurisdiction has had to, at some stage, reach in and stop their economy. We have not had to do that.

Obviously, we do have to deal with the challenges that the larger economies, being locked down, are providing as an impact here in Tasmania. As a government we will continue to work hard to ensure our businesses are strong, that we can continue to employ and, importantly, that we can showcase the wonderful product that we have here in Tasmania.

As I said last week at the TICT annual conference, we have an extraordinary advantage in Tasmania in that we are already well placed in the hearts and minds of travellers with respect to the qualities and motivators which influence their travel decisions. They see us as safe, they see us as unique, they see us as beautiful, and they are waiting to come to Tasmania. Tasmania is a place where visitors can immerse themselves in extraordinary culture and experiences, where the quality is distinctive. It will be a prime destination for the post-COVID-19 traveller.

The T21 partnership between the Government and the TICT is envied by other jurisdictions, and we continue to assist industry by focusing on the priorities identified in that strategy. We need to be ready in the market to build demand, when the time is right, to attract direct air services from key source markets, address the critical workforce and skills challenges, and assist in developing and enhancing our product proposition.

Tourism is integral to Tasmania's social, community and economic fabric. It celebrates who we are, what we do and the things we produce. It enables us to put Tasmania on the map. One of our greatest advantages lies in our renewable and climate credentials. We have the lowest per capita emissions in Australia, and some of the lowest in the world. The industry sees that climate policy makes good economic policy, and has its heart set on achieving carbon-neutral status, which will add another dimension to our appeal as a destination for today's discerning traveller. We back this with a \$1.5 million program to facilitate operators to consider how they can best place their business to do more in this exciting space, and we will continue to work with them on this matter.

This week we launched a \$50 million loan scheme for tourism and hospitality businesses. It provides for loans of up to \$2 million, which are interest-free for the initial three years, to enable them to continue to invest in their properties and their products to ensure that when the world bounces back we are in a place to take best advantage. Earlier this month we released a further \$7.5 million of the highly successful tourism travel vouchers, which will definitely provide a boost for our industry up until the start of the school holidays.

Since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, the Government has committed in excess of \$113 million to the industry. This does not include the significant proportion that was allocated to tourism businesses by the \$80 million Small Business Grants program that was our immediate response to the pandemic in March 2020.

This weekend, under strict COVID rules, we will make history with two AFL finals being played in Launceston. While Victorians and those from New South Wales cannot attend, Tasmanians can. This will create economic activity across the state as Tasmanians travel from every corner to view the biggest travelling circus in the country when it comes to town. Yesterday, steps were put in place to ensure that we can have a decision on our own AFL team. I would not normally hold up the Tassie map, but I cannot wait, and nor can the tourism industry, until we have our own Tasmanian team. When it plays Collingwood in Tasmania, they will turn up in their droves and we will be the biggest show in the place.

The future looks fantastic for Tasmanian tourism. The tourism industry has been very supportive. It was great to hear their president, Daniel Leesong, make some comments last week. They have been able to do a lot of this. By 'this' he means ensure that they remain in business, because we have had governments that have listened and have been responsive. He said he wanted to acknowledge the way that the Tasmanian Government had acted so swiftly and decisively in the support measures to industry. There is no doubt the measures the Government has implemented have saved businesses and jobs and given us a fighting chance to get through to the other side.

I am pleased to announce that this year's state budget will continue that support. As committed during the election campaign, the budget will include \$18 million in additional marketing funds to ensure the industry can and will re-emerge strongly and we will be ready for domestic and the world traveller when our borders open.

Border Closure Critical Support Grant Program

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for SMALL BUSINESS, Ms HOWLETT

[10.23 a.m.]

Yesterday, I asked you about sole traders like Paul Lewis who were affected by border closures but are ineligible for support through the Border Closure Critical Support Grant program. Your response was totally indifferent to the financial struggles that Mr Lewis is facing. Later yesterday you informed me that you had offered Mr Lewis the opportunity to meet with an Enterprise Centres Tasmania business adviser to talk about current circumstances. Again, the indifference is appalling.

I have since heard from a gentleman who runs a photography business that services events, conferences and weddings that have all been severely impacted by border closures over the last 18 months. His application for support through the Border Closure Critical Support Grant program was rejected. It was rejected because he did not meet the turnover thresholds and has not for the past 16 months. He has not met the turnover thresholds because of border closures.

It is clear that the way the program has been designed is not helping those who need it most. Will you commit to redesigning the program and offering a second round of grants?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. It is time the Opposition stopped playing petty politics and apologises for using our hard-working, small businesses to score political points. That is exactly what you are doing.

Our Government makes no apology for continuing to keep Tasmanians safe and backing businesses with significant support packages. While we have already provided more than \$80 million in business grants since the COVID-19 outbreak, we acknowledge that there are businesses that fall outside the eligibility criteria for this Border Closure Critical Support Grant program. We are taking onboard feedback from businesses with a view to using this information to adapt the current program's eligibility criteria to provide broader and practical support at this critical time, as well as the structure of future business support programs. Therefore, we strongly encourage all impacted businesses to register their situation with Business Tasmania.

Those who contacted Business Tasmania are being referred to Enterprise Centre Tasmania for independent business advice and other programs where applicable. The \$20 million package forms part of our Government's 4 Point Delta Shield Plan that will keep our state safe and our economy strong as we continue to deal with risk associated with the Delta strain of COVID-19.

As the Premier and I have both stated, if more needs to be done we will consider it. I have been advised that Business Tasmania contacted Mr Lewis on Friday 20 August to discuss his eligibility for the Tasmanian Government's support hardship program. During the conversation Mr Lewis had with Business Tasmania he was offered the opportunity to meet with Enterprise Centres and have current business advice and talk through his circumstances. My office has

directly reached out to Mr Lewis to discuss his issues and concerns and I will be meeting with him in the coming weeks.

Ambulance Tasmania - Resourcing

Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.27 a.m.]

The paramedic profession has come to me with concerns about the over-reliance on volunteers and the lack of adequate resources within Ambulance Tasmania. Of the state's 51 ambulance stations 24 rely, at least partially, on the goodwill of volunteers, while 13 are volunteer only with no support from salaried paramedics. I understand that too often ambulance call outs are crewed by single officers. This is manifestly unfair and unsafe to our salaried and volunteer officers.

To address these deficiencies the profession is calling for an additional 229 full-time employees, including 188 frontline paramedics. I am advised that this would provide a greater footprint of high-level critical care across the state while providing the volunteers with the additional experience and training opportunities they need.

Will you listen to your own paramedics and commit to recruiting the staff required to provide adequate clinical care to Tasmanians while ensuring safer working conditions, including mandating two-person crews for all ambulance call outs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her question. I appreciate paramedics, Tasmanian ambulance officers and all our frontline health staff, indeed all our frontline staff across Government for the work that they do for our local communities.

Ambulance Tasmania currently has approximately 450 volunteer ambulance officers. At the recent state election the Government committed to providing further support for our volunteer officers. We are providing \$50 000 to the Volunteer Ambulance Officers Association of Tasmania. Ambulance Tasmania is working with the association on key areas relating to our volunteers, including attraction, retention, training and support.

In relation to meeting demand for emergency medical services within our local communities, it is important to acknowledge since coming to Government we have employed 170 more paramedics and despatch officers state-wide, an increase of 50 per cent. We have also upgraded ambulance stations around the state. We are in the process of upgrading and delivering new stations at Burnie in the north west and, of interest to the member for Clark, at Glenorchy as well.

One of our key commitments at the 1 May election is to deliver 48 paramedics over the next two years to both urban and regional locations across the state. This includes new paramedic crews in Launceston and Hobart. It includes three new paramedics each for Sheffield, Dodges Ferry, Campbell Town and New Norfolk, and two new paramedics each for St Helens, the west coast and the north east. It also makes permanent the placements of two paramedics each for Swansea, Miena and Bruny Island. Recruitment processes for additional

paramedics are currently underway. Once all the 48 paramedics are in place, we will commission a review of Ambulance Tasmania service demand for best-targeted future investment, considering also the impact of hospital and ambulance avoidance programs such as the community rapid response and secondary triage.

We introduced secondary triage early this year, in February, if my memory serves me correctly. I have been at Ambulance Tasmania headquarters in southern Tasmania and seen that triage in operation. It seems to be working well in terms of ensuring that Tasmanians who call 000 can be triaged to perhaps more appropriate care in the community. This is easing the pressure and demand in terms of our 000 calls and emergency service demand for Ambulance Tasmania and paramedics.

We are also committed to investing some \$9 million to upgrade the Ambulance Tasmania vehicle fleet and deliver contemporary equipment that our paramedics need. I have seen an example of state-of-the-art equipment when I visited Ambulance Tasmania in Hobart.

The member mentioned volunteers and it is very important to recognise all our volunteers across Tasmania. We are very fortunate in Tasmania to have dedicated ambulance volunteers. They play a very important role and I thank them for their contribution. I was at the state volunteering awards earlier this year and I pay tribute to Wayne Doran, the winner of the 2021 volunteering awards. Wayne has been a volunteer with Ambulance Tasmania since 1993 and has displayed outstanding commitment to his community. He is inspirational through the community spirit he demonstrates, not only through the volunteering but also his continual contribution to providing very strong advocacy for volunteer ambulance officers across the state.

To all our paramedics across the state, of which we have employed more and will continue to employ more, I thank them for their contribution at the frontline. You cannot get much more frontline than a paramedic. I am well aware of the need to recruit more, which we have committed to.

I also welcome our new Ambulance Tasmania CEO, Joe Acker, who is providing outstanding leadership in this very short amount of time. I will be meeting with Joe at lunchtime today. I thank the member for her question.

Carbon Storage in Tasmanian Forests

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for CLIMATE CHANGE, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.34 a.m.]

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has just released the most urgent and frightening scientific report in human history. It is a code red for humanity. The sixth assessment report calls for immediate rapid and large-scale reductions in emissions. The report makes clear that each tonne of carbon pumped out increases the impacts and risks of extreme heat, floods and drought, so every tonne of carbon matters for the world our children will inherit.

As you know, Tasmania's emissions profile is positive primarily because of the carbon stored in our forests across all tenures. In all other sectors of the economy our emissions are

rising. Do you recognise that the single most important contribution Tasmania can make to a safe climate is to protect the estimated 4 billion tonnes of carbon stored in our forests?

Young people who took part in the Commissioner for Children and Young People's climate change consultation recognise this. Do you accept change is needed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Greens for that question. I want to make a couple of points on this, because one of the things that really concerns me, and I know there is a motion coming on this afternoon, is some of the extreme language that is being used. It is frightening some of our children.

I am very proud of the position we hold, in two key aspects. One is renewable energy. We generate 100 per cent of the renewable energy that we need, and we are on target for 200 per cent. If we were a country, that would put us in the top five in the world.

Regarding our emissions profile, I have learnt, as a result of engaging with the young people through that climate process and through the Premier's Youth Advisory Council, that what is not often understood by our young people is how very good we are at the moment on emissions.

In relation to the 1990 baseline, in six out of the last seven years we have been at net zero emissions. Again, if we were a country, we would be in the top five in the world in terms of emissions profile. What the Greens will not talk about is that if you look at the other sectors of our economy - and we do have some challenges, and we will work through them - if you look at key sectors like agriculture, right now, today, even after the exponential growth we have seen in agriculture since 1990, we are below the 1990 baseline for agriculture as a sector. Productivity and output has gone up and emissions have come down in agriculture.

If you look at the waste sector, we are down by more than a quarter, 26 per cent, compared to the 1990 baseline. These are things the Greens will not talk about. We should be proud of our emissions profile, of where we stand in terms of renewable energy. They should stop trying to frighten our kids. They should be educating our kids on the basis that we can lead the country -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, I personally take offence at the accusation that we are trying to frighten children. We are repeating the science. What we are trying to do is protect children.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. It was a general statement, it was not directed at any individual, and so is not a point of order.

Mr GUTWEIN - You would have to agree that we have a pretty damn good story to tell. What the Greens could do, rather than railing against projects like major wind farms, one of the things this state can do in terms of its renewable energy base, in terms of where we are heading with Marinus, where we are heading with Battery of the Nation, is to help the entire country to transition to renewables -

Ms O'Connor - The country that is buying big batteries and does not need our power.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr GUTWEIN - They could stop standing in the way of those generating more renewable energy and let us help the entire country. Tasmania could be the tail that wags the dog, quite frankly, because we are so far in front of every jurisdiction in this country.

As I said, if you look at the more than 200 countries in this world, in terms of renewable energy and emissions profile, we would be in the top five. That is what the Greens should be talking to our children about. They should be helping to educate them, make them feel proud as I am, as this side of the House is, about what we have done. The 100 years of investment in renewables, the choices that past governments have had to make, which have put us in the position where we are one of the most attractive, most progressive jurisdictions in the world -

Ms O'Connor - Have you read this? That is the kids. It is the children.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr GUTWEIN - That is the conversation that we need to have with our children. Other states and jurisdictions can learn from us. The Leader of the Greens should stop talking us down because we are in a very good position.

Border Closure Critical Support Grant Program

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for SMALL BUSINESS, Ms HOWLETT

[10.40 a.m.]

Tasmanian small businesses continue to struggle as a result of border closures and lockdowns in other states. David Peach, from the Launceston Chamber of Commerce has said that the Border Closure Critical Support Grant Program you announced recently is insufficient, and that grant amounts are not enough to make a difference or to sustain a business. He said that job losses will be a natural progression and the lack of support was a serious risk of draining capability in the sector. What additional support are you going to offer small businesses to prevent needless job losses in Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. We know how important small businesses in Tasmania are. I have been very passionate about this sector. We are taking on board, as I stated previously, the feedback from businesses with a view to using this information to inform how we can adapt the current program's eligibility criteria to provide broader and practical support at this critical time, as well as the structure of future business support packages. If the criteria needs to be adapted then we will do so. Let us not forget that under the last Labor-Greens government between 2010 and 2014 many small businesses closed and those small businesses never re-opened. The unemployment rate reached -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, order. Settle for a moment. The question has been asked. The minister has the opportunity to answer it without interjections.

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, the unemployment rate reached 8.6 per cent under the Labor-Greens government, with 10 400 jobs lost between February 2011 and October 2013. Youth unemployment reached a high of 20.6 per cent - you can shake your head, Mr Winter - during 2013.

Ms DOW - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 45, relevance. The question to the minister was what additional support is she going to offer small business to prevent needless job losses?

Mr SPEAKER - A point of order is not an opportunity to re-ask a question, or to re-state the question. The minister is answering it, she has been and she is allowed her opportunity to finalise her answer.

Ms HOWLETT - Our Government is about supporting businesses in Tasmania , unlike your side.

Elective Surgery - Update

Mr STREET question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.43 a.m.]

Can you provide the House with an update on the Government's plan to secure Tasmania's future with a record boost to elective surgery, so more Tasmanians can get the surgery they need within clinically recommended times?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for his question. I know he has considerable interest in this matter. We are delivering on our plans to secure Tasmania's future. Our plan is to continue to invest in health.

While the Government has delivered more funding, more services, more staffing than any previous government, we recognise there are ongoing challenges with demands continuing to increase in a COVID-19 environment. This puts pressure on health staff and services. Our election commitments include delivering a record elective surgery program, an additional \$120 million to provide an extra 22 300 elective surgeries and endoscopies and bring the waitlist down to a sustainable level. The health and wellbeing of Tasmanians is a priority for the Government. While the latest data for June shows some encouraging improvements with the elective surgery waitlist decreasing by nearly 1000 people since January, there is more to do. We are working hard to reduce elective surgery waitlists because every number on that list is a person requiring care, who is relying on the Government to do better.

That is why I am pleased to announce an additional \$40 million for elective surgery above what we committed to at the last election, taking the total investment for elective surgery in the 2021-22 budget to \$196.4 million. This will support the delivery of our four-year elective surgery plan and a total of nearly 30 000 additional elective surgeries and endoscopies to ensure that more Tasmanians receive their surgery within those clinically recommended time frames.

Last week we released a state-wide elective surgery four-year plan 2021-2025, which provides that clear road map for delivery of our elective surgery and endoscopy program over

the next four years in a sustainable way. It is clinician-led and patient-focused. We are listening to the clinicians and the health professionals across Tasmania. That is why they are leading the four-year surgery plan to get them down to a sustainable level.

The difference between this Government and the previous government, when they had responsibility for health, is we are putting more funding in and employing more people. We all recognise the 2011 horror budget which cut health staff and cut health funding. When you talk to clinicians around Tasmania, they still remember the 2011 budget. The damage is still being done. Even though it was 10 years ago, you are still damaging our health system by that massive cut back then. Do not forget it. Health staff around Tasmania are not forgetting it.

That is why we are putting more funding into the health system and employing more people. That is why we are sitting down with our clinicians, to deliver clinician-led, patient-focused health services, not only in the hospital but out there in the community. Our investments in hospital, the home and such services as the community rapid response service are delivering and working. We are providing that service state-wide. Trialled in Launceston, across the north west coast and Hobart, we are delivering right across the state on that promised program. We are investing more in community care. More than 180 staff across the state are expected to support this increase in volume.

We are also opening additional beds as staffing allows. This Government opens beds, not closes bed and shuts wards. Not only are we opening beds, the previous government closed entire hospital wards. We have 200 more hospital beds across the state than we had when we came to Government. They are sensitive because they have an appalling record when it comes to health. This Government recognises the challenges, recognises the fact that we are in a COVID-19 environment and that has put extra pressure on our health system. Not only do we need to prepare our health system for the possibility of an outbreak, we also need to prepare our health system to ensure that we are sustainable, irrespective of a pandemic and into the future.

Our new trauma and acute ward 4A opened at the Royal Hobart Hospital last week. At full capacity it will provide an additional 24 beds. At the Launceston General Hospital, a refurbishment is underway with a 28-bed medical ward on Ward 3D. It is expanding medical capacity. Short-stay surgical beds at the LGH will be open seven days with overnight beds increased from eight to 12 to support additional elective surgeries. At the north west coast, we are freeing up six beds on the medical ward, as well as establishing an eight-bed short-stay surgical unit. We are getting on with the job of securing Tasmania's future. We are delivering our plan so that when Tasmanians are requiring care, we will ensure that it is delivered not only in the right place, with caring professionals - as we see right across Tasmania - but also at the right time. My focus is ensuring we can get the elective surgery waiting list down to a sustainable level by listening and working with our clinicians and investing in our services.

Border Closure Critical Support Grant Program

Ms FINLAY question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.51 a.m.]

Bianca Welsh is the manager and co-owner of Stillwater Restaurant and Black Cow Bistro in Launceston. Her incredible business has fallen by 60 per cent on weekdays, and she

has questioned whether the Border Closure Critical Support Grant program goes far enough. She said, and I quote:

Many businesses across Tasmania are probably questioning whether they can go on. Things are feeling scarier than they did last year because without JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments, without the industry, everything is hurting. We are just not feeling that people are really understanding how quiet things are.

Do you understand how quiet things really are? If you do, can you say that the Government's support package is anywhere near sufficient?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her interest in this matter. To begin, I say that Bianca Welsh and her restaurants are fantastic; there are no two ways about it. She has been a shining light in terms of businesses and the opportunities she provides to showcase our fantastic produce.

I make this point: in Tasmania we have provided, initially, the largest support package of any jurisdiction as a percentage of our budget - over \$1 billion. Then what we have done is kept Tasmania safe, and our way of life as normal as we possibly can, albeit in the COVID-19 'normal' way. Through that, we then provided other initiatives such as the very successful tourism voucher scheme last year, which saw Tasmanians move around the state and spend in restaurants and on accommodation. We then doubled-down on that and put another \$7.5 million-worth of vouchers out there, which will move people around the state again.

On top of that, we announced our \$20 million support package, which has only been out for a week. You have to give some credit to that, Ms Finlay. It opened last Tuesday. What we have said - and I have been really clear on this from day one regarding the packages we provided - that if we need to do more, we will do more.

This weekend, Tasmanians will be turning up to Launceston and our restaurants are going to be full, and our accommodation is going to be full. That is a good thing. I know those on the other side are not really sure about who they support or what they are doing over there at the moment, but it does not even sound like they support football, which I thought they would be able to.

Ms Finlay, in terms of the circumstances that are facing our businesses around the state, we know that New South Wales and Victoria being shut is having a second-order impact. That is why we have stepped in and, with the Commonwealth, put \$20 million on the table. We know there are challenges. That is why we put the \$7.5 million tourism voucher scheme back on the table. If we need to do more, we will do more, which is why I have already announced that we have \$300 million in the budget for COVID-19 recovery and support, should we need it. If we need to, we will do that, but the question that has to be asked is, what is going to be in your alternative budget next week? What are they going to stand for next week?

Next week, when they get the opportunity, after looking at our budget, what are they going to do? Will the new shadow treasurer have the courage that his predecessors have not

had to actually bring out an alternative budget and demonstrate once and for all what they stand for?

At the moment they stand for nothing. In fact, they do stand for a lot: toxicity and division. Even last night we had Labor members speaking against Labor members. That is what they stand for. That is the representation they are providing for Tasmanians.

On this side of the House, we have already brought down the largest economic and social support package in the country. We have other programs out there, and as I have made perfectly clear, if we need to do more we will do more.

The reason we will do more is because we are in a strong financial position. Tasmanians know they can trust us on this: when they need support, this Government will step up.

Tasmanian Refugee Legal Service - Emergency Funding

Ms HADDAD question to ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Ms ARCHER

[10.57 a.m.]

The current and unfolding situation in Afghanistan is devastating. The local Tasmanian Afghan community is suffering greatly, and the Tasmanian Refugee Legal Service is working around the clock as fast as they can to assist people to progress visa applications.

What has the Government done to respond to this urgent extra need and increased demand? Have you provided the Tasmanian Refugee Legal Service with emergency funding to help them meet this unprecedented need? If not, will you today commit to providing that funding?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. On behalf of the Government, I first say that our hearts go out to not only our local Afghan and Hazara communities, but those who are impacted by the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. It truly is an awful situation.

I am obviously aware of the Tasmanian Refugee Legal Service; they do currently receive some funding from the state Government. I do not have the figure in front of me. I have not received a formal request, but I am very open to it. In fact, I had a conversation yesterday, internally within my office, of me wanting to provide some additional funding in relation to that, and I am certainly prepared to look at it.

Building Projects Support Program

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for STATE GROWTH, Mr JAENSCH

[10.58 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on how the Gutwein Liberal Government is building a stronger economy to secure Tasmania's future by getting stalled building projects off the ground?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for his question and his passion for jobs and our economy. Our Government recognises that the private sector is critical to rebuilding and growing our economy, and we remain committed to assisting Tasmanian businesses through this period and beyond. In particular, we recognise the important role the building and construction sectors have in our economic recovery.

Last year, after a brief pause, with state and federal government support, the residential building sector surged. It has remained strong and has been a key plank in our economic recovery to date. However, we recognise that the commercial construction sector has been slower to rebound, which is why we have allocated \$10 million in the 2021 state budget to establish the Building Projects Support Program, to bring forward stalled community or commercial projects that can help to stimulate the building and construction sector and support local jobs in our economy.

It is also why we committed during our election period to increase the program by another \$10 million, to get even more shovel-ready projects off the ground following closure of the first round on 14 May 2021. I am pleased to advise the House that 64 applications were received for round one of this program and that were assessed by an independent panel. Program guidelines included community and social benefits criteria to make sure that the projects deliver real on-ground benefits for Tasmanians as well as through construction activity.

On 20 August, I announced that 12 local projects worth \$50 million will be able to proceed with help from the program as part of our COVID-19 economic recovery plan. A great example of this is Community Care Tasmania, a not for profit, home-based disability and aged care provider that I visited last week. It will receive almost \$1 million to support the development of a new \$6 million facility at the Launceston Techno Park. When the project is complete the organisation will have a great new office complex from which it can manage its state-wide operations, as well as a new six-bed, 24-hour respite facility for those in immediate need and a training centre that will help more carers gain recognised qualifications that are in high demand in Tasmania right now. This project will create 20 new long-term jobs and facilitate the training of around 60 additional aged care and NDIS workers per year. In keeping with our first 100-day plan, the second round of the program will open for applications at 2 p.m. today, taking the total program funding to \$20 million.

This second round will help even more projects get off the ground in a COVID-19 environment, support jobs and investment in our local economy and provide a future pipeline for the Tasmanian construction sector. Funding will continue to be delivered through a competitive grant round administered through the Department of State Growth. Guidelines and application information will be available on the State Growth website from 2 p.m. today, with applications closing on 6 October. Eligible projects that were unsuccessful in the first round are able to apply in the second round. Support programs like this are important policies. They are clearly working.

The CommSec State of the States Report in July 2021 ranked Tasmania as the best performing economy in Australia for the sixth quarter in a row. The Deloitte Access Economics Report said in June that Tasmania's COVID recovery continues to outperform expectations.

Tasmanians clearly trust this Government to secure Tasmania's future and deliver on our plan because in these uncertain times we are focused on them and not ourselves. We are fighting for their jobs and their future, not our own and we are getting on with our plan and getting results for Tasmania.

Supply Bills - Infrastructure Budget

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr FERGUSON

[11.03 a.m.]

The supply bill you introduced yesterday contained just under \$120 million for capital works across the peak construction period from October to January. The supply bill introduced in June for the period July to October contained \$220 million for capital works.

According to your pre-election policy this still leaves nearly \$800 million-worth of infrastructure commitments, about two-thirds, to be delivered in the other six months of this financial year. With our northern highways currently plagued by potholes, so much so that the Devonport to Deloraine section of the Bass Highway had to be reduced to 80 kilometres per hour, can you rule out hundreds of millions of dollars of infrastructure cuts in the upcoming budget?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as much as the Leader of the Opposition would like us to spend less on infrastructure as she is very much on record, I can rule out any such fanciful notions from the Leader of the Opposition.

I thank the member for her question. Regarding the budget supply bills that were thankfully passed by this House yesterday, Treasury worked with agencies to ensure not only were their operational budgets being met through to January in the unlikely but remotely possible chance that parliament was disrupted, we wanted to make sure that the cash was available for agencies' expenditure. It also took account of the need for the capital program.

I invite the member to await the Budget tomorrow, where she will be, I think, disappointed to see that the Government will maintain a very strong profile for infrastructure right across Tasmania.

I can point to our success. Our construction industry is now running at full capacity. The unemployment rate is 4.5 per cent. If that is not an historic low I do not know what is. We are beating the rest of the nation. The Civil Contractors Federation is rapturous with the Government in relation to our program and are flat out.

Last year we uplifted the infrastructure program in the event that private capital would shrink away. It did not. Industry is very busy and we are very pleased. I am delighted to inform the House that our state roads and bridges spending in 2021 was 245 per cent higher than the last full year of the former Labor-Greens government. We delivered \$317 million versus \$129 million from 2012-2013. That is a remarkable outcome. We still have a lot to do.

I will address the matter Ms White has raised. I share her disappointment and concern around the potholing that is occurring between Deloraine and Devonport. We have maintenance contracts in place. I have instructed the department to enforce those contracts. Repairs are underway and I expect them to be done to a proper and decent standard. This time of the year is not the right time for reseals, but when the summer comes and construction season begins I expect a proper job to be delivered. The Deloraine to Devonport section of the Bass Highway is a key area for this Government, with the Morrison Government, with significant funding for its improvement. I am advised that that pavement is decades old now. It needs an upgrade. I am grateful to the community and the RACT for participating in our corridor study on that.

I am surprised that the current Leader of the Opposition has asked this question because the Government has a plan. The Tasmanian people voted for that plan. This side of the House is in complete unity. We do not want to spend less on infrastructure, as Ms White goaded us to do at the RACT forum in November 2019, because it is producing jobs, it is giving intergenerational assets and better and safer infrastructure. That is what the Government stands for. That is why we are so united. That is why we like working with each other and not the division that has characterised the Leader of the Opposition's failing leadership.

COVID-19 - Creative Industries

Ms OGILVIE question to MINISTER for the ARTS, Ms ARCHER

[11.08 a.m.]

Can you please update the House regarding how the Government is supporting our creative industries to get back on their feet and recover from the impacts of COVID-19?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. This side of the House thinks that the cultural and creative industries are key industries in Tasmania and employ many Tasmanians. The Greens not wanting to hear the good news about further grants for the Arts is not surprising. Our Government is a strong supporter of the state's vitally important cultural and creative industries which enrich the lives of all Tasmanians, support thousands of jobs across the state and add millions to our economy.

That is why we have committed over \$12 million in support to the sector to date during what has been a very challenging 18 months for artists and arts organisations. We have worked hard to deliver a suite of support, stimulus and recovery initiatives to get the industry back on its feet. At this critical time we recognise just how important it is to continue to build confidence and momentum within the sector and that is exactly what we are doing.

Our Creative Support Small Grants Fund is the latest in a suite of new initiatives specifically designed to support artists and arts workers to continue to recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Under the fund, \$200 000 is being made available to support Tasmanian self-employed, sole trader and freelance artists to get back to work in the gig economy. The small grants program will give a boost to artists, who can apply for grants of between \$500 to \$2000 to undertake activities that are relevant to their artistic practice. By way of example, artists can seek funding to hire or purchase equipment, to attend lessons, workshops or master classes that

will grow their professional and creative skills, engage a mentor for in-person or virtual skill sharing, or hire a studio or venue to create or show their work.

The Creative Support Small Grants Fund is open to all Tasmanian artists or groups with Tasmanian members in the gig economy. Applications for this competitive funding program opened on Monday 16 August and will close on 11 October. The Creative Support Small Grants Fund will be rolled out throughout Tasmania. Arts Tasmania's programs are administered in line with the Cultural and Creative Industries Act 2017. More information about the fund is available on the Arts Tasmania website.

Establishing the guidelines for this program represents one of the many commitments we have fulfilled as part of our First 100 Days plan. Delivering the program itself is one of the key cultural and creative commitments we outlined in our 2020-21 state election campaign, which also included our commitment to provide a \$1.2 million increase in annual funding available to arts organisations. These programs are specifically tailored to deliver confidence for our cultural and creative industries going forward, and to demonstrate that there is substantial funding support available.

These initiatives are in addition to the \$4.5 million in critical stimulus support announced in March, where we provided a further \$500 000 for arts organisations, \$1 million to support the reactivation of our live performance sector, as well as \$3 million for Screen Tasmania's Screen Innovation Fund, which is an initiative of our Government to further showcase Tasmania as a destination for film and production in our burgeoning screen industry.

These are all in addition to our \$2 million 'share the risk' Live Performance Support Program, which we announced in December last year, and our \$4 million allocation in the 2020-21 state budget, which enabled the establishment of new programs and initiatives to support organisations, performers and artists to recover, form creative partnerships and produce new work.

In closing, our Government has increased funding to the arts sector, more than any previous government, even prior to COVID-19. We know continued momentum and confidence are critical to the ongoing growth and development of our cultural and creative sector in this state - in stark contrast to those opposite who, like Mr Winter, believe that supporting the arts and small business is a joke, and who are still bitterly divided and have absolutely no plan for Tasmania. On this side of the House, we are getting on with the job to deliver this important assistance to Tasmanian artists.

We will keep delivering on our commitment to provide sustainable and targeted support so that our artists and performers across all genres can continue to recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Together, we can secure the future of this incredibly diverse industry.

Time expired.

POISONS AMENDMENT BILL 2021 (No. 35)

First Reading

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

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (VOTING AGE) BILL 2021 (No. 38)

First Reading

Bill presented by **Ms O'Connor** and read the first time.

MOTION

Government Business - Appropriation Bills take Precedence

[11.16 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of the House) (by leave) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That - Government Business take precedence from such time as the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2021 and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2021 are introduced, until the House has dealt with all business associated with the Budget.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Establishment of Estimates Committees

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of the House) (by leave) - Mr Speaker, I move - That -

- (a) all stages of the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2021 and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2021 shall have allotted a maximum total of 97 hours as follows:
 - (i) up to the second reading: maximum 16 hours;
 - (ii) in the Estimates Committees: maximum 63 hours; and
 - (iii) in Committee of the Whole House and third reading: maximum 18 hours;
- (b) on the second reading, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have unlimited speaking time and other members speak for not longer than 30 minutes each;
- (c) when the Appropriation Bills (No. 1 and No. 2) 2021 have been read the second time in the House of Assembly, the Bills be referred to Estimates Committees A and B of the House of Assembly.

Such Committees may not vote on, but may examine and report upon the proposed expenditures contained in the bills by no later than 14 September 2021, with such

expenditures being considered on an output by output basis, including Grants, Subsidies and Loans and the Capital Investment Program.

The following ministerial portfolio units are allocated to House of Assembly Estimates Committee A:

Date	Minister
Monday, 6 September 0900 - 1300 Premier (4 hours) 1400 - 1800 Treasury (4 hours) 1800 - 1900 Climate Change (1 hour) 1900 - 2000 Tourism (1 hour)	Hon. Peter Gutwein MP
Tuesday, 7 September 0900 - 1000 Finance (1 hour) 1000 - 1300, 1400 - 1500 Infrastructure & Transport (4 hours) 1500 - 1730 State Development, Construction & Housing (2.5 hours) 1730 - 1800 Science and Technology (0.5 hour)	Hon. Michael Ferguson MP
Wednesday, 8 September 0900 - 1100 State Growth (2 hours) 1100 - 1300 Local Government & Planning (2 hours) 1400 - 1500 Environment (1 hour) 1500 - 1600 Aboriginal Affairs (1 hour) 1600 - 1630 Heritage (0.5 hour)	Hon. Roger Jaensch MP
Thursday, 9 September 0900 - 1100 Resources (2 hours) 1100 - 1300, 1400 - 1500 Primary Industries and Water (3 hours) 1500 - 1700 Energy & Emissions Reduction (2 hours) 1700 - 1730 Trade (0.5 hour) 1730 - 1800 Veterans' Affairs (0.5 hour)	Hon. Guy Barnett MP

House of Assembly Estimates Committee B:

Date	Minister
Monday, 6 September 0900 - 1300, 1400 - 1600 Health (6 hours) 1600 - 1800 Mental Health & Wellbeing (2 hours) 1800 - 1830 Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries (0.5 hour) 1830 - 1930 Community Services & Development (1 hour)	Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP
Tuesday, 7 September 0900 - 1000 Hospitality & Events (1 hour) 1000 - 1230 Education (2.5 hours) 1230 - 1300, 1400 - 1500 Skills, Training & Workforce Growth (1.5 hours) 1500 - 1600 Disability Services (1 hour) 1600 - 1700 Children & Youth (1 hour)	Hon. Sarah Courtney MP
Wednesday, 8 September 0900 - 1130 Attorney-General and Justice (2.5 hours) 1130 - 1300, 1400 - 1430 Corrections (2 hours) 1430 - 1600 Workplace Safety & Consumer Affairs (1.5 hours) 1600 - 1630 Arts (0.5 hour)	Hon. Elise Archer MP

Thursday, 9 September 0900 - 1000 Parks (1 hour) 1000 - 1030 Prevention of Family Violence (0.5 hour) 1030 - 1300 Police, Fire and Emergency Management (2.5 hours) 1400 - 1500 Small Business (1 hour) 1500 - 1600 Women (1 hour) 1600 - 1630 Sport and Recreation (0.5 hour) 1630 - 1730 Racing (1 hour)	Hon. Jacquie Petrusma MP Hon. Jane Howlett MLC
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MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES - HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES

- (1) Estimates Committee A consists of the following members:

The Chair of Committees (Chair);
Mr Tucker (Deputy-Chair);
One member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition; and
Ms O'Connor.

- (2) Estimates Committee B consists of the following members:

Mr Ellis (Chair);
Ms Ogilvie (Deputy-Chair);
One member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition; and
Dr Woodruff.

- (3) Members of the House who have not been appointed as members of the Committee, may participate in proceedings by asking questions, but not more than two in succession; and may not vote, move any motion or be counted for the purposes of a quorum.
- (4) The Chair of a Committee has a deliberative and a casting vote.
- (5) During sittings, substitute members may be allowed.
- (6) If a vacancy occurs in the membership of a Committee, the Speaker may nominate a member in substitution, but in so doing has regard to the composition of the Committee as appointed by the House.
- (7) A Committee may proceed with business despite a vacancy in its membership.
- (8) The quorum of a Committee is a majority of the Committee.
- (9) If at any time a quorum is not present, the Chair will suspend proceedings of the Committee until a quorum is present or adjourn the Committee.
- (10) Any time lost for lack of a quorum shall be added to the time allocated to that session.

SITTING TIMES

- (1) Each Estimates Committee meets only in accordance with the abovementioned time-table adopted by the House or as varied by the Chair.
- (2) Estimates Committees may sit only when the House is not sitting.

OPEN HEARINGS

All hearings of the Estimates Committees are open to the public.

PROCEEDINGS OF AN ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

- (1) Consideration of proposed expenditures in an Estimates Committee follows as far as possible the procedure observed in a Committee of the whole House.
- (2) A Committee will consider expenditures on an output by output basis, including Grants, Subsidies and Loans and the Capital Investment Program.
- (3) A Committee may ask for explanations from a minister relating to the outputs.
- (4) The minister who is asked for explanations may be assisted where necessary by officers in the provision of factual information.
- (5) Officers may answer questions at the request of the minister but shall not be required to comment on policy matters.
- (6) Time limits of one minute for a question and three minutes for an answer shall apply in Estimates Committees.
- (7) Questions may be asked on a ratio of three Opposition, one Green and one Government, or in such form as the Committee determines.
- (8) A minister may advise an Estimates Committee that an answer to a question, or part of a question, asked of the minister will be given later to the Committee, where possible that Committee sitting day.
- (9) A minister may provide additional information to a Committee about an answer given by or for the minister.
- (10) Additional information -
 - (a) is to be written;

- (b) is to be given by a time decided by the Committee; and
 - (c) may be included in a volume of additional information laid on the Table of the House by the Committee.
- (11) If any member persistently disrupts the business of an Estimates Committee, the Chair -
- (a) names the member;
 - (b) if the member named is a member of the Estimates Committee, suspends the sitting of the Estimates Committee until the Chair has reported the offence to the Speaker; and
 - (c) if the member named is not a member of the Estimates Committee, orders that member's withdrawal from the sitting of the Committee until the Chair has reported the offence to the Speaker;

as soon as practicable, the Chair advises the Speaker who then gives notice that the Member of the Estimates Committee be replaced.

- (12) If any objection is taken to a ruling or decision of the Chair -
- (a) the objection must be taken at once and stated in writing;
 - (b) the Chair, as soon as practicable, advises the Speaker who makes a ruling on the matter; and
 - (c) the Estimates Committee may continue to meet but may not further examine the output then under consideration.
- (13) Television coverage will be allowed, subject to the same conditions that apply to televising of the House of Assembly.

HANSARD REPORT

An unedited transcript of Estimates Committee proceedings is to be circulated, in a manner similar to that used for the House Hansard, as soon as practicable after the Committee's proceedings.

REPORTS OF ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

- (1) A report of an Estimates Committee is presented by the Chair or Deputy Chair of that Committee to a Committee of the whole House, such reports containing any resolution or expression of opinion of that Committee.

- (2) When the reports of the Estimates Committees are presented they may be taken into consideration at once or at a future time.
- (3) The following time limit applies to consideration of reports of Estimates Committees on each portfolio unit on the question 'That the proposed expenditures be agreed to and that the resolutions or expressions of opinion agreed to by the Committees in relation to those expenditures be noted.'

One minister, the Leader of the Opposition or member deputised by the Leader - 20 minutes, any other member - 10 minutes. A maximum period for consideration of 2 hours for each minister.

- (4) When the consideration of reports of Estimates Committees A and B has been completed, the question is proposed and put forthwith without debate 'That the remainder of the bills be agreed to.'
- (5) When the bills have been agreed to by the House, the third reading of each bill may be taken into consideration at once or made an order of the day for the next sitting day.

Mr Speaker, this motion establishes, in particular, the period of time for debate for the second reading, the Estimates Committee time frames, together with the reporting back by the Committee of the Whole House for the third reading, consistent with recent news on how we have been able to refine this process.

At this point I acknowledge and thank Mr Winter, Manager of Opposition Business, Ms O'Connor, Leader of the Greens, and Ms Johnston, Independent member, for each of their considerations, as we worked through, in developing the time frames involved, and indeed working together in a cooperative fashion as far as the housekeeping matters here are concerned. It is right and proper that the government of the day be able to be scrutinised and held to account. That is in fact what the Estimates Process was set up to achieve. I think it was set up by Mr Rundle back in the 1990s. So, that is what we want.

Mr Winter - Mr Groom.

Mr FERGUSON - Thank you for that correction. It was former premier Mr Groom, Leader of the House at the time.

This motion sets the process for all members of our House, including Government members, ministers and non-ministers, but predominantly the official Opposition, to participate in Government scrutiny.

As with each year, a total of 63 hours is provisioned for scrutiny, and the Government is working with both parties on the allocation of this time for all Government portfolios.

I take this opportunity to inform the House in relation to our Independent member - and we do have some experience here, because in the previous two Budgets we worked with the Independent member for Clark, Ms Ogilvie. I place on the record via you, Mr Speaker, to

Ms Johnston, that she can certainly have the opportunity to, and expect to, participate in these Committees by asking questions. This did work well for Ms Ogilvie as an independent member in 2019 and 2020, and she was also able to move between the two committees that run concurrently. Via you, Mr Speaker, to Ms Johnston, you will have the same opportunity.

I refer all members to clause (3) of the motion, which provides that any member of the House that is not a member of one of the committees so-named in the motion will be able to refer to that clause and participate, and ask questions, up to two in succession.

We have made changes from a previous draft. Again, thank you, particularly to Mr Winter and Ms O'Connor, who were able to work together and give the Government a single point of reference for negotiating those times. I commend the motion.

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, we will be supporting this. I appreciate the opportunity to work with members across the Chamber to ensure that we adequately hold the Government to account for this year's Budget. We look forward to participating.

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, we support the motion. I acknowledge that, this year, having discussions about adjustments to the proposed schedule was much more productive and open than it has been in previous years. I thank Mr Winter and our own Chief of Staff and the Opposition's Chief of Staff for allowing this process to be respectful, and for a bit of give and take, which is important to a cooperative atmosphere in these matters.

We were able to negotiate some significant and important changes to the Estimates schedule that I want to lay on the record. Originally, as was the case last year, the year before and the year before, climate change was only given 30 minutes - and this is in a year we have had the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's sixth assessment report. I challenge some of the language the Premier used this morning, accusing us of trying to scare children. We are just repeating what the scientists and the UN Secretary-General have said about this being a code red for humanity, that human behaviours have absolutely contributed to global warming, and that every person on the planet and every jurisdiction has a role to play in bringing down emissions.

We do not set out to scare children, Mr Speaker. We set out to make sure that governments are taking action that gives children hope for the future. That is our job and we are the truth-tellers on climate in here. I understand -

Mr Ferguson - You should tell the whole story.

Ms O'CONNOR - We have just had the alleged minister for Science scoff at that statement, like the Attorney-General was scoffing when I was asking the question this morning and Ms Ogilvie was rolling her eyes. What do we have over there on the government benches? A pack of climate deniers.

Ms Ogilvie - It won't work, Cassy. Nobody believes -

Ms O'CONNOR - Do not call me Cassy in this place.

Ms Ogilvie - Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Once upon a time, Ms Ogilvie, you believed in climate action. Now you roll your eyes when we ask a question that simply repeats what the scientists are saying. The best way to make children feel optimistic about the future is to take tangible action. Action equals hope. It is a very simple, sociological equation. Take action: it gives young people hope. Be honest about the science and the path through. Do not treat children like they do not understand the truth. We will not cop the accusation that we are trying to scare children. When the minister for Science snorts at us because we are laying out the facts, we will name him up. When the alleged former independent member for Clark rolls her eyes when I am asking a question that is simply laying the science on the table, we will call that out.

Ms OGILVIE - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I am not quite sure what stage we are at with the order of the House.

Ms O'Connor - Where is your point of order?

Ms OGILVIE - She is pointing at me, calling me an alleged something.

Dr Woodruff - What is the point of order, Ms Ogilvie, other than -

Ms O'Connor - Former alleged independent.

Ms OGILVIE - How rude.

Ms O'Connor - Do you have a point of order. You have just big noted yourself. Good on you.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, getting back to the subject.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, getting back to the subject. It is only the most important subject we can be talking about in here because it will chart our children's future and some of us in this place get it. I am not sure how many Government members do.

So, originally it was 30 minutes for Climate Change. At the same time as the Estimates schedule had given Sport and Recreation an hour and Racing an hour, it gave Climate Change half an hour. It gave European heritage an hour then diminished Aboriginal Affairs to half an hour. We have been able to renegotiate that balance appropriately too. It diminished the Resources portfolio scrutiny to one and a half hours. Now, appropriately, it is a little bit longer at two hours. We are thankful for the capacity to negotiate. We also want to make sure that crossbench members and the independent member for Clark are given equal treatment at the table - and fair treatment, Mr Speaker. We will be keeping a close eye on that.

In closing, we would very much like to see the Government respect that this is a scrutiny process. In recent years we have seen a tendency for ministers to sit there and give very long preambles that take up potential scrutiny time. The classic example was last year in scrutiny of the Arts portfolio, which was relegated to 30 minutes, we had a nearly 15-minute preamble from the Minister for the Arts, Ms Archer.

Can we encourage ministers not to denigrate what is supposed to be a scrutiny hearing by buying themselves 10, 15, 20 minutes of Estimates time reading out a prepared preamble

from the department? This does not tell us anything about their knowledge of the portfolio. It just tells us they can read.

Please, ministers, do not do that to the Estimates process. It is insulting. You should not be afraid of questions. If you understand your portfolio, if you are across it, if you are not embarrassed by your decisions, you should not have to waffle at the beginning to fill up time.

We also know that the questions that come from Government members in Estimates hearings are nothing more than time-fillers and Dorothy Dixers. Of course, we understand they are part of the Estimates process but let us not kid ourselves about what those questions are and where they come from. They are written in government ministers' offices and they are designed to give the minister a bit of breathing space in the scrutiny hearings and for the minister to try to persuade us how terrific they are at their job. Let us keep the Dorothy Dixers to a minimum, the answers to the Dorothy Dixers short. Please let us restrict the length of time for preambles and let us hope this year, unlike in many previous years, we actually get some useful information through the Estimates process.

[11.29 a.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Mr Speaker, in addressing the question and the motion before the House, I thank the Leader of the House for his commitment to ensure that, as an independent member of this House, I get an equal and adequate opportunity to ask questions and to hold the Government to account. I very much look forward to holding the Government to account on behalf of the people of Clark. I acknowledge your commitment for the opportunity to be able to do that.

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, that was a very spirited debate. I thank members for their contributions. I love my job and I am grateful for the opportunity to work with members of this House.

There was a little bit of politics being played through that debate. I will respond briefly. We are getting better at this. This is more or less a cut and paste from the previous government with a lot of refinements that we have made over the last eight years. The number of times that Government members, private members, have questions is significantly less than was the case under the previous Labor-Greens government.

Ms O'Connor - That is a lie. That is just not true.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor -

Ms O'Connor - I was there. It is not true.

Mr FERGUSON - I believe it would be better for the record if words like that were withdrawn, Mr Speaker.

Ms O'Connor - What do I withdraw, Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER - You know that it is improper to use the word 'lie' in the Chamber, under any circumstance.

Ms O'Connor - Welcome to our Orwellian world of not naming things for what they are. I withdraw the word 'lie' and insert instead 'mistruth'.

Mr FERGUSON - I will insert instead that significantly less opportunities for Government questions than was the case. I do dare you, Ms O'Connor, to do that - follow through on your threat to check. The same goes for question time in the House. This is a matter of record, not debate. There is no point debating something when you are talking facts compared to made up facts.

Ms O'Connor - Like the IPCC report?

Mr FERGUSON - I felt that it was a bit self-indulgent to bring in a snortle. The word 'snortle' was used and the body language of Ms O'Connor to try to bring that into the *Hansard*. For the record only there were faces pulled around the Chamber when Ms O'Connor described herself as the only truth teller in this place.

Ms O'Connor - I did not. I said the Greens are the truth tellers on climate. Fact.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor. Interjections should cease.

Dr Woodruff - Can you imagine if those scientists who were at the dinner last night were watching what you are doing?

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr FERGUSON - Come in, spinner. I doubt that any member of this House could be fairly described in the way that Ms O'Connor has. That is a gratuitous and fatuous set of comments. I do not think that does you any credit at all, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'Connor - We were accused of trying to scare children just by reading out the science. I do not care what you think of me.

Mr FERGUSON - I know you do not but it is my turn to speak. The tradition on this was that you would not carve up by portfolio. The time that has just been wasted in questioning how much time for Climate Change; how much time for Aboriginal Affairs, how much time for Sport and Recreation, that is really in the hands of the House. The Government prefers to place that in the hands of the Opposition.

It is not a meritorious argument to try to say that one is more important than the other on the basis only of time. The tradition on this was that each minister, nine of them, would have seven hours of scrutiny. Nine times seven is 63. That is where it came from, but over the years there has been increasing flexibility to swap time in and out. With the benefit of some years' experience you can place more clarity on which output groups would be given what length of time. That is how the House got here.

I want to reject the claim because that was unhelpful. It does not give credit to this House. We are managing our time frames, trying to do it professionally. I will close where I started, which is to thank members of the Opposition and the Greens and Ms Johnston for their contributions to get us to this point.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Legislative Council Members Attendance at the Budget Speech

[11.34 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House of Assembly requests that -

- (1) All Members of the Legislative Council attend in the House of Assembly Chamber following the First reading of the Appropriation Bills (No. 1 and No. 2) 2021 for the purpose of listening to the speech by the Premier and Treasurer in relation to the Tasmanian Budget 2021-22.
- (2) The Legislative Council give leave to the Honourable the Minister for Racing, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Small Business and Minister for Women to appear before and give evidence to, the relevant Estimates Committees of the House of Assembly in relation to the budget Estimates and related documents.

Mr Speaker, that is self-evidently to ensure that that tradition can be honoured.

Motion agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Legislative Council Estimates Committees - Attendance of House of Assembly Ministers

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I am in receipt of a message from the Legislative Council which I will ask the Clerk of the House to read:

Mr Speaker,

The Legislative Council, having passed the following resolution, now transmit the same to the House of Assembly and requests its concurrence therein.

Resolved that the Legislative Council having appointed two Estimates Committees reflecting the distribution of Government ministers' portfolio responsibilities request that the House of Assembly give leave to all ministers to appear before and give evidence to the relevant Council Estimates Committee in relation to the budget Estimates and related documents.

C Farrell

President
Legislative Council

25 August 2021

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the message of the Legislative Council be considered forthwith.

Motion agreed to.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the message be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Small Business Support

[11.37 a.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: small business support.

We are hearing across our state from the incredible sector that provides the backbone to the Tasmanian economy that things are hard and that there is stress in the community. I want to respond to a couple of comments that I have heard, not only in the Chamber but across the community recently around the importance of small business and the reference to them being the engine room and power house of the economy.

This is true. We know from so many people in our community, the tens of thousands of people who are either employed by or growing and operating small businesses, that they are so important to Tasmania. However, if you expect people who are struggling and under stress to be an engine then they have to be cared for. An engine requires energy to operate. If you are fatigued and distressed and under pressure you cannot provide the energy. Therefore the engine room has the potential for catastrophic failure.

We talk about a small business being a power house to Tasmania. To be a power house, a hustler, a high performer and successful you need support and energy. Right now, we are hearing not only from micro businesses, small businesses but from our peak bodies who support and champion our business sectors, that people are struggling.

I acknowledge the packages of support that are being provided to small businesses across our state. It is too little too late. We are hearing from people now, today, of the distress they

are under and their inability to maintain the employees that they need to deliver the services in their various sectors. We are not just hearing from the same types of people in the same industries, we are hearing from micro, small and large businesses. We are hearing from people in retail, hospitality, tourism. We are hearing from people in lots of different sectors about concerns in the reduction of their income, not just at the 30 per cent which sets the threshold for the need for support, but we are hearing from people that are having a drop in their income right now of 60 per cent and 80 per cent.

In a peak body meeting I had recently in fisheries, I heard of a person who employs 15 people who has had no cash sales in six weeks: a successful business whose product goes to the mainland markets, particularly in Sydney. No cash sales for six weeks.

People in small businesses and microbusinesses in Tasmania are often the leaders of their household. They bring home the money that feeds their family, that puts fuel in their cars, that maintains either the rental payments if they are lucky enough to have rental accommodation or their housing payments if they are potentially under stress in their mortgages right now.

We hear, as we have from Mr Paul Lewis, who operates an independent taxi service from Perth servicing the Launceston Airport, of the impacts in his business. It has been suggested that perhaps we are being petty and playing politics with the impacts of people in micro and small businesses but I want to share with you what Mr Lewis shared with me about his current experiences. His income has dropped by 80 per cent. He is not eligible for a grant at the moment. He still has to pay his rent, he still has to buy food, pay his rego, his insurance, the phone bill, the fuel. He turns up to the airport for a flight that is due, feeling positive, spending the fuel to get there from Perth to the airport at Evandale, and the flights are cancelled.

People are living in a situation at the moment where they have not seen their family for a long time. His 16-year-old son is in Victoria. He has not seen him for eight months. He is looking after his elderly mother and he is caring for others in his family and struggling. This is not about being petty. This is about being real and understanding how hard it is for people in our community right now.

I received overnight a flood of emails from people in our community who are doing it tough. I want to read to the meeting today an experience of someone who has had a successful business for 15 years and never struggled:

I have been in my business for 15 years as a sole trader. When COVID-19 hit I pretty much lost everything. Weddings were cancelled, postponed and now couples are not confident to book a wedding. I have received no assistance. I have had advice, but the advice has been to close. I do not want to throw away 15 years of building my business and my reputation and then struggle to recommence.

We are hearing of people in hospitality who are having to lay off workers, who will find it hard to rebuild their businesses into the future. Contractors who are not being picked up in small business and microbusiness opportunities for grants are also finding it hard. As we know, recently at the Launceston Airport, aviation staff were stood down and are not eligible for financial support. The challenge across all industries is the loss of jobs right now. The exodus of staff right now will have long-term impacts on a number of industries to rebuild. At the

Launceston Airport it is suggested that it could take up to six months to recruit workers that we lose now once the borders reopen.

Tasmanian small businesses are the backbone of our community. They are the people who provide opportunities for a range of indirect services, indirect incomes for others in their small communities, often in regional Tasmania. These are the families, the individuals who are supporting our school communities, our sporting communities, our community organisations. They are often the people that stretch because they understand what it is to provide support and need support.

Right now, there is too little too late being provided to the small and microbusinesses in Tasmania. We have heard today that the Government will make changes because they do understand that it is not enough and times are hard.

We need to see action now for people struggling now to put food on the table, to pay their rent and to support themselves and their families.

[11.44 a.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for State Growth) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for bringing on this Matter of Public Importance today. As she acknowledged and as we heard in the exchange in question time today regarding the Border Closure Critical Support Grant Program, the Government acknowledges there are businesses that fall outside the original eligibility criteria for that program.

We are taking on board the feedback from businesses we are hearing from and been referred to us, with a view to use this feedback to inform how we can provide broader and practical support at this critical time as well as the structure of future business support measures.

We strongly encourage all impacted businesses to register their circumstances with Business Tasmania, which is the go-to for this and a range of other supports our Government has been able to provide and will continue to provide to small businesses, yes, as the engine room of our economy but also as the fabric of our communities.

I take this opportunity to send a message to small business to say thank you for how remarkably adaptable, resilient and innovative you have been over this last extraordinary 18 months or so. How quickly small businesses have responded to sudden unprecedented restrictions on their operations in the interests of keeping their customers and their communities safe, at their own expense in many cases. The amazing lengths that businesses have gone to to adapt the way they provide their services to their customers so that they can keep going and keep providing a level of safe, normal service delivery to people who need them.

I am thinking here about the small community pharmacies in towns like Wynyard, where I live. Within hours of early hard lockdowns we had in the north-west, that night there were lights on, tradies out the front of their businesses, turning their normal shop that people could come in to and wander through, into a counter on the footpath, serving people through a window, able to continue to fill their prescriptions and provide for their primary health needs in a COVID-safe way. They did that literally overnight and it was extraordinary.

I take my hat off to people who have reinvented their whole business operations to support continued service delivery to their customers and our community through these very uncertain times. They have done an extraordinary job.

The Opposition's claims that this Government has done too little too late are also extraordinary and way off the mark. So far, I am advised that this Government has provided in excess of \$80 million in assistance packages directed specifically to small businesses providing over 21 000 grants to more than 14 000 small businesses directly in response to the pandemic.

It is not just in the programs that have been delivered directly to small businesses from which they will get a benefit. The \$50 million Tasmanian Tourism Loans Scheme, the creative support that the Minister for the Arts spoke about before, the Creative Support Small Grants Fund, the \$10 million Building Projects Support Program I spoke about earlier today, which has just been doubled, another \$10 million - \$20 million in total, two travel voucher rounds, the home builder boost, the first home owner's grant boost. Everything that has been done to stimulate our economy creates, in many cases, particularly in building and construction, work directly for small businesses who are part of the supply chains. It creates confidence and cash flow in the economy that channels back in through small businesses right across our state.

That is why so much of the assistance that has been provided - over \$1 billion in assistance, the Premier confirmed this morning - has been directed to those sectors most able to turn that money over and reinvest it in local businesses, local communities, right across Tasmania, including, critically, the building and construction sectors.

We do hear the feedback, we are listening and we have been listening and we will continue to listen to communities, sole traders, small businesses, big businesses, whole sectors of our economy, as they give us feedback on how this unprecedented, uncertain pandemic is affecting them, where the gaps are and where we need to move next. Our track record is one of responding quickly and generously in a targeted way to meet those needs when they arise. That track record speaks for itself and will continue to.

Right now, we are also rolling out new commitments that we made during the election period directly to assist small business, including a \$1.2 million COVID-19 Small Business Financial Counselling Support Program, a \$2 million Small Business Incubator And Accelerator Pilot Program, \$800 000 boost for Business Tasmania to provide its services to people in small business right around the state as well as \$300 000 for regional chambers of commerce, \$150 000 for the Small Business Council and \$30 000 for the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. They are all critical go-to navigators and networkers of small business to help them ensure that they are getting best advantage from the assistance programs and services that are available to them. They all provide critical feedback and intelligence to help us design the next package of support for small business in Tasmania.

Time expired.

[11.51 a.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, borders are closed to New South Wales and Victoria. We know why and we support that measure. However, this has an impact. While we are protected from the virus spreading by the border being closed, we are not protected from the economic impact of lockdowns in New South Wales and Victoria.

There is nowhere near enough economic support in Tasmania despite the fact that we are very lucky to be walking around with businesses open, without needing to wear masks. We are thankful for that, but if you scratch the surface of business conditions in Tasmania right now, not enough is being done to support these businesses. Only this morning the shadow treasurer and I walked down and talked to three businesses about conditions. They are hurting right now.

When I hear the Minister for Small Business come in here and repeat programs that they are ineligible for or can access but are completely inadequate, I am sad for those business operators. When I hear Mr Jaensch talk about being thankful for their innovativeness let us show them some thanks now. Despite all the work they put into the last 12 months to ensure that they survived lockdowns in Tasmania and the difficult economic conditions, what we are seeing right now, according to the businesses that we are speaking to, is worse because there is no JobKeeper.

We need more support. When we asked those questions this morning, I wondered if the Government was going to announce something today. Would that not be a good response to inadequate answers from yesterday, that there had been a change of heart and that they did understand? We have now uncovered that there is no additional support in tomorrow's budget for these businesses that are not meeting the criteria, as outlined by the member for Bass this morning.

We heard from the Minister for Small Business that there will be a conversation with Mr Lewis and advice provided to someone who is ineligible, who has not got enough revenue coming in, who is really struggling. The Uber driver I spoke to last week is reliant on the airport for the revenue he needs for himself and his family to make ends meet. He has lost all that revenue. Even if he accesses the \$2000 that he is eligible for under the program, that is nowhere near enough. This is likely to continue.

We understand that in New South Wales things are out of control. It is highly unlikely the borders are going to be open there for quite some time. That is going to continue to have an impact. At least in the next few months, there is unlikely to be any change to that border situation. Without that, people are not going to survive unless this grants program is either restructured or changed or expanded so that we can support the businesses that are desperate for our support.

We asked these questions legitimately. The answer today from the Minister for Small Business referred to post-GFC Tasmania, as though that is going to help someone. I wonder what would happen if the Minister for Small Business went to one of these businesses and said, 'Do you know what happened back in 2013?' I do not think she would last very long in that business. They would probably move her out of there pretty quickly. It is not an adequate response. It's a really serious issue.

Question time is an opportunity to ask the important issues. The issue for businesses and their workers must be one of the most important issues for Tasmania right now. We are asking questions and the answers coming back are completely inadequate. It is obvious that the budget tomorrow is going to have inadequate support. You can point all you like to programs that do not work, but the reality for people right now, for these businesses, is that they are really struggling.

One of the people we spoke to this morning was a hotel operator. He told us that occupancy was down to about 20 per cent at the moment. He pointed to other hotels around Hobart with similar issues. The Premier says football is the answer. That would be a nice sugar hit for some businesses in Launceston on the weekend. I am sure that will be well received, but it does not help businesses in southern Tasmania. It does not help businesses in Launceston the weekend after. It does not help them over the next two months, three months, for however long we are going to be in this situation.

JobKeeper was obviously needed last year, but we continue to hear and Government members must be hearing the same feedback, things at the moment, for many businesses, are worse. We do not have the support of the Australian Government like we did last year, so the Tasmanian Government should step up. To say they are listening and suggest a business emails someone and they will provide you with some advice is not good enough.

People are really struggling. Later today we are going to hear a bunch of economic statistics from July, I assume, talking about how wonderful the Government is and making claims that the Government is responsible for whatever good news we'll pre-emptively hear. The reality is right now. Go out and talk to real people. Get out of the limo, out of the ivory tower and have a chat to businesses today. I will take you out at lunch time, minister. Go and have a chat to them. They are really struggling. When you stand up here and talk about how great things are and how innovative they are, that does not help anyone. Do something. You are in government.

[11.58 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, it is a very difficult time for so many small businesses in Tasmania. All members would be confronted regularly through our offices or personally with stories of people who had a hard time last year and are having an even harder time this year.

Struggling to get on top of the high number of Delta variant cases in New South Wales and Victoria has had a huge impact on tourism and trade in Tasmania. It has slowed the transport of goods and services across all industries. The state has done what it can to adapt but unfortunately the basis on which some people have established their small business means they are just not able to adapt. If you do not have people coming through your door you cannot manufacture them, and you cannot pay staff. You can only hold on for so long. As was predicted in the middle of last year, when JobKeeper finished it was going to be the hardest time for Australians. Tasmanians in small business have not found themselves to be in a different situation from people in the rest of Australia.

What does the Government do in response? The Greens would be expecting the Liberal Premier to be shouting with outrage to the Prime Minister about why he has not continued JobKeeper. We have never heard the Premier come out and make a public statement about that. We have never heard him stand up for Tasmanians who are doing it so hard. Small business owners who are on the brink of ruin, if they have not already gone under - those are the people he should be standing up for. It is a really cruel form of economic management that Josh -

Mr Jaensch - Premier Gutwein has not stood up for Tasmanians?

Dr WOODRUFF - Not in this instance.

Mr Jaensch - Is that what you are saying? He sat on his hands all through the pandemic?

Dr WOODRUFF - Correct. Not in his interest. We do not hear it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, minister.

Dr WOODRUFF - The minister is interjecting. We have not heard it, so we would really like to hear the Premier make some very strong statements about the failure of the federal Liberal party to stand up for Tasmanians and provide economic support through this crisis, because that is where it should be, and that is how we continue economies. Successful economies have that social support when it is required. We saw the evidence of how well it has worked in Australia. Now we are seeing the evidence of how it is becoming unstitched after JobKeeper was removed.

There is a level of denialism in the federal Liberal Party on so many issues. Climate denialism is right at the top, but COVID-19 denialism is hot on its heels. There is a distorted reality that the Prime Minister lives within, probably because of his particular religious beliefs; somehow, he does not seem to attend to the factual realities of life on Earth today. Things are only going to change if we take agency and do that ourselves. It is the hand of human beings and leaders to make decisions for people today about the challenges confronting us. Putting our head in the sand about how we respond to COVID-19 and respond to climate change - the greatest threat to human beings - is a disastrous approach.

All people around Australia who attend to science, who are open and understand the reality of what is happening on the planet, realise we have to take a different approach.

In Tasmania, when it comes to small business owners, this Government needs to have more transparency about how the grants process is conducted, and demonstrate that there is fairness in the way people's applications are received and processed. I commend the people who have been working on advisory panels making decisions about who gets grants. It is obviously a very hard job. There were a lot of applications last year, and there will continue to be a lot of applications.

We have had a number of contacts from people who just point out that the system seems designed to specifically keep out the most needy. I understand - and the minister may correct me if I am wrong - that people who are now on under \$50 000 are not eligible. One of those people contacted the Greens directly with his very sad message. Last year he had some funding because he had the federal government/state government COVID-19 assistance, but because he has been in the events sector, and there are no conferences and fewer weddings for the past 16 months, he can no longer meet the criteria, because his income has systemically and serially fallen below the threshold.

The system is upside down, as he said. It is like the Salvos saying you cannot have any assistance because you are too homeless. It is really harsh when people like him who are the most needy do not fit the guidelines.

We also had some correspondence on behalf of a person last year who failed to meet the threshold. Eventually, after our advocacy for this person, they did receive financial assistance,

but there was no openness about that process, and the minister did not contact that person directly or offer a review process.

Compassion, fairness and transparency are what is required.

Time expired.

[12.05 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I have the deepest amount of compassion and concern for people who are endeavouring to continue to keep very small businesses going, in particular micro-businesses and sole traders. As a former sole trader myself, and as a mother, I know how hard it is to balance business and home life and work in ordinary times. In COVID-19 times, it is doubly so.

On the record, I really want to call out to everybody who is working so hard to keep those businesses going. Because of my professional background, I get follow-up communication from those in the professional services sector, where we do have a lot of people who are running small businesses, sole practices, and those sorts of things. They are finding it very difficult.

Some of the unanticipated or unexpected impacts of COVID-19 have caused some difficulties. For example, one of the communications I have had is from a barrister who is a specialist and works nationally. He is not a wealthy person, he tends to do defence work - and even his ability to attend court matters because of border closures has been affected. We hope of course that teleconferencing works, but it does not always work, and you do need that face-to-face time. So, people's incomes have reduced dramatically.

I think about our musicians and artists and all of those who effectively work from gig to gig - music gigs, artistic gigs. Tutors who are teaching kids. A whole lot of people who are not in the retail or restaurant sector need to be in our consciousness as well.

I think I will for the rest of my life remember the moment in this Chamber when we made the decision to close things down because of the risk and damage that could be done long term. We asked our business community, and they stood up and went with us on this journey of 'hibernation' - that was the word we used in some sense.

I can say - because I have had my own very interesting journey from Independent to my new team, where I am extremely happy - that every time I brought one of those people - particularly the restaurateurs, bars, pubs and clubs - to the table with the Government and said these people need help, is there something we can do? Can we do something about the restrictions? Can we have stand-up dancing? Can the kids have their end of year formal? Can we have Christmas? All of those issues. I worked very hard to focus attention on keeping things going. If we were going to get kids back to school, that was really important.

When I did that, the Government said yes, we will find a way. As much as the ministers in this place would love me to say well done - and I will - the people I really want to give deep credit to are those who work in government, who are in charge of making sure that the connections are continually happening with those businesses, and going through the process of making applications, which is not an insignificant process.

I am thinking about those traders, for example, in the printing services sector. Things changed dramatically for them. Many of them were living on being able to produce printing for things like conferences, the university - those sorts of major clients and customers were impacted as well. I think we now have this before COVID-19 and after COVID-19 time question. The Liberal government, of which I am now a proud member, has done so much to put funds into businesses at the right time.

Nothing is perfect. Having a pandemic is not unprecedented, but responding to it in the way we have is unprecedented - for our island economy to be the leading light in the nation, economically. To have the capacity to help small business owners when they asked for help is really quite remarkable. We are lucky to have that sense of safety and security that we have.

I am full-bottle supportive of football, as you know, as a former president of the Southern Football League, having started the women's competition, which is now a massive event in itself. Bringing those teams here is a remarkable achievement but there is more we can do and there are other things we could possibly bring here to generate activity and revenue.

I want to give a lot of credit to Business Tasmania, to the Government, to everybody who has worked so hard to keep this going. Business Tasmania, of course, is the central point of contact for small businesses seeking support in their recovery. I have constituents going through that process now.

They received 15 000 phone calls for assistance since 23 March 2020. When we say they received 15 000 phone calls, they took 15 000 phone calls. They did the work. They connected, they reached out. Good people. The top five inquiries made to Business Tasmania last month, and this is worth noting, were around the event framework and 100 per cent capacity for seated events. It is a good thing.

The Check in TAS app has been a boon. I get out and about in my electorate a lot, I like to be out there talking to people, and I always endeavour to use the Check in app, and I see other people doing that too. That has allowed us to move freely. It means we can move freely and we can spend more money, and we all want to spend money locally, in our electorates in particular. They received requests for grants or loans to start or expand a business. That is good news as well.

In saying this, I do not want to underplay the fact that there is more to do and there are some people who desperately need help. I say to them, please, please reach out. We will do absolutely everything we can do through my office to assist.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

CHILDREN, YOUNG PERSONS AND THEIR FAMILIES AMENDMENT BILL 2021 (No. 28)

Second Reading

[12.12 p.m.]

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Children and Youth) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Amendment Bill 2021 introduces an amendment to the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997.

The proposed amendment will strengthen the legal authority for Tasmania to participate in the national safety data linkage initiative known as Connect for Safety. The amendment will extend provisions for the information-sharing between child welfare offices to information-sharing between state and territory protection agencies through direct system access under defined arrangements. I will now address the background to the proposed amendment.

Vulnerable children and their families often cross state and territory borders. One jurisdiction may not hold all the information that could be used to support decisions about child safety matters. Failing to have access to all relevant information can result in assessments and actions based on part-information, leading to increased safety risks to children or inappropriate interventions.

Current processes to support sharing of child safety information are slow, resource-intensive and not always effective, as they are done on a person-to-person basis and reliant on manual processes. There is a strong desire across all jurisdictions to address the challenge of inadequate sharing of child safety information.

In August 2019 the Children and Families Secretaries agreed to purchase and implement a national child safety data linkage solution developed by an Australian company. This decision followed a request for tender process, proof of concept and three years of development in consultation with multiple jurisdictions.

During testing, the new system has demonstrated an ability to match clients many times faster than manual searching processes and also to find matches that could not have been found by manual searching. The proof of concept testing process also demonstrated that the level of overlap between jurisdiction systems was far greater than anticipated, with a significant proportion of clients or family members appearing in systems held by multiple jurisdictions. This means that cross-jurisdictional data linkages has potential to provide a much more accurate picture of client and family circumstances and lead to better outcomes for vulnerable children and their families.

A national privacy impact assessment prepared by Salinger Consulting Pty Ltd for the Children and Families Secretaries considered the legislative enablers and barriers to participation by jurisdictions in the national project. Key recommendations from the privacy impact assessment were that: the privacy impacts were justified by the benefits in terms of child safety; all jurisdictions would require minor legislative change to enable them to participate; and a range of governance and other processes were proposed to ensure the proper management of systems and information, and the minimisation of privacy or other negative impacts.

The Commonwealth Government has provided funding of \$3.8 million which will support the establishment of the system and the first two years of implementation. The Children and Families Secretaries have also agreed that implementation and use of the system will be guided by a framework based on the recommendation in the privacy impact assessment. The framework will include policies and procedures, a scheduled program of reviews and performance audit reports.

The new interjurisdictional governance group, initially chaired by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services and comprising senior executives from all jurisdictions, has been established to govern this initiative.

The Connect for Safety solution is specifically designed to dramatically streamline the process of interjurisdictional data-sharing on client children, who may be known to more than one jurisdiction.

The information to be recorded and stored in the national database through Connect for Safety relates to identity only, that is, information such as name, date of birth, residential address and phone numbers. It does not include the more sensitive health-related information which is subject to additional legislative protections in relation to privacy and data breaches. Once a match is identified by the system, person-to-person contact between jurisdictions will follow to obtain the more detailed information, as is currently the case.

Under the new system, the information that is shared is the same as shared now. What will change is the current delays in collating information or waiting for confirmation as to whether another state even holds relevant information. These current delays can affect the adherence to key child safety timeframes and vital information may not be located due to different spellings or aliases, all of which impacts on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

In conclusion, the Children, Young Persons and their Families Amendment Bill 2021 will significantly improve the sharing of information between state and territory child protection agencies. The act must be amended to allow Tasmania to participate in this important child safety information initiative.

Several other states have already loaded data and are participating. Failure to make this legislative amendment would mean that Tasmanian children are not able to benefit from the safety initiatives that other jurisdictions are implementing, which have already been funded by the Commonwealth.

I commend this bill to the House.

[12.18 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Labor Party will be supporting this bill. A briefing was provided to another member of the Labor Caucus but Ms O'Byrne is in quarantine so she is unable to take this bill through, and so I will do that on her behalf today.

I have a few questions, minister. First is in relation to the funding allocation. In your second reading speech you outlined a provision of \$3.867 million to support the establishment of the system and the first two years of implementation. That is to be provided by the

Commonwealth. The question I have is whether ongoing funding will be required and, if so, is that going to be a state responsibility and can we expect to see that allocation in tomorrow's Budget? Do you have a figure in mind at this stage as to what that might look like?

The other question I have in relation to the bill is to do with the definitions. The definition of 'relevant person' is incredibly broad. As I was not present for the briefing, it may have been something that was discussed, but could you provide an explanation to the House for the reason for the definition, if it is consistent with definitions of 'relevant person' in other bills, for instance, understanding that we are looking at a bill here that is trying to provide protections for children? I understand why we need to look at all the different people that might be interacting with that young person to make sure we are doing everything we can to keep them safe. Just a question on clarity to understand how that definition was drafted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I note in the Liberal Party election policies that were taken to the election, one of the commitments was to undertake a comprehensive review of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997. The amendment bill we are debating today deals specifically with some national harmonisation requirements around the digital transfer of information, but I would like the minister to provide a progress update on the other changes that were flagged by the Government at the last election, which included not just this element of information sharing, but the role of Aboriginal communities and organisations in supporting Aboriginal children and their families, embedding a public health approach in safety and wellbeing for children and young people, enhancing the requirement for supporting and preserving families wherever it is safe to do so, and promoting permanent stable outcomes for children who enter out-of-home care. I presume at some point we will see further amendment bills come to this House to more comprehensively update this act.

Can the minister provide an update on progress there, because in the policy they took to the most recent election, they indicated there would be a review, including consultation, to be completed over the next 12 months. I am guessing that started from the first of May, so I expect some work has started that you can share with the House, so we can also participate in that process if it is appropriate to do so.

I also want to talk about some other matters that I think are connected to the bill, but not specifically related to it. One is the Human Services Dashboard. When it comes to disclosure of what was happening in our child safety services system, it has not been updated for a very long time. On 30 July, the Government released an update saying that the Department of Communities has changed the way it reports data for Housing, which is currently a quarterly report in a PDF format that is available on the Communities Tasmania website. There has been no announcement on what is happening for the Children and Young Persons portfolio.

Can the minister provide an update on that? The last information provided to the Tasmanian community about what is happening in the child safety system in relation to notifications was in March this year.

Usually by this time we would have an update of the June quarter, but that has not been provided. In March this year, the notifications referred for investigation sat at 60, and in the last 12 months to that reporting period, that has hovered anywhere between 50 and 82. That is quite a lot of notifications that have been referred for investigation each month.

More concerningly is the number of children in active transition - noting that the data has not been updated since March 2021. In March 2021, 65 children had not been allocated a case worker within priority time frames. In April 2020 there were 18 children, and that is bad enough - but month on month from that point in time to the most recent reporting date, March 2021, there were 65 children referred for an investigation who have not being allocated a caseworker within priority time frames.

These are some of the most vulnerable children in our state, who have not just had a notification made about concerns for their welfare, but who have been referred for investigation.

These are children who are potentially at risk of harm. And the fact 65 of them have not been allocated a case worker is alarming. And not only was it so high, it had been increasing month on month from April 2020, which is the earliest data set that is still published on that website.

I would like to understand what the minister intends to do to fix that, because it is something we have to address as a priority. It is so important.

I am also concerned that the child safety advice and referral line has been set up in such a way by this Government that you are effectively starting to outsource some of the statutory obligations of government regarding the welfare of our children. Currently, the child safety advice referral line is not wholly run by the public service. Some of those responsibilities are outsourced and it is for the not-for-profit sector. This is no reflection on them or the capabilities of those people working in it. Those people working in such an important job should be public servants because there are statutory obligations that they have to uphold as public servants. When you outsource that, that obligation changes.

I am keen for you to give a commitment to bring those workers back into the public service to make sure that we are doing everything we can to ensure that the children being referred to this child safety advice and referral line are given every opportunity to be supported so that they are safe. It is far too important a service to privatise bit by bit.

Those are the other issues necessary for you to address. Tomorrow in the budget my expectation is that we will see additional funding for child safety officers. There are too few. We have seen time and again media reports of the vacancies that exist in each of the regions of our state, which has led to the delays in notifications being investigated. This is why there were 65 children in March this year who had been referred for investigation who had not been allocated a case worker. There are not enough case workers.

There are a number of reasons why that is the case. The trauma associated in dealing with these terrible situations sometimes has a profound effect on the workforce, as you would be aware if you have spoken to some of those workers. The instances of leave are greater than some other areas across the public sector. That is understandable. They need to be supported. There needs to be backfill provided in cases where those people have taken leave. That does not happen, which means that the caseloads of the workers who remain grows and grows. The time it takes to respond to notifications that are required to be investigated increases or children are not allocated a case worker at all.

In tomorrow's Budget my expectation is to see funding not just to progress your election promises but to fund more workers to support the child safety system to operate in a way that we would all expect it to and in a way that keeps our children safe. Right now it is not able to optimally do that. The welfare of our children has to be a priority. Previous Government announcements have made a big commitment to the Strong Families, Safe Kids child safety redesign. This included a substantial investment of \$51 million. That began in 2016. It is now 2021.

Minister, I would be very interested to hear your observations as a new minister in this job as to how effectively that is working. My understanding is that there is not ongoing funding for Strong Families, Safe Kids Child safety redesign. I understand it was a redesign and you would expect that once you commence that work there is a completion point and the project functions in a different way. My understanding is that the \$51 million has run out but the project is not finished. There are still elements of implementation that are necessary in order to truly give effect to the intent of that policy. It is a good policy.

My understanding is that there has not been an adequate allocation of funding to fully implement it. All the work that has happened since 2016, and \$51 million that has been invested to try to improve the child safety system in Tasmania, could be for no tangible improvement to the welfare of children if the funding does not continue to ensure that it can be properly and fully implemented so that we actually are gaining the advantages of that redesigned project.

Minister, it is probably a little unfair to blame you for that. Well, very unfair as you have only been in the job a couple of months, but it is your Government's responsibility to get this right. There is significant demand in our community, unfortunately, for our child safety system. There are too many children who are still being referred to the child safety system. Unfortunately, that number is not likely to decrease, so we need to make sure we are providing appropriate and safe care for those young people, and that the system is working in their best interests at all times.

If we spent \$51 million on the redesign program, but not funded it to be properly implemented, that is a waste: a waste of people's time and energy, a waste of money, and a terrible disservice for those young people who deserve better.

I know they are not specifically part of this bill, but they are really important. This is an opportunity for us as a parliament to get an update on those things, and an update on other amendments to the bill that we can expect to see over the next few months.

[12.31 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Greens will be supporting the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Amendment Bill. We recognise it has the capacity to improve child safety and welfare outcomes, and to lead to more coordinated responses across jurisdictions.

There is logic behind this amendment bill, and I note it is part of the national reform process. I have a few questions that relate to the intersection - and potentially, collision - between the imperative to ensure the safety of children and young people, and also the protection of privacy.

I note in clause 5 in the bill, which is new section 111C subclause (6):

- (6) The *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* does not apply to information recorded and stored in, or accessed from, the national database to the extent that -
 - (a) the information is recorded and stored in the national database in accordance with this section; or
 - (b) the information is accessed in this jurisdiction by a person, or a member of a class of persons, approved by the Secretary to access the information.

which then takes us back to the powers of the secretary to authorise access to the data and personal information in that data set. Perhaps the minister could provide some clarity over what class of person or persons may be authorised to access that database? Also, on what basis, outside data sharing nationally to improve child safety frameworks and regulations, the secretary might otherwise approve access to that data?

It also says the secretary may approve access 'for the purposes of the administration of an Act of this State, another State or a Territory, or the Commonwealth'. Perhaps we could have some more clarity on what that means.

Ms Courtney - Which section is that?

Ms O'CONNOR - Page 6, clause 5(c).

It says the Secretary may authorise access under:

- (c) for the purposes of the administration of an Act of this State, another State or a Territory, or the Commonwealth.

The House should have some clarity over whether, for example, the secretary might give Tasmania Police authority to access that database because of a matter under the Youth Justice Act or the Criminal Code Act 1994. What are the circumstances in which the secretary could say to another individual, or a person from an agency, that you can access the database? Could it be used, potentially, to bring about charges against the person, or against a young person?

You have to be very cautious when you allow an exemption from the Personal Information Protection Act. I understand through the second reading speech that Salinger Consulting did a privacy impact assessment and advised ministers that, on the balance of risk, they should come down in favour of the safety of the child. Nobody can argue with that. However, you need to be very careful on how that data is stored, managed and accessed, in order to protect the privacy of persons, including children and young people, and also their families.

It would be fair to say that in the child safety space, the pace of reform has been glacial. I was listening to the Leader of the Opposition talk about the child safety and wellbeing framework that has been in train for nearly six years now. The first minister who was part of it was Mrs Petrusma, then we had Mr Jaensch, now we have Ms Courtney, and yet we still have

no tangible improvement in outcomes for children and young people who go through the child safety system. We know the people who work in that system are under enormous stress, and that their case loads are unsustainably high. They have stayed persistently unsustainably high throughout the Liberal terms in government.

We also need to talk about further amendments to the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act that drive a much stronger focus on creating a child-safe community and child-safe organisations. I am old enough to remember our previous Commissioner for Children, Mark Morrissey, who started some really important work on child-safe organisations in Tasmania. Yet again, the progress of reform has been glacial. There has been too little direction or leadership from government into the community about what a child-safe organisation and community looks like, and what responsibilities that places on everyone in terms of the protection of children.

I had an interesting briefing with Liana Buchanan, who heads the Victorian Commission for Children and Young People. In 2016, the Victorian Parliament released a report, *Betrayal of Trust*, which exposed the many failings in Victoria to protect children. As a consequence, a whole series of reforms were made that embedded child-safe organisational frameworks in Victoria, increased the powers of the Commission for Children and Young People, and put in place a model recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutionalised Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Victoria has led the way. Victoria now has a statutory framework for monitoring, compliance and enforcement. In Victoria, the Commission for Children and Young People has a significant suite of powers to ensure organisations have child safety policies in place. They have set seven standards for child-safe organisations, covering around 60 000 organisations. In Victoria they have policies in place, codes of conduct, complaint and response standards, strategies to protect the rights of children and to empower the voice of children. These measures have been in place since 2016. At the same time as these new, very robust standards, enforcement and monitoring powers have been put in place, the Victorian Commission for Children and Young People has engaged in a statewide education and information program to work with organisations to ensure they are child-safe. They have in place an advice and response line, a help line.

In Tasmania there is no organisation resourced to undertake the educative role. We have an outstanding Commissioner for Children and Young People, and marvellous people who work with Ms McLean in her office, all of whom are dedicated state servants but you do not have that sense of an Office for the Commissioner for Children and Young People that is resourced or statutorily independently empowered enough to be leading that educative role and that protective response we need for children and young people in Tasmania.

In Victoria there is an umbrella piece of legislation called the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2021, which is just going through their parliament now, as I understand it. Their child-safe framework in Victoria is all about prevention but, as I said, it gives that commission very considerable powers. That is what we need here, Mr Speaker. There are standards for what is reportable conduct and the commission can refer a person or an organisation to their unit that undertakes working with children registration and checking. The commission in Victoria has a very important advocacy role but also a regulatory role so, when it is needed, the commission in Victoria can take out the big stick.

There has been a big spike in notifications in Victoria in recent years and that is, undoubtedly, in part because of the framework put in place, the focus on child safety but also that broader community education role.

We need to have those standards in place here in Tasmania. There needs to be a capacity for the office of the commission for children to engage across the community about what a child-safe organisation looks like, to have standards in place, to make sure that the commission has an enforcement and compliance role. At the moment, children are slipping through the cracks. There is uncertainty within businesses that engage with children, not-for-profit organisations, for-profit companies that work with children, about what a child-safe organisation is. There is a wish on behalf of those organisations in Tasmania for more guidance and clarity from government about what making sure we have a child-safe place looks like.

The broader Children and Young Persons and their Families Act 1997, as I understand it, is up for review. We need to recognise that we have lost time here in Tasmania since the Royal Commission handed down its findings in 2016. I acknowledge some of the work that has been undertaken by government to give effect to the Royal Commission's recommendations but you still have a Commissioner for Children and Young People who has, in many ways, one hand tied behind her back in terms of being able to provide that leadership and guidance across the community on what a child-safe organisation looks like. She also has to make sure that there are consequences for organisations that do not make sure children are safe when they are with them.

I also want to draw the link between the fact that tens of thousands of Tasmanians live in poverty and we have a widening divide between those who have enough to get by and those who have far too little. Poverty, research tells us, increases cortisol levels in our brains, we become very stressed and we can make bad decisions. If you are a parent, those bad decisions can have a life-long impact on your children and extensively limit their capacity to have a good life and to fulfil their potential.

We have to tackle poverty, and there was too little discussion of it during the last state election campaign. Frankly, I have had a gutful of government ministers getting up in here and telling us how wonderful things are in Tasmania and talking about this economic sunshine which is not being felt by at least 30 000 Tasmanians.

Let us have some more honesty about the lives that are being lived out there in the community, from people who cannot get enough work, do not have a job or cannot find a secure rental. We have families who cannot pay the rent and, if they pay the rent, they cannot buy the groceries they need.

Every member of this place has constituents who have been in touch with them to say 'my real estate agent is putting up my rent by \$50 a week and I am on a pension', or 'my real estate agent is putting up my rent by \$120 a week and I am on a low income'. That is happening right across the state in the major centres and in our towns.

More empathy is required from government ministers when they get to their feet and read out their prepared answer, provided to them by the department and touched up in the ministerial office, that paints this rosy picture of life in Tasmania during a pandemic.

We heard this morning, from the contribution from Ms Finlay and Dr Woodruff, about how many small business operators are struggling and how at the margins of survivability they are. This is a story being told right across the state. People have lost jobs, they have lost hours, their rent has gone up and the price of food is going up. I am sick of hearing from the Premier and from other government ministers how terrific it all is. It is not.

You need to be able to measure community wellbeing in a more empathetic and nuanced way. We need to acknowledge in this place that poverty is a major driver of child neglect. In some of those instances, the neglect is the consequence of not having enough money to provide for your family and being so stressed that you hit the bottle, or you go out and get some ice, or go down to the pokies bar and lose all your money.

Short personal story: my late sister, who was profoundly mentally traumatised, every pension day would go down to the local pokies pub and just about blow every cent she had. Four small children. Then she would be filled with self-loathing and have no money. That meant the kids would go without unless the rest of her family made sure that there were groceries there for her and the kids.

That happened to a kind of technically middle-class family. This is happening all over Tasmania. It is a hidden and deeply sad social story and it is contributing to the pressure on our child safety system, the pressure on our alcohol and drug treatment system, the pressure on our homelessness support system and other housing services. We have a piece of legislation that will come in here before too long that will guarantee that generations of children and young people will go without because their parents have been down to the pokies barn and blown what little money they have. That will be on the heads of everyone who supports the amendments to the Gaming Control Act.

In closing, we cannot talk about the wellbeing of children and young people without talking about the state of the climate. I do not know how many members have read the August 2021 Commissioner for Children and Young People Ambassadors Climate Change Consultation Summary. It did not sound from his answer this morning that the Premier had read it. It certainly did not sound like he had read anything about the IPCC report or the summary for policy makers because the question I asked this morning was straight out of the mouths of the scientists or the UN Secretary General.

What scares children is a feeling that they are not being heard and that decisions are being made about their future that are not in their best interests. What scares children is being lied to about big things. Wise young people took part in the commissioner's consultation across all regions of the state.

In the north-west, children and young people told the commissioner that they want sustainable adaptation of agriculture and forestry. They said we need jobs but we need to do it while protecting the environment. Tick, tick. We need more frequent, reliable and affordable public transport. They want to make participating in reducing the impacts of climate change more affordable for everyone. In the north, children and young people want to be sure that we provide places and activities for people to seek climate relief. They want us to better prepare for emergency evacuation and hazardous events, and because they are wise, they want us to ban single-use plastic.

In the south of the state, children and young people told the commissioner they want to influence behaviour change around reducing and organising waste and choosing low emissions options, such as local products and eating less meat. They want more frequent, reliable and affordable public transport and they want more, not less, climate change education and support for young people and adults.

When asked what rules would they like to see implemented now in a list of 13 strong recommendations from the ambassadors, this is what we heard:

- (1) They want us to ban single-use plastics.
- (2) They want better recycling and collection in all Tasmanian council areas.
- (3) They did not hear this from the Greens, we have not been messing with their minds, is a ban on native forest harvesting. They are not radical greenies. They just understand what needs to be done.
- (4) They want to see emission limits for big companies.
- (5) They want all government buildings and schools to have solar panels.
- (6) They want to make sure big companies that supply products to Tasmania do not use single use plastics.
- (7) They would like to make a seat in parliament for a youth minister.
- (8) They definitely want the Australian Government to stop supporting the coal industry. We would all like to see both the Liberal and Labor parties end their devotion to coal.
- (9) They want to see 80 per cent green buildings in Tasmania by 2035 and 100 per cent by 2045.
- (10) The young people would like everyone to move to electric cars by 2045-50, with half of us driving electric cars by 2030.
- (11) They want emergency response plans for all communities with permanent nominated evacuation hubs and relocation plans for animals and livestock.

This is the way young people are thinking. They understand. They are scared by the facts and they will be more scared if they see that governments are not taking action and listening to them. We know it is a very simple sociological equation on climate for young people - action equals hope.

I am not sure how I feel about No. 12:

- (12) They want mandatory Clean up Australia Day participation.

- (13) They would like media representation around environmental practices to be mandated to teach a good example.

Pretty tough, pretty informed and giving us a signpost for the path forward.

We will be sharing the Premier's answer to our question this morning with scientists, avid climate advocates, with the school strike for climate organisers. We will be asking them to reach out to him and to tell him that what they are scared by is not the facts and the truth, it is a lack of leadership. That is what scares children and young people.

Highly regrettably, what we had from the Premier this morning demonstrated a lack of leadership. He could have said, 'I acknowledge the IPCC report, I acknowledged that the alarm bells are ringing for humanity. I note that the scientists are telling us that Australia will need to reduce its emissions by 75 per cent by 2030 for us to reach our Paris targets. I acknowledge that fossil fuels are the main driver of anthropogenic climate change'.

He could have said, 'I acknowledge that our forests are mighty carbon banks. I acknowledge what the children said to the Commissioner for Children and Young People about their desire to see an end to native forest logging'. He could have said, 'I am all for growth in the plantation sector and I am open to change'.

He could have said, 'I am listening to children and young people and I am prepared to show leadership'. He did not. What he did instead was get stuck into the Greens because when you are on the back foot up there on the Government lectern the safest bet is either to point the finger at the Opposition or the Greens because you can fill out the time, there is a whole lot of noise and you do not have to talk about your own failings. It is a very regrettable failure of leadership from this Premier, who is no fool and should know better.

Today, in recognition of how much young people want to see leadership and change and the right that they have to have a say, we tabled the Electoral Amendment (Voting Age) bill 2021, which would give young people from the age of 16 to 18 voluntarily the right to register to vote and have a say in state elections.

It is not unreasonable. We sit here in this place and we vote on laws that will affect their lives. There are decisions this parliament does not make around climate change that will profoundly affect their future, so they should be given the opportunity to vote.

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

MOTION

Climate Emergency - Motion Negatived

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I indicate that a vote will be required.

I seek the leave of the House to table the Climate Change 2021 Physical Science Basis Summary for Policymakers documents which I believe has been approved by leaders of Government and Opposition business and the Independent member for Clark.

Leave granted.

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Greens, on behalf of young people and everyone who wants to be sure that we have a safe climate for the future, I move -

That the House:

- (1) Notes the release of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)s Sixth Assessment Report, the starkest warning yet of the massive and irreversible impacts of climate change, with the United Nations Secretary-General describing it as a "code red for humanity".
- (2) Recognises the IPCC says it is still possible to limit temperature rises to below a catastrophic threshold, but only if immediate and ambitious action is taken.
- (3) Understands every single tonne of CO₂ kept out of the atmosphere is important in ensuring a safer future climate.
- (4) Agrees the overwhelming majority of Tasmanians want elected representatives of all political persuasions to acknowledge the severity and urgency of the challenges humanity is facing.
- (5) Acknowledges that the Australian Medical Association, the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, and the Royal Australasian College of General Practitioners have all declared climate change is a health emergency.
- (6) Declares a climate emergency.

Dr Woodruff and I are moving this because this is the first opportunity that we have since the IPCC sixth assessment report came out just two weeks ago. I have reflected again on the answer that the Premier gave to our question this morning. I have had a look at the wording of the motion and I honestly cannot see how he could characterise it as trying to scare children. It is a statement of facts in quite cold, clear language.

We sought some advice from the organiser of the School Strike for Climate on this motion and what actually does scare children and young people. Sam Eccleston from School Strike for Climate nipaluna/Hobart has this to say to the Tasmanian Parliament today:

Tasmanian young people are some of the most educated and aware on the climate crisis and as such are some of the most concerned about the effects it may have on them, their families and their communities. Declaring a climate emergency sends a strong message to Tasmanian young people that the Government is truly committed to climate action and the futures of all Tasmanians. Declaring a climate emergency will not scare or intimidate young Tasmanians, it will only help to tackle their fears.

As I said earlier, what scares young people most in relation to climate change is a lack of action and a failure of leadership. Young people need to be told the truth in a clear and calm way. They need to be pointed to the actions that can be taken to limit the increase in warming. What IPCC sixth assessment report tells us is that the planet has warmed by about 1 degree Celsius already. We have a very narrow window of opportunity to keep warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Australian continent has warmed by around 1.4 degrees Celsius.

Yes, it is confronting to deal with the science but running away from it helps no one. I feel where the fear is felt regarding this is on the Government benches. They fear being exposed for their lack of meaningful action on climate.

We are moving this motion today following the release of the sixth assessment report, which was the starkest warning yet for the future of the earth and humanity in a rapidly changing climate because we want parliament to show leadership. It is an emergency. We need to treat it like an emergency and take the requisite action to avert crisis and catastrophe.

If we go to some of the words that Mr Gutwein feels are scary, these are coming from scientists in response to the sixth assessment report. Professor Jonathan Bamber of the University of Bristol in the UK, one of the report's authors, talks about how extreme weather events such as coastal flooding that occurred only once a century in the recent past are projected to happen at least every year in 60 per cent of places on the earth by 2100. That includes places like Lauderdale, Orford, Port Sorell.

Professor Bamber says that might seem like a long way away but there are millions of children already born who should be alive well into the 22nd century. A number of us in here, were born in the last days of the Holocene era. Our children are born in the Anthropocene or what some commentators, having a look at the state of the planet now, are calling the Pyrocene era because of the number of places on earth that are catching fire.

Another scientist, Professor Katharine Hayhoe, chief scientist at the Nature Conservancy says:

... we can no longer assume that citizens of more affluent and secure countries like Canada, Germany, Japan and the US will be able to ride-out the worst excesses of a rapidly destabilising climate.

...

It is clear we are all in the same boat - facing a challenge that will affect every one of us within our lifetimes ...

Professor David Reay at the University of Edinburgh in the UK says:

For the tipping points, it is clear that every extra tonne of CO₂ emitted today is pushing us into a minefield of feedback effects tomorrow.

That is not the Greens talking. That is some of the world's finest, most dedicated climate scientists. When we use the term 'code red for humanity', that is not something the Greens coined. That is the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Yet, after the IPCC sixth assessment report was released there were news stories and news reports for about two days and then nothing. Then we come into this place and nothing unless it is raised by the Greens. No statement of leadership from the Premier, no statement on climate from the Leader of the Opposition. Our young people demand and deserve better.

A few words from the Summary for Policy Makers. The first finding on the current state of the climate:

It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land, widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred.

Observed increases in well-mixed greenhouse gas concentrations since around 1750 are unequivocally caused by human activities. Since 2011, concentrations have continued to increase in the atmosphere. Each of the last four decades has been successively warmer than any decade that preceded it since 1850.

Changes in the land biosphere since 1970 are consistent with global warming. Climate zones have shifted poleward in both hemispheres and the growing season has, on average, lengthened by up to two days per decade since the 1950s in the northern hemisphere extra tropics.

On it goes.

When was the last time in the history of this planet that we know of that atmospheric CO₂ concentrations were this high? Not for at least two million years as far as the scientists can tell us. When was the last time that the planet was heating this fast? According to the scientists, probably at least not before 100 000 years ago. When was the last time temperatures were this high? May be 6500 years ago. When was the last time in the recorded history, or understood history of this planet that sea levels were rising so fast? At least 3000 years ago. When was the last time our oceans were so acidic? The climate scientists are telling us 'not any time in the past 2 million years'.

This is an emergency, Mr Deputy Speaker, and it is an emergency we must acknowledge and take on so that we can be part of the rapid reduction in emissions our climate needs. That our children and our grandchildren and their children, and all life on earth needs.

I hope every member of this place reads the document we have tabled in here today, the Summary for Policy Makers, because we are policymakers and we are custodians of this beautiful little island. We all know Tasmania is already feeling the impacts of global heating. We all remember the fires of the summer of 2019. We all remember the devastating floods of June 2016. And some of us have read the Climate Futures work on projections based on previous IPCC reports on the impacts on Tasmania out to the year 2100.

Sadly, this excellent work, which is a collaborative work of UTAS, the Antarctic Cooperative Research Centre, IMAS, CSIRO, working in partnership with the then Labor-Greens government, is now more than a decade old. It urgently needs updating, but what it tells us, even from 10 years ago, is still all true, of course.

In the sub-chapter about extreme events, the Climate Futures work tells us:

For Tasmania, the pattern of extreme weather is likely to change across a broad range of climate indices by the end of the century. The emerging pattern of change across these indices represents a consistent and progressive adjustment of the current climate and its weather patterns to a new climate. This new climate for Tasmania will have more hot days and warm nights, more extreme wet days, an increase in more intense rainfall and more dry days. Rain events will intensify, leading to a tendency for increases in both drier and wetter conditions on seasonal and annual periods. This means a reduction in the occurrence of 'average conditions' that we have experienced.

There will be fewer frost days. There will be more winter rain on the west coast and it will be drier there in summer. The central highlands are already drying and they will continue to dry, which is why we are losing the Miena cider gums. This beautiful state of ours is already feeling the impacts.

Regrettably, because climate change has been put on the backburner by government since 2014, we are now dealing with science that needs urgent updating. The benefit of the Climate Futures work is that it provided businesses, farmers, fishers, everyday Tasmanians with a really accessible and granular understanding of the likely impacts across a range of low, medium to high emissions scenarios out to the year 2100 at a 10-kilometre by 10-kilometre grid across the landscape.

Which minister signed off on Climate Futures? My predecessor, as the minister for climate change, now-Senator Nick McKim. We also made sure in that Labor-Greens government that our planning system had the necessary tools to help our communities adapt. Again, this is work that has gone on the backburner under this Government. So why should we declare a climate emergency, apart from the fact that we would be acknowledging the truth? It is a fair question. What does it achieve? This is about our state formally, in this parliament, accepting the scientific evidence and, in doing so, accepting the need for immediate and ambitious action. It recognises we are in an emergency and this is crucial for all of government and across all sectors of the economy and the community - the whole state.

We need to approach climate change with a pivot towards urgent action right across the board. We need to mobilise the Tasmanian Climate Change Office to work with industry, work with communities and engage in that vital mitigation and adaptation work that we know is so necessary.

People at Hobart City Council have highlighted how their move to declare a climate emergency has helped to redefine their operations and reduce their climate impact. My colleague in local government, Greens alderman Bill Harvey, moved this climate emergency motion and Hobart was the first capital city in the country to declare a climate emergency. Alderman Harvey says this:

The importance of declaring a climate emergency was not just a symbolic act but critically important as it sends a clear and unequivocal message to the community that, as elected leaders, we are listening and accept the science and the urgency of climate change, and we are committed to taking decisive

action to protect our community and biodiversity from the dangerous and catastrophic consequences.

It is not a new concept. As members would be aware, we have moved to have a climate emergency declared before. We kept the language in this motion as clear and apolitical as it is possible to be in the hope that members will support this motion, acknowledge the science, acknowledge the truth, declare a climate emergency and work together on a path forward.

We did it during the worst of COVID-19 last year. We showed Tasmanians what is possible. It made Tasmanians feel so reassured to know that the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Greens and this whole parliament was working together to keep them safe. The parallels with global heating are unavoidable. We could do this together if we could put all the politics, the silliness and the unwillingness to accept the truth aside and work together so that Tasmania can be a beacon to Australia and to the world of what real climate action looks like.

Declaring a climate emergency is not a new concept. Thousands of jurisdictions across the world have done so; the ACT; the South Australian Upper House; and dozens of Australian councils. Since Hobart City Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019, the Kingborough, Launceston and Northern Midlands councils have followed suit. Doing this is not radical. It is a necessary and appropriate response to a code red. This is an existential crisis for humanity. As our motion highlights, the Australian Medical Association, the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine and the Royal Australasian College of General Practitioners have all declared climate change is a health emergency.

Yet despite this, when you examine it, it is a conservative response to a crisis. It is conservative to acknowledge the truth and take steps to keep people safe, despite this.

I listened to the Premier's extremely disappointing answer to our question in question time today and I do not think the Government is going to support this declaration, on the flimsiest of excuses from the Premier that it will scare young people. I tell you what, they are crapping themselves now because the science is right in front of them. As Sam Eccleston said, they are smart, they are engaged. What they want is action that gives hope. What they desperately need from the Premier and this parliament is leadership.

I listened to the Premier this morning and my heart sank. I genuinely expected better. It struck me as Shakespearian - 'Me thinks he doth protest too much' - the noise and fury that came out of the Premier when we asked a straightforward question: 'Do you acknowledge the science? Do you acknowledge change is needed? Can you bring yourself to acknowledge that our forests are our great gift to the Earth, to the climate, to the kids?'

But he could not do it. Instead, we got shouting and finger pointing and distortion of Tasmania's greenhouse accounts. He still cannot bring himself to acknowledge the forests and the turning point in our emissions profile in 2013-14, when suddenly we became a net carbon sink. Yes, that is the forests, and of course there is some evidence that we are able to decouple emissions growth from economic growth, but when you look at transport, agriculture and waste, while we may be down only marginally on 1990 levels, emissions are still growing across those sectors.

What we have here in Tasmania - and I believe it is the reason the Premier did protest so much this morning - is ongoing and massive deforestation accelerating under the minister, Mr Barnett. That is what young people see. They see log trucks full of massive native forest logs still trundling down Macquarie Street. They see the huge piles of old, old trees at Brighton, waiting to be sent to China as chips.

I raise the forests almost hesitantly, because I do not want Labor to not support this motion. That is why the forests are not part of the wording. We need Labor to start doing the right thing on climate. I note yesterday the federal Labor shadow treasurer, I think he is Chris Bowen, acknowledging we are in a climate emergency. So, he is the federal Labor energy and climate spokesperson, who acknowledged we are in a climate emergency.

Ms White - We declared that in October 2019.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, but it was just another statement. I am not taking anything away from you. It was just another statement I saw online yesterday.

The truth is in the IPCC report, and what scares young people most is that political leaders continue to engage in climate delay and denialism, and constantly downplay the challenges that we face. That is a lack of honesty and leadership. That is what scares young people. Trying to pretend we are not in an emergency not only flies in the face of the indisputable scientific facts, it flies in the face of the deep concern felt by the vast majority of the community, and it actually increases the level of anxiety being felt. It is simply insulting and dismissive to say to all those young people who marched for a safe climate, 'You are being scared by grown-ups. You are being unnecessarily scared. Go back to school.'

Do you know, it is possible that the Deputy Premier, Mr Rockliff, has attended a school strike for climate. I have certainly seen a number of my Labor colleagues joining the students with Rosie and I at the school strike for climate, but I have not seen many Liberal ministers or members join with young people for a safer future - and that really lets them down.

We will probably hear from the Premier or other members this excuse that declaring a climate emergency would be an alarmist move. That would be a pathetic and spineless response to an obvious existential crisis faced by humanity and life on earth. We want to know why there is this resistance to declaring a climate emergency, which has been declared by hundreds of local councils, state governments and other jurisdictions around the globe. We think it is a noxious combination of the ongoing power of climate change denials or delayers in the party room, because, of course, delay is the new denial.

People like, for example, Senator Eric Abetz, who use to pretend climate change was a fantasy, now in the face of the evidence from all around the world cannot actually say it is not happening. So, there is this new approach, which is that it would be too expensive. China is the big bad guy; the USA is a bad guy too, and there is nothing we can do. Well, the coal that goes into the coal fired power plants in China, a very large percentage of that comes from Australian coalmines. We are among the world's top three coal exporters. So, nationally, the Australian people are being gas lead by people like the Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce, who in a barely coherent sentence said something like, 'nothing wrong with us, China bad'. That is about as coherent as it got. It is so gutless. We dig up, and export the coal that feeds those coal fired power plants and now we have a government that wants a gas fired recovery from COVID-19 -

Dr Woodruff - Frightening.

Ms O'CONNOR - Horrifying, Dr Woodruff - and wants to open up the vast gas reserves in the Beetaloo Basin. That is what scares children and young people. That instills deep anxiety in young people. When they see their national government not only not taking the climate crisis seriously, but taking steps to accelerate it, they are terrified. I mean, the Prime Minister belongs to a Pentecostal death cult that believes in the Rapture, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr ELLIS - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, it seems deeply unparliamentary. I ask that the member withdrew.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, I will not withdraw it, under any circumstances. The Prime Minister's version of Pentecostalism believes in the Rapture, which is by definition a death cult.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, take your seat, and let me rule. The member is entitled to her opinion. You are entitled to make a statement on the adjournment in reaction to her opinion.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you for your very wise ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker. I encourage Ms Ogilvie and Mr Ellis to do a little more reading on the tenets of Pentecostalism, and get back to us on their views of the Rapture.

So, we have the ongoing power of the climate delayers and deniers in the party room. There is a warped sense of political self-interest-based politics, to sort of whistle to communities that need support in transitioning, and meaningful jobs in the renewable sector. It plays to the base politics of both the major parties to pretend there really is a future for coal.

Perhaps at a state level our Government does not want to show up the Morrison Government's active acceleration of global heating and, therefore, cannot politically join in the declaration of a climate emergency. We know of course about the insidious and corrupting influence of donations from big fossil fuel companies to the major parties. Both the Liberal and Labor parties over the past decade have each received more than \$1 million each from Woodside Petroleum alone.

Let us be clear: the IPCC sixth assessment report tells us that every tonne of CO₂ and CO₂ equivalent matters. Every tonne of greenhouse gas we do not put into the atmosphere or we draw down out of the atmosphere matters to our children and our grandchildren. One of the themes that has come through the IPCC assessment report, and it is not so explicit, is that the scientists have realised that they were far too conservative in their previous assessments and we are seeing accelerating global heating because we are reaching a series of tipping points for the planet.

Members who vote against this motion will be engaging in climate denial. There is no getting around that fact, no matter how inconvenient it may be for some members because delay is the new denial. If Labor and Ms Johnston support this motion, as we hope they will, it would take only one Liberal member to change the outcome of what happens today, and that responsibility rests with every single Liberal member. This is a matter of life and death. Members should be given a conscience vote on a climate emergency declaration. This vote just weeks after the release of the IPCC report will forever be part of the legacy of this House

and the legacy of each individual member. I urge my colleagues to think very carefully before we call a division at 3.30 p.m.

I know my children in years to come will probably flick through the *Hansard* to see what their mother did in her day job. I am sure other members' children will too. We are in an emergency and we should have the courage and the leadership to acknowledge that in this place.

I again encourage members to read the Commissioner for Children and Young People's consultation report on climate change across all three regions. Young people have sent us a message loud and clear: take our future seriously; take action; work together. That is a common theme in the Commissioner for Children and Young People's report.

I also urge members to have a look at our Safe Climate Bill. In many ways it is very conservative legislation. It has tangible actions in it - Dr Woodruff has brought it forward - that can help us reach the goals that we need to reach and critically help us to have adaptation planning in place to protect our people. Our Safe Climate Bill can set binding annual emissions reduction targets including sectoral targets. It would require a plan to meet these targets, a sequestration plan and an adaptation plan. The act will also establish a parliamentary standing committee on a Safe Climate and a Safe Climate Commission.

I will go back, finally, to Sam Eccleston's words: declaring a climate emergency sends a strong message to Tasmanian young people that the Government is truly committed to climate action and the futures of all Tasmanians. Declaring a climate emergency will not scare or intimidate young Tasmanians. It will only help to tackle their fears.

This is our opportunity to let young people know they are in our hearts and in our heads and we are prepared to do things differently. We are prepared to work together to protect their future, we are prepared to mobilise Government so that there is tangible action to bring down emissions - and that can take many different forms. What an excellent discussion it would be if we could be collaborative about it and critical.

It sets out a path for adapting because while the IPCC sixth assessment report makes it clear as does the Climate Future's work that on land Tasmania has cooled slightly more slowly than the mainland of Australia, we know that the waters on the east coast of Tasmania are warming faster than most waters in the world.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the motion to the House on behalf of all our children and young people.

[3.07 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, first, I thank the member for Clark for bringing on this very important motion. I now have a copy of which I think is the summary of the Climate Change 2021, the physical science basis. I have read as much as I can in a short time but I have had it since you have tabled it -

Ms O'Connor - Where is the Climate Change minister?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - You were heard without interjection, Ms O'Connor.

Ms OGILVIE - I will try again, thank you. As I rise today to speak on behalf of the Government, this is an incredibly important topic for all of us. We have heard a lot about children and I care for them and I care for the future. I am a bit sad to see the Greens' members leaving the Chamber. Why are you leaving the Chamber?

Dr Woodruff - I am not leaving the Chamber.

Ms OGILVIE - An interesting move. I will continue nonetheless.

I support the science. I believe this is a very important topic. I have spoken on the record about this many times. In fact, in the last couple of years I was able to bring forward some discussions around this as an Independent member.

Today, I rise to talk about how Tasmanians ought to feel incredibly proud of where we are at with this issue. Particularly, I want our kids to feel really proud and, yes, we all have children and families and we do want to make sure that the future is secured for them.

We know that Tasmania is a leader in climate change action. We are a leader. Under the leadership of Peter Gutwein, we will continue to be so and we will do more. We have the lowest per capita emissions in Australia and some of the lowest in the world. We were the first state in this country to achieve zero net emissions. We have achieved our target of net zero emissions five years in a row and in six of the last seven years. It is quite incredible. The most recent data shows that emissions are 108.6 per cent lower than our 1990 base line. This is good stuff. Our net zero status reflects the carbon sink in our forests. I think we can all agree about that. Our longstanding investment in renewable energy - renewable energy generation as well as emissions reduction in our agricultural and waste sectors over time.

Tasmania continues to achieve economic growth without increasing emissions. There is a clear downward trend in Tasmania's total annual emissions from 1990 to 2019. It is going down and we are meeting the targets. In fact, we are ahead of the game if you look at what we are doing nationally or even internationally. Yet, over this period, Tasmania's gross state product has increased by 94.9 per cent which is about \$32 billion. We have found a way of balancing emissions reduction with economic growth. Tasmania is a leading light in this area and our state is now 100 per cent self-sufficient in renewable energy and continues to lead Australia's transition to a low emissions economy. This includes a commitment to generate 200 per cent of our current energy needs from renewable energy by 2040 and fast-tracking a renewable hydrogen industry in Tasmania.

The four-yearly statutory independent review of the Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008 and our emissions reduction target is well underway. A key focus of the review is consulting with industry, businesses and the community on options to revise Tasmania's emissions reduction target. We are doing the work, consulting and finding out what it will take to migrate to the new future. In addition to the review, the Government has commissioned the Tasmanian Emissions Pathway Review and corresponding economic analysis which will use CGE modelling to determine the impact on industry and jobs of a more ambitious emissions reduction target for Tasmania. This is good news.

We are also developing Tasmania's next whole-of-government climate change action plan to underpin our legislative framework. Again, the work is being done. This is the hard work that needs to be done.

Our Government knows that climate action is not only good environmental policy but it is also good economic policy and plays to our strength in renewable energy, hydrogen, electric vehicles and clean industry. By taking action, we are addressing the challenges. There is no need to be over the top about this.

I worry about the anxiety on this issue because it is a big issue but we must restrain ourselves from hyperbole and create the action that is required by working with industry, working across boundaries and delivering results. Rather than declaring a climate emergency, this Government is responding in an ambitious, informed and considered manner to climate change. We will continue to take action in a responsible and sensible way which is the hallmark of this Government.

In Tasmania, we are uniquely positioned. We have the lowest per capita emissions in Australia and some of the lowest in the world. We are taking action to harness strategic opportunities that will deliver good environmental outcomes and good economic ones as well. That is what we want, to strike that balance. Key projects such as Marinus and Battery of the Nation are not only Tasmanian opportunities, they are strategic investments in national electricity infrastructure and identified by AEMO as critical to assist in firming variable renewables in the transitioning eniom.

Project Marinus and the clean energy it unlocks will be a significant contributor to Australia's emissions reduction ambitions, leading to a savings of up to 70 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent. In other words, Tasmania is doing the work that needs to be done. It will not only help to cut emissions but it will deliver 2800 direct and indirect jobs in both Tasmania and Victoria, attract billions of dollars in regional investment and will unlock a pipeline of future investment in renewable energy.

Tasmania has an opportunity to capitalise on its existing and expandable renewable energy resources to become a world leader in large scale renewable hydrogen production for domestic use and export.

Our Tasmanian renewable hydrogen action plan sets out a vision for Tasmania to become a significant exporter of Green hydrogen by 2030. To get moving towards achieving this vision, we have developed a package of support measures because we want people to come with us.

The development of the Tasmanian hydrogen industry sits firmly with our Tasmanian renewable energy action plan. This action plan has defined a pathway to securing a renewable energy future creating thousands of local jobs and strengthening our economy, and ensuring energy remains affordable and accessible. This is incredibly important.

Australia's national hydrogen strategy indicates that by 2050 an Australian hydrogen industry could generate around 17 000 jobs nationwide. These are the jobs of the future. These are clean, green energy jobs for our kids and we want our kids to go forward into that future to become engineers, scientists, teachers and carers - however they choose to participate in building this future. We want our kids to be proud of what we are doing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are also supporting households, schools and sports clubs to reduce emissions and this is the work that needs to be done. Through a further \$30 million Tasmanian Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme, we are helping households. A \$10 million solar

power sports club, no interest loan scheme, for solar systems - we are helping people. A \$5 million renewable energy schools' fund to install solar panels in Government schools - that is fantastic, brilliant work - and funding to deliver a program of carbon audits and upgrades for tourism businesses. We are boosting the no interest loan scheme, energy saver loan and subsidy scheme with funding of \$2 billion.

We are investing and we are doing the work that needs to be done. The work is being done on the ground level. We are working with industry, business, schools and young people and we are listening. We are actioning what needs to happen.

Smart climate policy is smart economic policy. Transport is a significant source of Tasmania's greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle fleet costs are a considerable expense for the Tasmanian Government, for local Government, the private sector and the community. We have already taken action including setting an ambitious target to transition the Government vehicle fleet to 100 per cent electric vehicles from 2030. That is from 12 currently but 100 per cent. It is going to be great.

That target is underpinned by 100 per cent electric vehicle and zero emissions strategy. This is what we are calling for and we are delivering it including interim measures to further reduce emissions in the Government fleet. We have tasked Metro Tasmania - good old Metro - to trial zero emissions buses in both the north and the south of the state. These are real steps that are underway that are being taken that are actioning the change.

We have delivered a statewide charging network of 14 bus charges and 23 workplace and destination charges. We know you need to be able to charge your electric car so we are doing the work but there is more to do and we are committed to taking action.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are supporting agriculture with \$250 000 for a carbon farming advice pilot program for farmers and businesses to seek expert carbon farming advice, to create carbon credits for sale in national and international markets. We are expanding Landcare action grants to include carbon farming initiatives. As a local aside, I have the great pleasure of joining Landcare for their awards night here in a local restaurant and it was such a marvellous evening with such intelligent, astute and sensible people. We talked at length about both the opportunities and the challenges that are created in this area. There was a lot of good thinking that came out of that evening. I was very grateful to be invited along to that. Landcare, keep doing what you are doing but, specifically, the grants program and project is far-reaching and much wider. That is a very positive step.

We are also providing a \$10 million no-interest loan scheme for large Tasmanian greenhouse gas-emitting businesses and industries to trial existing clean technologies, or test new, innovative production processes that will lead to reduced emissions. There is a lot of good science research and research and development going on in relation to that right now.

We are committed to a state-wide waste levy and container refund scheme and funding to support a circular economy fund to invest in improving organics collection and reprocessing infrastructure across Tasmania. We need all the elements to come together. We need to not just have the good ideas - I understand your passion - we have to deliver the infrastructure and the elements and the processes that will come together to create action on the ground. Sustainable forestry management is part of the solution to climate change -

Dr Woodruff - Oh rubbish, not the way you do it.

Ms OGILVIE - Not the reverse. Our sustainable forestry management - well, we need the forests because of the carbon - you agree with that, you have agreed with that many times. A sustainable forestry management approach is reinforced by the IPCC. There is no deforestation in our public production forests.

Ms O'Connor - Garbage! Point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Ms Ogilvie, I need you to take your seat.

Ms O'CONNOR - The member is, whether knowingly or unknowingly, misleading the House by definition. What is happening in our native forests is deforestation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - It is not a point of order. Continue, Ms Ogilvie.

Ms O'Connor - Clear-felling, chipping and burning is deforestation, for God's sake.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Continue, Ms Ogilvie, the call is yours.

Ms OGILVIE - Tasmania's sustainable forest industry has an important role to play in mitigating bushfire risks - you would agree with that - and the impacts of climate change. The research shows that a mixed strategy of conservation and timber production is more likely to be optimal for atmospheric carbon reduction.

The Tasmanian Government is supporting growth in the renewable and sustainable production of wood - we need wood - while also providing the framework for reducing emissions. By engaging in active forest management, the Government can make forests more resilient to fire while also producing sustainable timber products that store carbon. I have a wooden table in my office. It is Huon pine and it is made by artists.

I would like to put on the record a few of our Climate Action 21 key achievements. We have a nation-leading cross-sectoral electric vehicle working group. Our Smarter Fleets program supports Tasmanian Government, local government and heavy vehicle fleets to improve fleet efficiency and prepare for electric vehicle uptake. I have been thinking about electric vehicles. They are still quite expensive, so I am looking forward to a moment in Tasmania where there is a sufficient market both in new and second-hand vehicles to get that flowing through our economy.

Our ChargeSmart grants program is an investment of over \$600 000 to support a state-wide electric vehicle destination and fast charging network. That makes a lot of sense. We are hydro-electric people. We create electricity. We can charge the cars. We can lead the nation if we get this right. Thinking and communication need to go into this. We are transitioning the Government vehicle fleets to 100 per cent electric vehicles by 2030.

Dr Woodruff - Are you going to have some respect and allow other members to speak?

Ms OGILVIE - Crickets, right. Business Resource Efficiency program and the Power\$mart Business program - I can speed up a bit -

Dr Woodruff - Are you a robot?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff!

Ms OGILVIE - Climate-resilient councils - they will be pleased to know I am almost finished.

I am sure that this House agrees that we live in one of the safest and most beautiful places in the world and we are committed to protecting that. I am concerned that rather than acknowledging the action that is actually happening on the ground, the motion seeks to ignore this with an eye to creating concern through a mere declaration. A declaratory statement is not enough. We have to do the action on the ground. There is an opportunity for Tasmania to continue its leadership in this space. We are committed to continuing to take action and do more.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Honourable members, I welcome Lily Wooding from The Friends' School to the parliament this afternoon. Lily was a member of the youth parliament in July. Welcome back to Parliament House.

Members - Hear, hear.

[3.25 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Greens for bringing this motion to the parliament and acknowledge how serious the IPCC report is. I have not had a chance to read the entire report but I have read some of the fact sheets for policy makers. I have some of them in front of me that relate to the Australasian region that I have been looking over. It is incredibly concerning to see what is projected to change for our country and the world if we do not take action to address the change in climate.

The motion that is before us should be one that all of us can support. The Labor Party will be supporting this motion. It is clear from reading through, not just what is in this motion, but what is available on the public record about what the IPCC report predicts, that we need to take action.

Declaring a climate emergency is a clear signal that we can do more. Tasmania does have a very proud reputation for what we have already achieved and the member who resumed her seat spoke about some of the history here in our state, investment in hydro generation of electricity. A Labor initiative of which we are incredibly proud. The work that occurred in the former government that looked at how a change in climate will have an impact on agriculture.

We have seen now climate emergencies declared by countries across the globe. We have seen the EU, Canada, Japan, Bangladesh, the Maldives, New Zealand, South Korea, even the Vatican City declare a climate emergency. In October 2019 federal Labor declared a climate emergency because the Labor Party takes changing climate seriously and knows that we can always do more. We have to do more if we are going to provide a future for our children that is safe. A changing climate has an impact not just on our environment but on health care. The motion talks about the concerns that have been raised by health professionals in Australia. If

you have a look at the media reporting about the global reaction to the IPCC report, you can see the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, said the report makes for sobering reading. He said, 'We know what must be done to limit global warming - consign coal to history and shift to clean energy sources, protect nature and provide climate finance for countries on the front line'. That is Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, member of the Tory party.

Leaders from around the world say that the climate science is clear. The Deputy Prime Minister of Spain said, 'This report provides unequivocal evidence that we must scale up efforts to adapt to climate change, including through stepping up financing to build resilience and we cannot afford to delay real and rapid emissions cuts'

We had prime ministers and presidents from across the world respond to this report, not just progressive nations like our country, which I hope we would be. It was a disappointing response from my Prime Minister, remembering he is the fellow who took a piece of coal into parliament. Right across the world we have had responses to the serious issue of climate change from global leaders.

I am mindful that there are members of this House who have had no time to talk on this, including the Independent member for Clark, Kristie Johnston, so I will resume my seat so you can indicate a position on the motion if you wish. No? This is serious. If you have not read the report, I do not think many of us would have had a chance, at least read the fact sheets which show that for the southern Australian region, which includes Tasmania, we can expect observed rainfall decrease; increase in agricultural and ecological droughts; projected reduction in mean rainfall, particularly in the cool season; increase in aridity and increase in meteorological and agricultural and ecological droughts; and significant rainfall decreases; increase in agricultural and ecological drought and rainfall very likely to continue to decrease under all future scenarios. That will have an impact on our economy, on our society, on the health of Tasmanians. This motion is not controversial. There is nothing controversial about it. It is important that we support it.

Time expired.

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

The House divided -

AYES 11

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

NOES 11

Mr Barnett
Ms Courtney
Mr Ellis (Teller)
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Jaensch
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Tucker

PAIRS

Ms O'Byrne

Ms Archer

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - The result of the division is ayes 11, noes 11. In accordance with Standing Order 167, I cast my vote with the noes.

Motion negatived.

MOTION

MMG Mine at Rosebery

[4.00 p.m.]

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

That today this House -

- (1) Notes that without increased tailings storage capacity the MMG mine at Rosebery will close in 2024.
- (2) Further notes that the closure of the Rosebery mine will result in the loss of 500 direct jobs and impact the wider Tasmanian economy, including putting Nyrstar's Hobart zinc smelter at risk.
- (3) Further notes that the "paste fill" method of tailings storage would potentially create unacceptable risks to mine workers' safety.
- (4) Further notes that the Bob Brown Foundation has threatened legal action to halt test drilling at MMG's South Marionoak mining lease despite MMG having all the appropriate state approvals in place.
- (5) Calls on the Liberal Government to ensure that any legal doubt is removed to uphold the integrity of state-based mineral exploration approvals.

This is a very significant discussion. MMG and the MMG mine at Rosebery is crucial to the state economy and the north west economy. A lot of people in Hobart probably do not appreciate, and the Greens probably do not, but half our exports are minerals. It is a significant part of our economy. Maybe there are people in southern Tasmania who think that because they do not see a lot of mining operations that it is not important to our state economy. It could not be further from the truth. Mining is vital to our state.

If we go back in history and look at the reasons why Tasmania is not part of Victoria it is because of mining. Way back when Mt Bischoff started, that was the time when Tasmania had the economy and the funding to be able to become a state in our own right. Without mining I do not know where Tasmania would be historically. We would be more than likely just a

footnote. Mining has driven our state economy and has made an important contribution to our state. I have always been a big supporter of the mining industry. It was mining that brought my family to the north west coast in the 1870s. It employs thousands, pay royalties and helps fund the services we rely on.

We know that Rosebery is one of our biggest mines and it is in danger of shutting because its tailings capacity is going to run out in 2024. There have been some fixes at the Rosebery mine to try and increase their mine life. They have done lifts on their other tailing storage dams but you can only do that so much. We have a very well-regulated mining industry in Tasmania. You cannot keep lifting the dam to increase your tailings storage capacity. If you do that sort of thing, you could end up with a mine disaster like we have seen in Brazil that killed hundreds of people.

There is a lot of engineering and science in the design of tailings storage facilities. Rosebery needs a new one. The question is where should that tailings storage facility be?

At the moment we know that MMG's number one option is for the Marionoak site and they have been planning this for quite a while. They have a mining lease over the area and they have secured the appropriate approvals to go and do some test drilling at that site.

This is a site the Greens are contesting. I would note that it is also an area that is part of the permanent timber production zone that the Greens signed off on in 2012. I have been to the site, I have had a look at the site, it is not pristine wilderness. What you see once you get past the junk that the protesters have left - because what they have actually left is their drums and so on that they lock onto and when the police cut them out and moved them on and arrested them, the device they used that they concreted into the ground is still there because they have not removed it, which I found really curious - there is a powerline corridor going through there. There are signs of logging all through there. I took numerous photos. You only have to take one foot off the track in many places to see there are signs of logging, and logging from various periods of time. There is a coupe where there was a protest that has only recently been logged. You can see there has been logging there for a long time. Indeed, you can see signs of exploration, too.

When I was there, the Bob Brown Foundation was setting up for 'a citizen's science weekend', I think they called it. They set up a tarp between trees, because the weather can be inclement on the west coast. I thought where they set up was ironic, because it was quite obviously an old exploration track that was potentially quite old, perhaps 80 to 100 years old. That was where they set up because it had been levelled and it was relatively easy to get to.

The Bob Brown Foundation and their political arm, which we have sitting in this House, were talking about alternative sites. MMG has been having discussions with the Tarkine National Coalition - which morphed into the Bob Brown Foundation - over a number of years, and the South Marionoak site came up. From what I gather, it was seen as a reasonable option, before they went to that site, that they tried to get more tailings out of their existing storage - which they did. They did the big dam rise in the tailings storage facility, which you can see as you drive through the main road on the way to Zeehan. You can see where they have done the big lift on their tailings storage. That tailings storage facility was filled out. Then they were going to the place where they thought they had agreement on. They got to the gate, the Bob Brown Foundation were there because they were trying to stop logging, and this campaign fell into Bob Brown's lap.

MMG was quite surprised when they asked if they could go through and do their test drilling. The answer from the Bob Brown Foundation was, 'No way, José'. No way known. Now we have this whole action.

Crucially, MMG, as part of the normal process when you are trying to establish something like a new tailings storage facility, self-referred to the federal environment department and sought to have an exemption for the EPDC approval and have it not declared a controlled action.

MMG had all the state permits required to do test drilling. You cannot just build a tailings dam. It is not like the old days where you could just get in a bulldozer and build something. You need proper due diligence. You need to go in there and take soil samples, check the geology, and try to find the threatened species that are there. There is quite a process.

One of the key parts - and it does have an impact - is that you have to put road in so that you can get a drill rig in there, punch a couple of holes and see what the geology is like. For example, if you are drilling into fractured rock, you may not be able to construct a dam there; it might leak. Tailings storage facilities are designed to last forever.

The way a modern tailings storage facility works is that it gets filled up, then it gets capped, and then it gets rehabilitated. It is supposed to stay there forever.

When we have discussions and rhetoric like 'toxic tailings' is used, they are trying to evoke this image that it is a nuclear waste dump. It is not. It is waste rock. If that waste rock is managed properly, you do not have issues like acid and contamination getting into the rivers. That is what modern mining engineering does. It stops the impact to the wider environment. The tailings storage facility fills up, and it is then remediated in a way that those tailings are stored forever.

Once Bob Brown realised they did not want the tailings dam at that site because it is within a line that they have drawn on a map and called The Tarkine - because it is on one side of the river and not the other - they started talking about alternative sites.

Once they realised that building a tailings storage facility on the alternative site, which is Natone Creek, would actually result in far more rainforest being cut down, they suddenly changed their tune. They said what you need to do is a paste fill method of tailings storage. You crush up the rock, mix it with cement and then pump it into old parts of the mine underground, and obviously it will solidify and everybody is happy.

That method only works for part of the tailings. You can never use all the tailings, so even if they went with paste fill, they would still run out of storage. After 2024, the mine will have to shut, so paste fill is not an option because of the simple fact that it will never be able to take all of the tailings. The other issue is that it is very expensive. Crucially, and this is the point I make here, it will create unacceptable safety risks for mine workers.

Rosebery has been going for 85 years. It has had numerous owners and numerous methods, and they probably did not have the technology to accurately map all the shafts and all the drill holes 85 years ago. As a result, there are undocumented shafts and drill holes. Crucially, the new workings are actually deeper underground than the old workings. Imagine

pumping in a slurry of mine tailings mixed with aggregate or cement. That poses an unacceptable risk to the miners who are working in the bottom of the mine because you could get a mud rush. You could get collapses. They just cannot guarantee that the paste fill would be stable.

Every time you do a tour of a mine site, one of the things they are very proud of is their safety record, which they always publish. No modern miner would take a risk like that with their workforce. Unless there is a solution made to it, paste fill will not work.

Paste fill does work at other mine sites. In fact, MMG has a mine, in Queensland I think, where the whole mine was designed for paste fill disposal of tailings. It can work if the mine is new and is set up so that paste fill is an option. MMG know this, because they operate a paste fill storage at another site, and they are telling me that paste fill will not work at this mine site.

What is the option? What will the Greens be happy with? If South Marionoak is the only site where there could be a tailings stand, are they happy to see the mine shut in 2024 if there is no other option because that may end up the case?

The alternative option into Natone Creek is also problematic. It is technically possible. It is a bit uphill, so the pipe would be under some pressure, but the other issue is that there are mining leases all over that site. It is not advisable - and I do not think it is even legal - to build a tailings storage facility if there are minerals there that can be mined.

What MMG has to do is go to the Natone Creek site and bore the drill holes to prove there are no minerals there. If there are minerals, the company that has the leasehold, that has the mining lease, can start a mine. In effect, they could potentially be doing unpaid-for exploration for other mining ventures.

MMG has to have a new tailings dam. Absolutely. The time lines are very short now. Three years. To build a tailings dam, you need to do the geology, the engineering, and get all the approvals in hand. It could be 18 months, two years before that happens, so it is vital that MMG is able to determine if South Marionoak is indeed a place where they can build a tailings dam.

The federal minister, Sussan Ley, has come down and declared it a controlled action. That is well within the environment laws. That is the appropriate process. The minister has set that process in train. However, the exploration on that site has all the appropriate approvals for the exploration, but not the construction of a tailings dam.

There are two separate issues here. The Greens say MMG were acting illegally, that when they were going in there before it was even declared a controlled action, they were acting illegally and did not have the appropriate approvals. That is a serious allegation - that MMG was breaking the law by exercising its state exploration permits to go in and drill some holes to check the geology and the ability to build a tailings dam on that site.

What does the minister say about that? Was MMG breaking the law? There is legal uncertainty in this. The Bob Brown Foundation seem to be arguing that because the construction of the tailings dam is a controlled action, that doing anything, even exploration drilling, cannot occur until there is a full EPBC approval.

What that, in effect, means is that the Bob Brown Foundation could use this argument on any exploration in Tasmania. Imagine that somebody at Natone Creek, up the other side of Rosebery, on the other side of the Pieman, needed to cut down some rainforest so that you can get a drill rig in there to put some holes in the ground to see if you can build a mine there. Bob Brown Foundation might be able to argue that because building a mine at that site would require EPBC approval, you should not be allowed to do any exploration there either because it would trigger an EPBC approval. That appears to be Bob Brown's legal argument.

Where you have this legal uncertainty, it is up to the Government to clear this up. If Bob Brown can mount a successful challenge to exploration drilling at this site, there needs to be a legislative fix, because we cannot have mineral exploration in Tasmania held to ransom by legal threats from the Bob Brown Foundation. That is not a sustainable way to run mineral exploration in Tasmania. There is mineral exploration in Tasmania happening right now without EPBC approval because we have state-based regulations that cover the environmental approvals you need to do mineral exploration.

I am not aware of other mineral exploration that required a full EPBC approval but Bob Brown is arguing that because the construction of the tailings dam may require EPBC approval, then no exploration can happen on that site. The Government need to defend this. This is vital for our mining industry, the very certainty that when they have state approvals they can undertake exploration without legal threats from a well-funded organisation with pro bono lawyers like the Bob Brown Foundation has.

I am calling on the Liberal Government to ensure that any legal doubt is removed to uphold the integrity of these state-based mineral exploration approvals.

The state could do this in a number of ways. One way is that they could get their own legal advice about the Bob Brown Foundation's legal opinion, then maybe help MMG there and provide some advice to MMG about the legality of Bob Brown's threats. Or they could offer to become party to any legal challenge that the Bob Brown Foundation might put in place, to say to MMG, 'if you want to get in there and do the exploration you need to do so that you can get EPBC approval and start building the dam straight away, we will back you'. That is what the Government should be saying. They should be backing the industry and backing the Rosebery mine to make sure that Rosebery mine does not run out of time.

The EPBC process can take a very long time; it can take years in some instances. That means that MMG might only get the green light to go in and do the exploration when they have hardly any time left. Maybe they get in there and finally get to drill their couple of holes and find that you cannot build a dam there because the geology, or for whatever reason, it is not suitable for a tailings storage facility, then they will run out of time. That will be on the Government's head. Rosebery has good resources now, JORC'd up, which is the standard for investment, and they have a 10-year mine life or more proven. But they need a tailings storage facility.

The Government should be doing everything it can to make sure MMG does not run out of time. 2024 is not that far away. Indeed, it is potentially before the next election, minister. You need to get cracking and make sure MMG does not run out of time. The last thing we want to see is the 500 jobs at Rosebery put on care and maintenance, or investment decisions

made. This creates wider uncertainty in the mining industry. That is the thing the Government needs to work on.

The Government has a lot to do here. For me, on balance, saving the 500 jobs and the township of Rosebery is worth building a tailings dam, which is going to cover 200-odd hectares out of the Tarkine's 442 000 hectares. I believe that is a fair trade.

The Greens obviously have another opinion. I would like them to clear up what would happen if the South Marion oak site is the only option for MMG. Would they prefer the mine to shut down rather than a tailings facility built there? That is a question.

We depend on Rosebery. Now, rough calculations: they have a 10-year mine life at a stage where they can prove to the stock market they have a 10-year mine life. They have it 'JORC'd up', as the industry says, for the 10 years after 2024. When you take into account the royalties, wages, the amount that they spend in the community, we are talking about \$1 billion being taken out of the Tasmanian economy if that mine has to go on care and maintenance or close after 2024. This is vital to us.

The uncertainty, the Government's lack of support in this area, is telling. It is not without precedent. Under the Liberals, mineral exploration has fallen by nearly 70 per cent. That has a big effect on mining activity and jobs in the future. Without exploration, you do not have proven resources, therefore you do not have mining investment in the long term.

People must be watching what is happening in Tasmania and marking the Liberals' cards quite hard. This is also vitally important for Hobart because 25 per cent of the feedstock for Nyrstar comes from Rosebery. In fact, Nyrstar has a life-of-mine agreement with the Rosebery mine, and they are providing about a quarter of the feedstock for Nyrstar. That has a big impact here in Hobart and the jobs here in Hobart. We have a minister who needs to take some action and needs to clean up and clear up what appears to be Bob Brown's right, the legislative uncertainty.

The member for Braddon, Mr Ellis, had a bit of a chuckle when I said that the industry was marking down the Government in terms of mining. Well, do not take my word for it, take the Fraser Institute. The Fraser Institute produces an annual report, a survey of mining companies. The latest one came out in 2020. They do this regularly. When you look at the ratings, they do ratings for countries and they do ratings for jurisdictions within countries. For example, all the states in Canada have their own assessment, some countries have their own assessment, and all the states in Australia have their own assessment and they put out what is called an Investment Attractiveness Index -

Mr Ellis - Is this about the resources or about the policy?

Dr BROAD - This is a world-class document, Mr Ellis. Maybe you should have a bit of patience and let me get to the real crux of the matter. The Investment Attractiveness Index is a composite index that combines both policy perception index and results from best-practice mining potential index. It is useful as a measure of the attractiveness of a jurisdiction based on policy factors, such as onerous regulations, taxations level, quality of infrastructure and other policy-related questions that respondents answered. The ratings that are documented for Tasmania are coming from the mining industry in Tasmania. The mining industry in Tasmania

is surveyed and they are asked questions about the performance of the jurisdiction this Government has been in charge of for seven years.

When we look at the latest results, where is Tasmania? Tasmania is 63 out of 77 jurisdictions in the world, based on a survey of the Tasmanian mining industry. The mining companies have responded to this survey and in a global scale Tasmania is ranked 63 out of 77. We are in front of Papua New Guinea, we are in front of Zimbabwe and we are in front of Venezuela, which was actually ranked last. Believe it or not, on this index we are below the Dominican Republic, we are below Ecuador, we are below Burkina Faso, and we are below Guinea. We are even below the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Democratic Republic of Congo was marginally better than Tasmania.

Mr Ellis - Because it has heaps of resources in the ground. You do not even know what this index is based on.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Dr BROAD - Mr Ellis is getting a bit animated, but I point out that this is our worst result ever. The results of this mining index I can find go back to 2006-07. When this index started Tasmania was ninth out of 65. This is the worst result ever. The mining industry in Tasmania has marked this minister as the worst Tasmanian mining minister in the history of the Fraser Institute annual survey. This is documented in these graphs.

Why are we surprised? We need to see this minister do more than talk about support for the mining industry. Do more than talk as our exploration crashes by 70 per cent. He fiddles around the edges, pretends to be supporting MMG. Here is a moment in this minister's life where he can step up, he can back MMG and he can say, 'We are going to make your life a bit easier. We are going to make sure that we uphold the integrity of state mineral exploration approvals so that you do not run out of time, so you are going to have your tailing storage facility. The mine is going to keep on going. You are going to be able to employ those 500 people. You are going to be able to spend all that money on supplies and consumables. You are going to be able to move your product through the Burnie port'. We need a minister that stands up. If we look at these results from the Fraser Institute, he is the worst minister ever.

You have a bit of work to do here, Mr Barnett, because the results are clear. This is the worst investment attractive index result for Tasmania going back to 2008. When the Liberals came into government in 2014 we were 46 out of 122. In 2013 we were 44 out of 112. On this minister's watch he has crashed to the worst result ever. The mining industry is getting sick of him not meeting with them.

The minister will play another stunt and say, 'You don't support our protester legislation'. This is what he does. He will just focus on the politics. He will not focus on supporting the needs and wants of the industry. This is the moment when he can try to clear up this legal uncertainty. He might try to run the same stunt. It was transparent to everybody. He brought up his anti-protester legislation that was already thrown out by the High Court. He changed a couple of words and laid it on the table again and again. The last time it was so transparent. They did it for two or three days before the election was called. How transparent was that?

It sat on the table, he tabled it in parliament, and he sat on it for a whole year it was that important to him. It sat gathering dust on the table for a year only to be brought up at the very

last moment so he could get it through the lower House and get it knocked off in the upper House again so he could go to the election with a political stunt in his back pocket. He is treating the mining industry as a political stunt. What does the industry think about these stunts? He is the worst mining minister ever according to the statistics from the Fraser Institute. He needs to do more than talk about mining. Talk about the importance of mining. He needs to lift his game.

This is a mark against this minister. This is a report card that comes directly from the industry. The industry fills these surveys out. It is not a think tank. It is not government departments. This comes from the industry.

Our mining industry is vital to this state. We need a minister who will stand up. He is the fifth or sixth mining minister since they came into Government. I will have to count. There has been a revolving door. This minister has had the job for a couple of years now. The industry is marking him down. He needs to back MMG. He needs to clear up this legal doubt otherwise the Bob Brown Foundation may have an effective legal action veto on mineral exploration in Tasmania. This means that our investment attractiveness could fall even further. We are already below the so-called Democratic Republic of Congo. We can fall even further.

The minister has his cards marked. He needs to lift his game and we need mines like Rosebery to keep going for another 85 years.

[4.13 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Resources) - Mr Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this motion and table my amendment on behalf of the Government. It is similar in many respects to the current motion but it has a number of additional parts which I would like to speak about. It highlights the inconsistencies in Labor's position with respect to mining and mineral processing in Tasmania. It puts the spotlight on the fact that federal and state Labor are split when it comes to the state Government and the federal Liberal position.

Gavin Pearce, the federal member for Braddon, and the state Government are on a unity ticket. From the lamenting, the regrets on the other side, particularly the members for Braddon, I can see they are very forlorn. It is very clear that they are split with the federal Labor candidate, Chris Lynch, who indicated when there was a reference to the BBFs radical protest at the Rosebery mine site, that it was 'a tricky question'. He could not work out - he wanted more time - whether he should be supporting the BBF and the radical protesters around the Rosebery mine site, and whether he supported the 500 jobs at Rosebery.

Dr Shane Broad, on behalf of state Labor, has not been able to even acknowledge the position of his federal Labor candidate in Braddon, who probably resides not far down the road. That is a great shame, but it is an indicator of where Labor is at in Tasmania. They are split; there has been bloodletting. The day, 23 August, will go down in infamy, where we saw the infighting reach another level, where we saw two members of the parliamentary Labor Party disappear from their ranks on that day.

That is an issue for the Labor Party, and specifically for the Leader for the Labor Party, who, when she came to power, said there will now be unity, there will be no more infighting, we will be all together lovey-dovey on the one page. The exact opposite has occurred. What is the Leader doing in that regard?

There is no greater supporter of the mining and mineral processing sector than the majority Liberal Government, that is for sure. It is more than half of our exports. This was made clear at the mining and mineral processing annual conference, which I recently attended. It was great to catch up with Ben Maynard the president, Ray Mostogl and all their members. It was great to see the confidence in the mining and mineral processing sector.

I call on Dr Broad and highlight his speaking down of the industry. I can tell you that is what they do not want. They want investor confidence. They want confidence in the sector. You are obviously not listening. You are not talking to the mining and mineral processing sector when you are talking them down in the way you have in your speech. It is a great shame. You should try another tactic, Dr Broad, with respect to where you want to go.

You were asking about the contribution to the economy. Well, the royalties in 2019-20 were \$31 million - and guess what? It significantly increased the last few years. You will see more in the budget.

It is a significant contribution to the Tasmanian economy, and we are proud of that. In terms of the contributions from the industry, it is fantastic support for education, health and welfare and the like.

The bottom line is Labor is feigning support for the mining and mineral processing sector. You have been caught out. It is not just your federal Labor candidate, it is the fact that you will not and have not over successive terms of government supported our workplace protection legislation. You have refused. In fact, you have voted time and again against it.

Dr Broad - You are using them for political point scoring.

Mr BARNETT - Time and again you have opposed. Not only that, you are standing -

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Braddon. You have had your opportunity. Allow the minister to respond.

Mr BARNETT - I do thank you, Mr Speaker, to be heard in silence from the interjections by the Opposition. Labor governments and Labor Parties across the country in various states and territories have all supported legislation of various types, shapes and sizes in opposition to workplace invasions. It is at a bilateral level in the federal parliament, and then the various states have done it - except for Tasmanian Labor, because they are so close to the Greens and they have remained so close since 2014.

They have been caught out and their voting indicates exactly where they are at. They have not been listening to the industry. On our side we have had miners, foresters, farmers, fishers and businesses large and small all supporting our legislation; all supporting our objective to maintain the right of workers to go to work; and the right of businesses to operate freely from workplace invasions with protesters tying themselves to equipment, running in front of trucks in an unsafe environment - a dreadful situation and this is not hypothetical. As I said yesterday, this has been going on day in, day out, week in, week out, particularly on the west coast in the mining industry. It has been happening in the forest industry off and on over a number of years, and now we see the Bob Brown Foundation has hired somebody full time. They have employed somebody full time to stop the sustainable salmon industry in Tasmania, and they are supported by their parliamentary wing, the Tasmanian Greens.

What we do know is that the BBF and the Greens want 440 000 hectares of the west coast - some 6 per cent of Tasmania - locked up. They have tried this before, in fact under the Labor-Greens government at the federal level many years ago. They said no, it is not going to happen. Now they are still trying.

I am grateful to federal minister Sussan Ley for her response to that application, to reject the emergency listing of the Tarkine to lock it up. It has seen 150 years, generation after generation, of multiple use, whether mining or productive forestry, recreational land use, four-wheel driving, fishing, farming. Much of it of course is also for conservation purposes, for bushwalking. Getting the balance right is important. That is why we do support a balanced approach, and we have done. It is important that we do everything we can to ensure that balanced approach.

Since that application was made, what has the state Labor Party done to say no to the BBF claims? I have not heard anything. There has been a wall of silence. Now we are getting these feigned cries of opposition and criticism of the BBF and the protesters there but did you ever make communication with the federal minister? I wrote twice to federal minister Sussan Ley outlining the importance of these industries to Tasmania, especially in the north-west, and the final decision is a great outcome.

My department in fact produced a report on the Tarkine, which I released a month or so ago, indicating how it has been responsibly managed over those 150 years, highlighting the importance of this area to the productive industries and the community, and why we have a balanced, multiple-use approach. I will just remind colleagues what it says:

Mining and forestry annually contributes over \$3.5 billion in direct gross revenue to the state. Owing to its resource base, the Tarkine is critically important to both the mining and forestry sectors in Tasmania. These industries make a significant contribution to the north-west and Tasmanian economy and community.

Then it says:

Together in the north-west, mining and forestry:

- contributes approximately \$1.6 billion in direct gross revenue, and over \$650 million in value-added per annum.

That is big money. That is a big contribution. Then it says:

- Supports over 8000 direct and indirect jobs

That is why this Government is rock solid in our support. That is why we are proactive. P for Proactive in our opposition to the BBF.

This feigned criticism from Tasmanian state Labor notwithstanding, federal Labor thinks it is a tricky question as to whether you should support 500 jobs at Rosebery. This was backed up with Mr Lynch snuggling up to the anti-salmon farm protesters on the weekend on the north-

west coast. So, Mr Lynch has grave concerns for the salmon industry on the north-west coast. That is a real indicator that Labor is totally split.

In Tasmania we have a unity ticket, thanks to Gavin Pearce who is doing a good job, working hard, working with people like Felix Ellis and other members for Braddon, Jeremy Rockliff and Roger Jaensch.

It has been quite excruciating listening to state Labor and Dr Broad in the last 48 hours trying to explain why he has a position different from federal Labor on this matter.

I will make a few other comments about our excellent mining sector. You asked about exploration and the work the Government has been doing to support it. We made those commitments at the election. That is why we have solid support, particularly in Braddon, unlike state Labor. Greens support in Braddon paled into insignificance.

Our commitment of more than \$3.5 million in new support to the sector, including \$1.5 million to extend our popular co-funded exploration drilling grant initiative, is going to be extended through to 2025. It has worked well in the past few years and we are extending that for the term of this Government to 2025. The industry is pleased with that.

We have been able to secure \$2 million. I thank the Premier for his support for geosciences initiative. I thank Keith Pitt, the federal Minister for Resources and appreciate his support for Tasmania. He responded to that request and has committed up to \$3 million on top of our \$2 million for the geoscience initiative. We are doing all the work necessary to allow those exploration companies, those mining companies to look out for opportunities.

We provided \$150 000 to the Tasmanian Minerals, Manufacturing and Energy Council to establish the diversity action plan for the sector. We are committed to ensuring that mining and mineral processing will remain a key engine of growth in the Tasmanian economy as we rebuild from this recent pandemic.

I mention the COVID-19 pandemic. Right now, every job counts and this attack from the BBF and their parliamentary wing, the Tasmanian Greens, on jobs, particularly on the west coast and including the equivocal position of Chris Lynch, the federal Labor member, is shameless.

The Government will do whatever it takes to protect, promote and support jobs. We are going to fight tooth and nail to keep those jobs. MMG, the Rosebery mine, has entitlement to go through due process, through a planning and approval process at the federal level. I will officially table the amendment and if you want me to, do so now.

Mr SPEAKER - You will need to explain the amendment and read the amendment in.

Mr BARNETT - I will finish the point I was making regarding the federal Government. MMG will go through due process. They have everything that is required by the state Government. We have broken our back and we have reached out. I was down there with Felix Ellis, the state member for Braddon. We had a tour of the site, met with the mine manager and the workers. We appreciated that opportunity and got the feedback.

Ms O'Connor - Did you not have a police escort that day because you were scared of the protesters?

Mr BARNETT - We were not scared of the protesters. We had a very congenial discussion with the protesters. We had no issues at all. The Greens claim it is pristine wilderness. It is not. With respect to whether it is a national park or World Heritage, it is not. It is a permanent timber production zone - forestry land. It has been harvested many times over many years. There have been mining deposits and drilling on that land over many decades. It has a transmission line right through this particular part of that west coast, on the other side of the river at Rosebery.

There were fires through there some years ago. We have walked through there, the tea tree swamp; it is not pristine wilderness. Let us get that very clear. We are on a unity ticket with Dr Broad there, which is encouraging.

Ms O'Connor - The words 'pristine wilderness' have never come out of my mouth. I have talked about habitat, wilderness, national environmental values.

Mr BARNETT - We have had an interjection from the Tasmanian Greens. The BBF got caught out in putting down some bait.

Mr Speaker, I move -

That paragraphs (2) to (5) of the motion be deleted and replaced by the following paragraphs -

- (2) Notes that the closure of the Rosebery mine will result in the loss of 500 direct jobs and impact the wider Tasmanian economy, including Nyrstar's Hobart zinc smelter and TasRail.
- (3) Notes that MMG advised that the 'paste fill' method of tailing storage would potentially create unacceptable risk to mine workers' safety.
- (4) Condemns the Bob Brown Foundation's relentless radical protesting and its threatened legal action to halt test drilling at MMG's South Marion oak mining lease despite MMG having all the appropriate state approvals in place.
- (5) Calls on Labor to come clean on their position on jobs at the mine with their federal candidate for Braddon saying it was a 'tricky question' when asked if he supported Rosebery miner MMG or the BBF.
- (6) Acknowledges that the Tarkine is a prime example of multiple land use management where recreation, conservation, forestry, mining and tourism have successfully coexisted for generations.
- (7) Welcomes the Australian Government's rejection of the BBF's latest attempt to lock up another 440 000 hectares of the Tarkine.

- (8) Acknowledges the comfort that this news would be to over 8000 Tasmanians in the north west with jobs in mining and forestry.
- (9) Calls on all members of the House to stand up for Tasmanian workers, back the Government's proposed Workplace Protection Bill and send a clear message that workplace invasions have no place in this state.

There could be nothing clearer than that motion. There is nothing more simple. There is nothing more pro-jobs. There is nothing more pro-business and pro the mining and mineral processing sector. There is nothing more pro-getting-the-job-done and getting a balanced approach. For Tasmanian Labor this is the test. This is an opportunity now to put the past behind you, Dr Broad and state Labor. Put the past behind you. Listen to the community. We have had an election and the people have had their say. They have expressed a mandate for our position. We are all go. We will continue to do what we have to do to get the job done.

We are delighted to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the industry to get the job done. We will not give up. We have a unity ticket with the federal Liberal, Gavin Pearce. Getting a balanced approach. I mentioned the paste fill plant proposal. That is a decision for MMG. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to tailings management but it is a matter for MMG. It has made it clear that it is a concern, particularly with respect to the safety of the workers.

Ms O'Connor- How come Rosebery can do paste and backfill?

Mr BARNETT - You will have to talk to MMG about that. I do not know if you have had the opportunity.

Ms O'Connor- Yes, where I was three weeks ago.

Mr BARNETT - There was a mention of the baiting, of the camera traps. Reports that camera traps baited with wallaby legs or cat food have been found on MMG's mining lease are extremely concerning. Did the BBF get the relevant authorisations to take wildlife under the Nature Conservation Act? Were those requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 1993 met? I would expect the organisation dedicated to the environment to know that a permit is required to take wildlife or a product of wildlife for any purpose, including for baiting a camera trap. I understand the department has conducted initial inquiries into the matter. That is an operational matter.

With respect to the tailings storage facility, we have had a good discussion on that and we know how important it is. It has been there for 85 years. I was at the celebration with the mine management, the workers, the staff, people who have been there off and on over many decades. It was a real celebration, fantastic, and I was absolutely rapt in that regard. They should be congratulated on that 85 years of commitment and they have every intention of going for decades and decades into the future, subject to this progressing.

We have one political party that is totally opposed to that - the Greens and the BBF -

Ms O'Connor - What are we opposed to?

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor, you do not get to ask questions from your chair.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. First, I will note that Dr Broad has been repeatedly interjecting and not been pulled up by you. I interjected once and was pulled up. I have asked the minister what he is accusing us of not supporting because, of course, we support the celebration of a mine's long life.

Mr SPEAKER - That is not a point of order, Ms O'Connor. Sit down. I have, in fact, asked on several occasions for the member for Braddon not to interject. You are specifically interjecting on the minister. You will have a chance, I presume, in a moment, when the minister has completed, to take the jump and you can have your contribution then.

Mr BARNETT - As I was saying, with respect to the tailings storage facility and the contribution of MMG over 85 years -

Ms O'Connor - That is not MMG.

Mr SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, please.

Ms O'Connor - He is just not telling the truth. The mine has been there for 85 years, not MMG.

Mr SPEAKER - You will have your chance to have a say. You will, if you do not get thrown out.

Mr BARNETT - The Leader of the Greens is baiting the minister and she has baited Dr Broad as well.

The ownership of the Rosebery mine is a red herring from the Greens. In fact, it is not even a red herring, it is a Greens herring. Does anyone seriously think that if the mine were owned by other interests, the BBF would simply take their bat and ball and go home? I ask the question. The reality is that the Greens and their fellow travellers have opposed and are opposed to this job-securing proposal regardless of the ownership. They have a track record of stopping things and doing everything they can to stop things, particularly in terms of the productive industries. We will not take the bait from the Leader of the Greens.

What we do know is that there were more 67 000 tonnes in 2020 of zinc concentrate and 38 000 tonnes in lead concentrate, 1500 tonnes in copper concentrate, 10 000 ounces of gold, 6000 ounces of silver in 2020 from the Rosebery mine. That is significant. That zinc comes down here on the TasRail, on our beautiful trains, all the way south to Nyrstar and is used in making zinc. The Greens and the rest of us use it on our roofs. The zinc is used on our roofs to protect the homes that we live in with our families. They forget that. The mining and mineral processing is really important. The phones you use, the cars we drive, the utensils we use at dinner time and breakfast and lunch, this is the mining and mineral processing sector in action.

I will make my closing remarks and ask all members of parliament to support this amendment and to note how important it is to send a message of our support for the mining and mineral processing sector. We want to protect jobs for the sector and a fantastic outcome for Tasmania.

[4.39 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, we have this confected lovers' tiff now between Dr Broad and the minister, Mr Barnett, who on just about every issue agree with each other, are in lock-step. Yet we have this motion brought forward so that Dr Broad can again dog-whistle to his constituents in Braddon and pretend there is any substantive difference between him and minister Barnett when it comes to resource extraction in Tasmania.

The first thing I want to say is that the Greens support a sustainable mining industry. We recognise the enormous contribution the mining industry has made to Tasmania's economy. Over the winter break I took out of the Parliamentary Library *The Peaks of Lyell* by Geoffrey Blainey, which I highly recommend to any member of this place to read if you want to understand the history of this island, the history of the west coast, the role of mining in kick-starting our economy and employing people. A fascinating read. A wonderful read.

Members - Hear, hear.

Ms O'CONNOR - I am also the daughter of a former sand miner on Minjerribah, Stradbroke Island. I understand the importance of mining but you have to do it sustainably. There has to be a social licence for mines. We have Dr Broad sneering about people who live in Hobart as if we do not understand the value of mining to Tasmania's economy, this sneering dismissal of people who live south of Ross.

All over this island people genuinely want to see a balance. That is in the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council Report. Tasmanians recognise we are blessed with many assets. We have resources and we have great wilderness. Extraordinary scenery. It is the reason people come here from all over the mainland and all over the world. Even in a pandemic, we have seen visitation from the mainland, when it is possible to do so, be sustained.

Then I heard Dr Broad muttering, when the minister was on his feet about, 'Oh, the minister is trying to politicise it'. Oh, my goodness - read the original motion. You want to talk about playing politics. That is exactly what the motion was about. We have this one-trick pony in Dr Broad, who is obsessed with the Bob Brown Foundation. He trundles out onto the racetrack. You know, he is a bit of a plodder but he does stay in his lane, I will give him that.

Do not sneer at people who do not live on the west coast. Let us stop marginalising each other because of which part of Tasmania we happen to live in. This tiny island.

I was listening to both Dr Broad and the minister, and the minister was so excited about his new goose-stepping anti-protest laws. You know the person who came into my mind? That radical protester, Anthony Houston -

Mr BARNETT - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I consider the use of those words by implication offensive. I draw that to the Speaker's attention. I ask the member to withdraw those parts of that phrase from her contribution, and perhaps you could reconsider the use of those words.

Mr SPEAKER - There has been offence taken.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Mr Speaker, I am happy to withdraw the use of the words 'goose-stepping' in relation to the proposed anti-protest legislation. The person who came into my mind when the minister was talking was that radical protester, Anthony Houston, lettuce farmer extraordinaire, who was one of 71 people, many of them everyday Tasmanians, tourism operators, older people, pensioners, young people worried about the future, who were arrested over that seven weeks defending the Tarkine.

We know that the anti-protest laws which have been knocked out once by the High Court, recobbled together because this is a minister who thinks you can put a shine on a cow pat. Sat upstairs for a year - that is something I have to agree with Dr Broad about, this urgent legislation which was jammed through here one day in December and left to sit upstairs for almost a year until just before the election.

Dr Broad - Labor opposed it.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, they did not. They gagged the debate and jammed it through. As I said on election night, on behalf of young people and everyone who cares about this island, if this minister and his cheerleader Dr Broad think that the most draconian anti-protest laws in the country are going to stop people from defending wild places, they are very slow learners.

When I am out of parliament, I will be there too. There are plenty of us, because we care, and we are prepared to stand between people who would wreck wild places and habitat for threatened and endangered species and those places. Those sacred places.

We will not be supporting the amendment, and we will not be supporting the original motion, because they are both just garbage. This is an amendment from a minister who stood in this place not more than an hour ago and voted against a climate emergency declaration that is backed by science, facts and young people.

Mr SPEAKER - Through the Chair, please.

Ms O'CONNOR - I was talking through the Chair, Mr Speaker; I just was not looking at the Chair.

The minister talks about us wanting to lock up the Tarkine. I do not know if the minister was there when there was that big sign, at a public road, put there by Forestry Tasmania on behalf of the mining company, that stopped we, the people of Tasmania, from being able to go into that rainforest. Allowed a corporation in there that was in there unlawfully. This is something Dr Broad does not seem to be able to acknowledge or grasp.

Dr Broad - That is your opinion.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, no. I will read you now a letter that was sent to MMG by Roland Browne, who represents the Bob Brown Foundation. The reason we know that Mr Browne was on the money is that once this letter was received, MMG took advice and pulled its machinery out.

Dr Broad - I do not think they wanted a further delay by an injunction. That was probably the truth.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - This is a letter to Mr Steve Scott, Acting GM of the Rosebery Mine, MMG Australia Limited, 7 Hospital Road, Rosebery:

Dear Sir,

I act for the Bob Brown Foundation incorporation of Dr Bob Brown. I refer to the above referral by MMG dated 10 May 2021 for the construction of, amongst other things, a tailings dam west of Rosebery.

MMG is currently upgrading the access track from the Pieman Road in a general southerly direction. That upgrade work has included grading the roads, cutting trees at the side of the road and placing rock and other road base material on the road prior to grading.

Section 74AA of the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, (the Act), provides that it is an offence for a person to take an action where there has been a referral to the minister and whereupon the other prerequisites to that provision are satisfied.

Clearly the proposal has been referred by MMG under section 68. A component of the referral is the upgrade of the roads.

This is made clear by Figure 4 to the referral depicting the access track to be upgraded. That access track has already been upgraded for a substantial distance in the order of three-quarters of a kilometre into the rainforest.

Unless section 74AA(2) is invoked by the minister having made a requirement or request and by MMG giving her written notice of the action in accordance with that provision, the inevitable conclusion appears to be that section 74AA(1) has been breached by MMG.

If section 74AA(2) has not been invoked, will you please confirm as a matter of urgency that MMG will halt all works that are part of the action that has been referred to the minister and which is now the subject of a controlled action and assessment decision, made on 12 July 2021.

I further refer to the decision by the minister on 4 June 2021 to suspend the referral and assessment approach decision time frame until 23 July. That decision requires an agreement to be reached in writing with the minister.

Can you also please provide a copy of the agreement reached with the minister.

I look forward to your urgent response.

Yours sincerely,
Roland Browne

Two days later, Dr Bob Brown wrote to the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police about the fact that MMG was still unlawfully, under national environment law, so Commonwealth law - I know, quaint, just dismiss Commonwealth law - and MMG got it and they got out.

There is a federal legal framework here that MMG Australia Pty Ltd was not compliant with. We know, from the EPBC referral they made, that there were insufficient environmental impact assessment details in their documentation. They blamed the BBF for that.

Blaming the BBF and the Greens. We are quite used to being the punching bag for people who want to degrade and damage nature, but the federal environment law is the federal environment law. That is all there is to it. And MMG was in there unlawfully.

As I have mentioned before, we made a submission to the federal minister to talk about those values that are matters of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act 1999. We are talking about an area that is about 285 hectares of forested wild lands. I have never personally said they are pristine, but there are certainly large chunks of those rainforests that are unspoiled, undamaged, and by definition are wild and wilderness.

This is 285 hectares of forested wild lands, including pristine rainforest. Dr Woodruff and I have both been there. The forests west of Rosebery were independently verified as having World Heritage and National Heritage value. Just because a federal Liberal environment minister from a coal-loving, climate-destroying government does not agree to National Heritage listing for the Tarkine does not mean it should not be on the National Heritage list, because it should.

The January 2020-21 Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment Protected Matters Report did confirm that the MMG tailings dam proposal will, or is likely to, impact on the following matters of national environmental significance: the fact that within these forests there are Tasmanian devils, which are endangered; spotted-tail quolls, vulnerable; masked owl, vulnerable; wedge-tailed eagle, endangered; Tasmanian azure kingfisher, endangered; swift parrot, critically endangered - and driven closer to extinction on this Government's watch, and according to the ANU scientists, down to about 300 individual birds. There are also critically endangered forest communities of *Eucalyptus ovata*.

As I reminded the minister on behalf of the Greens, even *The Australian* newspaper reported that an MMG spokesperson confirmed the company had not conducted the environmental studies required to determine the proposed tailings dam's impact on EPBC-listed species.

At a federal level, despite the Samuel report, which looked at whether the EPBC Act was doing its job to protect nature and habitat and our incredible wildlife, we know that the Morrison Government has ignored the Samuel report's findings on the EPBC Act and are trying to work out different ways and probably having a chat to Mr Barnett while they are at it to weaken the EPBC Act. The review found not only is the act not protecting the environment, it is actually driving environmental damage, habitat and species loss. Our national environment law is failing the environment and you have Dr Broad here who wants to make it even weaker. That is reassuring isn't it? That is great in a time of climate and biodiversity crisis, that is just epic.

Dr Broad - Can you not believe in uncertainty.

Ms O'CONNOR - There is no legal uncertainty about the provisions in the EPBC Act. You might want to narrow cast your view of the world to only things that happen in Braddon, but there is a national environmental law and it is clear that MMG was not compliant with it either in the documentation they sent in in the referral or the fact they were undertaking works without approval.

Dr Broad interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad. No interjections but I ask also that you present through the Chair please and do not direct your statements and incite interjections.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Mr Speaker. I hope the next time Mr Barnett is on his feet inciting interjections, pointing at the Greens and shouting at us that you raise the same concern with him.

We are here having this debate because Dr Broad wants to be a cheer leader for MMG and pretend in any way that he is in any substantive manner different from his ideological mate, Mr Barnett. We have the original motion which does not understand Commonwealth law and calls on the state Government to basically ignore Commonwealth law and then we have the amendment which is a load of bollocks.

We are not supporting either of these. We stand by every one of those 71 people who put themselves on the frontline to defend the Tarkine. We stand with Bob Brown Foundation and we always will. We stand with them because they are defending what makes this island unique in the universe. Despite the best endeavours of majority governments, whether they be Liberal or Labor in this place it is civil society and conservationists who have protected enough of this island to uphold some brand integrity.

I have said this to Luke Martin who makes sport of bagging out the Greens. You should be on your knees saying thank you to the conservation movement for their decades of hard work to defend what makes this island unlike any other place on the planet. It is civil society that will stand up for this place. I bet there is not another member of this House at the moment apart from Dr Woodruff and me, possibly, who were there for the March for Saving the Styx. It was about 15 years ago now. I could not believe it. I could not see the end of the line of more than 10 000 people who had come from all over the island to the Styx to defend the forests. Also, the 10 000 or more people, most of whom you would not call radical Greenies who marched through Launceston to save the Tamar Valley from the Gunn's pulp mill.

We hear a lot from Mr Barnett about balance. He has no idea. This is a minister who is accelerating native forest, logging, chipping and burning. This is a minister who is party to meaningless memoranda of understanding with the Leatherwood bee keepers while he continues to allow Forestry Tasmania to harvest and fell and often waste Leatherwood trees. This is a minister whose own department said, 'Do not please go ahead with the duck-shooting season this year' - and this is the year-before-last - because there has been so much pressure on these species caused by drought interstate that they are coming here for refugia and we need to put a stay on duck shooting for this year and what did the minister do - he ignored it - so we will not be supporting any of this rubbish.

Time expired.

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

The House divided -

AYES 11

Mr Barnett
Ms Courtney
Mr Ellis (Teller)
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Jaensch
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Street
Mr Tucker

NOES 11

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

PAIRS

Ms Archer

Ms O'Byrne

Mr SPEAKER - The results of the division, being ayes 11, noes 11, in accordance with the Standing Order 167 I cast my vote with the ayes.

Motion as amended agreed to.

MOTION

Tasmania's Economy during COVID-19

[5.06 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House:

- (1) Notes that, despite the challenges of 2020/2021, Tasmania's economy continues to grow.
- (2) Recognises that, across a range of economic indicators, our state's economic performance is strengthening.
- (3) Acknowledges that Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force data for July 2021 has confirmed the highest number of Tasmanians ever employed.

- (4) Further recognises that Tasmania's unemployment rate remains the lowest it's been in more than 10 years.
- (5) Further acknowledges that our State Final Demand is now higher than before the pandemic.
- (6) Further notes that, as the economy is strengthening, confidence is returning to the Tasmanian community with retail trade figures higher than 2020.
- (7) Further recognises that with our economy growing strongly and our recovery well underway, this week's State Budget will continue to support that growth and recovery to secure Tasmania's future.

Mr SPEAKER - Is a vote required?

Mr ELLIS - Yes, Mr Speaker. In spite of the many challenges in the past year-and-a-half across a range of economic indicators, our state's economic performance is strengthening. This is good news. The prophets of doom on the other side find it hard to welcome it. Instead they just keep being perpetually negative, even if there are new faces at the helm.

At the election in May, Tasmanians voted for a majority Liberal Government for the third time in a row. They voted for certainty and stability at a time when our state needs it most. The Government has laid out a clear plan to secure Tasmania's future, to continue building on our strong economic position, to create jobs and ensure we have the skills and training pathways Tasmanians need.

There are more jobs now than before the pandemic. At times of uncertainty, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues around the country, it is important that this House supports our recovery and, in particular, our economic recovery, to encourage people to be positive about the future, to not talk down our state. It is important to acknowledge when things are going well, while at the same time recognising that some Tasmanians are doing it tough. That is why I am talking about a stronger Tasmanian economy today.

Last week's ABS labour force data for July has confirmed that the Tasmanian economy is strong and that jobs are continuing to be created, with the highest number of Tasmanians ever employed. Employment grew by 0.3 per cent in July to hit a record high of 263 000, with 800 jobs added in the month. This includes record female employment. Our unemployment rate has also remained steady at 4.5 per cent, the equal lowest of all the states. That is the lowest it has been in more than 10 years. Our economic recovery has led the nation and these positive figures demonstrate once again that our clear plan is working as we secure Tasmania's future.

It also follows the positive data released last week by the National Skills Commission, which confirms that Tasmania has seen the largest growth in job vacancies in the nation, with 69.3 per cent more vacancies than before the pandemic. Job vacancies are higher in all three regions, confirming that businesses are confident and looking to hire in all areas of the state.

CommSec ranks Tasmania as the best performing economy in Australia for the sixth quarter in a row. Our state final demand grew 1.6 per cent in the March quarter. That is the third highest growth rate in Australia. Importantly, state final demand is 2.9 per cent higher than at the start of the pandemic. Retail trade is up and exports, including from our mining and forestry sector, are at record highs growing 5.2 per cent to \$3.84 billion in the 12 months to June. Deloitte Access Economics said in March Tasmania's economy navigated 2020 better than any state. In June Deloitte said Tasmania's COVID-19 recovery continues to outperform expectations.

Annual building approvals, for example, are at 4208, the highest in more than 25 years. However, COVID-19 remains an ever-present threat to our way of life, particularly with the Delta strain that is currently impacting a number of states and therefore having an impact on all Tasmanians.

That is why this week's Budget will continue the momentum and deliver on our plan to secure Tasmania's future, to grow our economy and our workforce with key investments in education, skills and TasTAFE, to ensure that even more Tasmanians can participate in our growing economy as we work to secure our future. The Budget will build on the strong foundations the Government has established, growing our economy, creating jobs, supporting businesses and connecting the skills and training Tasmanians need to grasp the opportunities ahead. It will include an ambitious infrastructure program to support jobs and build better, safer and more connected communities.

The Budget will invest in our health system and the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians. It will invest in education, skills and training to enable Tasmanians to get the jobs that will support and drive our economy forward. It will invest in social and affordable housing and homelessness initiatives to help those Tasmanians who are in need.

This Budget will be based on listening to Tasmanians and providing support where it is needed most - in our communities, in our businesses and in our economy. I am expecting a plan that is bold in its breadth and in its vision. It will secure the health and safety of our community. It will secure our achievements in growing our economy, investing in skills and education and increasing the number of Tasmanian jobs. It will secure better and more modern services for Tasmanian families. It will deliver on ambitious climate change action plans and provide a more competitive tax system for Tasmanians; one that is fair, sensible and sustainable.

I recognise that some areas have not fully recovered, and that include parts of my home region in the north west. That is why our clear plan to secure our future includes our state-wide infrastructure pipeline, TasTAFE investment, new jobs hubs in rural areas, including Burnie, to support regional jobs growth.

What are the alternatives? The recycled Labor leader, Rebecca White, has failed at the first hurdle to demonstrate real leadership. The Labor Opposition remains divided, chaotic, a rabble. After more than seven years in Opposition, the Labor Party will still not produce a properly costed budget. There is no alternative. Dr Broad, the latest shadow treasurer, simply has not done the hard yards. I do not know if he has it in him.

The Greens will probably have a range of kooky proposals as per usual, but even the Greens do an alternative budget, and they only have two of them.

Dr Broad - Did you see the last alternative budget that these guys put up?

Mr ELLIS - To be fair to the Labor Party, the last Greens alternative budget could be summarised as a budget for dogs and chooks. At least they did an alternative. I know you were not here; at least they did some work.

Labor is simply not an alternative and it is why, under Ms White, they suffered a humiliating defeat at the May state election. Despite Ms White's claims that Tasmanians would see change under her leadership, it is nothing but the same old Labor Party that they saw at the election, minus a couple of key figures. Still bitterly divided, still no plan for Tasmania, still too close to the Greens.

When she became leader, Ms White said it would be a full stop to the backgrounding and the infighting. She said it would end and that she would unite Labor. Perhaps she has united what is left of it but in the process, it is fair to say that she has not. The shock resignation announced by health spokesperson, Bastian Seidel, cited a toxic environment. It demonstrates how bitterly divided the Labor Party is and how Rebecca White has lost control of her own team in less than two months.

Labor is bitterly divided; they are dysfunctional; they are dominated by hard-left factional powerbrokers. If you cannot govern yourself, how on earth can you govern Tasmania? They have no plan. They still refuse to produce a properly costed alternative budget after seven years of opposition. I know you are new but hopefully you might be able to help us out. They deliberately lied during the election campaign, running fake scare campaigns on privatising Hydro and privatising TAFE.

They told mistruths about ward closures while standing outside the hospital. They misled on economic data; their fake free TAFE promise which was not actually free for everyone. The election result under Ms White was a humiliation for the once-proud Labor Party. They went backwards in every electorate. Labor won only one booth north of Kempton and they saw a massive swing against them even in their traditional base of Clark. We must not forget that Labor has a shocking economic management record.

They took us into recession under the then minister for economic development, Mr O'Byrne, Labor member for Franklin, and Tasmanian businesses have not forgotten those dark days of the Labor-Greens deal. I am looking forward to the 2021-22 Tasmanian Budget later this week. The budget will deliver on every commitment our Liberal team made to the Tasmanian people during the election. This is a government that does what it says it will do. Thanks to the hard work of Tasmanians, we are in a good place.

Our economy is in good shape and we need to keep on top of COVID, keep getting vaccinated, keep our state safe. It is constantly evolving and we are not through this yet. Despite Labor's constant whingeing, negativity and attempts to undermine business confidence, recent economic results are yet more evidence that our plan is clearly working but we know that there is much more to do.

I want to speak about some particular areas of the economy that are close to my heart, particularly about the building and construction sector. We have seen a massive increase. Homes loans, first home buyers, June 2021 - 880 new loan commitments in June in line with

previous months. There were 145 new home construction loans in June. There were 242 first home buyers in Tasmania in June.

I am young enough that buying a first home has recently been part of my journey. I have to say the support for first home buyers is immense. We believe in getting people into the property market, on to that ladder of wealth-generation but, even more importantly than that, it is about having a home of your own, it is about having a place of stability where you can raise a family and you have that room to grow.

We also know that there is a huge number of jobs in the construction sector, in the home building sector. There were 342 dwelling approvals in seasonally-adjusted terms in the June quarter. Building approvals in June were 43.7 per cent higher than in June last year and were 15.9 per cent higher than in March last year before the pandemic. That is a fantastic result for those people who are moving into those homes but perhaps it is an even better result for the construction industry because we know that these guys and girls are absolutely flat out at the moment. It speaks to opportunities for people who are already on the tools; it speaks to the business owners and subbies who rely on the economic growth to make sure that they can put food on the table but even better than that, those are opportunities to take on new apprentices. Those are the young people who are going to build our future, whether they are boys and girls leaving school, whether they are people who are looking to retrain or whether they are older people who are coming out of different industries. Perhaps some of those who have been hit hard by the pandemic are realising that the construction industry in particular is a fantastic place to learn, to earn and to get ahead.

We want to provide more opportunities for those people and one of the best things about Tasmania's growing economy is that we are also seeing our growing population. A growing population means more opportunities, more homes to be built, more work to be done and more jobs for our young people.

The value of construction work overall in the March 2021 quarter was of near record construction activity in late 2020 and some adjustment was expected. We see an enormous amount of increase in terms of the confidence in these industries. There were 3159 dwellings completed in the 12 months to March 2021. That is 13.2 per cent more than the previous year, despite the pandemic. Growth in the number of houses completed was the highest in the country and there is more to come with 3546 dwellings commenced in the 12 months to March 2021.

We have seen across all sorts of industries an increase in confidence. CommSec State of the States Report for July 2021 ranks Tasmania as the best performing economy in the country and that is for the last six quarters in a row. Tasmania comes out on top in four of the report's economic indicators, including relative population growth, equipment investment, relative unemployment and dwelling starts. CommSec found that equipment investment was up 52.3 per cent on the decade average. In the September quarter only Tasmania had equipment spending above the decade average levels. What does that speak to? That tells us that there are guys and girls out on the tools who are willing to invest in a new excavator. It means that there are café owners who are willing to put in new cookers, new coffee machines; it means that the people on our roads who moving our goods around are willing to buy new trucks.

Equipment investment is a leading indicator and it speaks to confidence and hope in the future. Now we can say that people in our state are looking to do that in the middle of the worst

pandemic in a century. It is a truly staggering record of achievement. We know that there are threats around the world. The world is in fact in a very deep recession on and off over this period and where lockdowns continue we know that people in Australia are often doing it tough. Here in Tasmania, because of good management, the strength of our people and the way that they have approached what has been requested of them by the Government in this difficult time, we have been able to bounce out of this stronger than anywhere else.

There are still nurses in the north-west who are suffering from long COVID-19. We know that it has had an impact in our community but the most heartening thing is that we have come out of it stronger, we have come out of better and with a confidence which has not been seen in Tasmania in many years.

Tasmania also remained in top spot for dwelling starts which were 61.1 per cent above the decade average, with CommSec stating that Tasmanian dwelling starts were at 27-year highs. Tasmania also led the nation on relative population growth while also displaying the strongest wage growth in the year to the March quarter of 2 per cent.

That means more people are moving here and people are getting higher wages. We could not ask for much more. I certainly know in my area in the north-west, the west coast and King Island, people are extremely keen to get out of the mainland. People in Victoria who maybe have suffered through six lockdowns over the last 12 months who know that we have not had any here in Tasmania in the last 12 months. They see the beautiful scenery, the affordable housing, the friendly people and the great opportunities for their kids. They know that you can buy a house in the north west. They know they can see a bright future here. They know there are heaps of jobs in the mining industry, the forest industry and the aquaculture industry, which I think Labor supports, maybe. I do not know. Certainly, their candidate in the federal scene does not. We know that he has grave concerns about the workers in Mr Winter's electorate. We know that he does not support what they do down there and he hopes that they do not bring it up into the north-west.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there is a huge amount of confidence about Tasmania, not just from Tasmanians but around the country. Australians want what we have here. They want to come to the north-west, the west coast and King Island to enjoy our way of life, to enjoy our opportunities, and they are willing to pay for it.

As I have said, we have seen the largest increase in wages in the country, up 2 per cent here in Tasmania in the March quarter. It means more money in people's pockets. That means the ability to buy that home they are looking to invest in or live in themselves and it means that there is plenty of hope for the future.

Under the Labor-Greens government, Tasmania was ranked dead last - last overall - for eight consecutive reports, from July 2012 to March 2014. The failed state economic development minister, Mr O'Byrne, sits across from us, the Labor member for Franklin. That is his record. That is the record of the Labor Party. Ms White was part of the budget razor gang which gutted services right across Tasmania and sent our economy backwards because they simply could not manage money, they could not manage the budget and they could not keep on top of the challenges that were happening in the state: last on all eight measures in the July and October 2013 State of the State reports. I do not know if that is a record that you are proud of, Mr Winter: last on all eight measures in the CommSec State of the State report in July and October 2013. We have been first for six quarters in a row. That is what you guys

did. That is why people wanted to leave. That is why people could not get opportunities. That is why the state was falling apart. It was a state in crisis.

We are in the worst global pandemic in 100 years and you know what? Things are getting better, things are improving and there are more opportunities now than when the pandemic struck. When you look at the NAB business survey, the latest NAB business survey for July shows that Tasmania has the best conditions for business in the country - a title we have held for most of 2020, despite the pandemic.

Tasmania has the second-equal highest business confidence. Given the small sample size, these statistics do move around from month to month but it points to an extraordinary confidence in what the Government is delivering for business because we talk to them, we work with them, and we are here for them. We are the party of the small business. We are passionate about the lives and families of small businesses right across the state but particularly in my electorate and the north-west, west coast and King Island. The families that small business support know that we believe in them, we want them to grow, we want them to prosper and we want them to provide even more opportunities, whether that is a trainee who is just leaving high school, an apprentice looking to get a start or someone who wants to support a family.

Let us look at the Deloitte Access Economics Business Outlook June 2020-21 quarter. The latest Deloitte Access Economics Business Outlook report for June 2021 forecasts strong economic growth of 6.1 per cent this calendar year - that is the second highest in the nation - and notes that Tasmania's COVID-19 recovery continues to outperform expectations. Perhaps they could have added that it continues to outperform the expectations, particularly, of the doomsayers in the Labor-Greens alliance over there. Spending is back to pre-pandemic levels and business investment continues at 'a record pace', reflecting our strong economy and the confidence that businesses have to spend, invest and, most importantly, to hire. The report again confirms our COVID-19 response measures have been successful and allowed our state to rebound with a strong pipeline of construction work on the horizon and building approvals continuing to flow.

The ANZ Stateometer released today found that Tasmania's economic activities accelerated and lifted above trend in the March 2020-21 quarter. ANZ found that Tasmania's labour market recovery accelerated, with employment growing 2.7 per cent in the quarter and under-utilisation 'dropping like a stone'. Our accelerating and above-trend economy was based on higher retail trade, growing consumer confidence and the business sector demonstrating a complete turnaround in that quarter. ANZ also noted that Tasmania has, again, the highest wage growth in the nation, growing 2 per cent over the year.

I know Mr Winter does not like to hear that, and I know the Labor Party does not like to hear that but it is the truth. When there is low unemployment it means that wages go up and that is what we are seeing. We are seeing unemployment of 4.5 per cent - some of the lowest in the nation, below the national average - and what that is meaning is that it is really hard to find good people at the moment, so businesses are offering those people more money. It is fantastic to see.

I know for some businesses it is difficult to find suitably qualified people but these are the problems of growth. These are good problems because it means that young people can see opportunities ahead of them, they know if they get trained up that they will get a pay rise, that

they will be able to earn decent money and that people will be clambering for the skills that they learnt, rather than those kids having to leave Tasmania as they did under the last failed Labor-Greens government because there was simply no hope for them here, no jobs for them here and no prospects of a life that they wanted to live here.

People in Tasmania are sensible. They vote with their feet. When things are going well they come back, when things are going badly they leave. It is simple facts. We have seen what has happened here. The economy is growing right now and our population is growing right now. Under that lot, the economy was falling through the floor and so was the population. It was a very sad time for Tasmania and we hope to never go back there. That is why we are so passionate about this idea of securing Tasmania's future. In an uncertain world, in an insecure time, the best thing we can do in our island state is to make sure that we are set up for the future. The security with prosperity, confidence and hope. That is why we are so passionate about the work we are doing and about what we are looking to achieve with the 2021-22 Budget.

It is an opportunity again for Tasmania to grow and for us to set Tasmania up after long dark years of failed Labor-Greens policies. This is an opportunity to support the traditional industries which have made Tasmania strong over the years and to look to the future.

Some of the opportunities that are presenting themselves now in Tasmania, for example in the hydrogen space, are truly revolutionary for our economy. They are opportunities which have been unmatched probably since a lot of the hydro development took place. What it will mean, with all these major companies looking to come down to Tasmania to invest, and those that are already here, to change the way that they do things.

In my electorate in the north west, Grange Resources, one of the state's largest emitters but, more importantly, one of the state's biggest employers, is looking to add nearly 100 megawatts of hydrogen capacity as heat input at their Port Latta pellet plant. That is something that would have been inconceivable just a decade ago but because we have so much renewable energy coming online in Tasmania, the opportunities are great. The scientific research is largely coming in and showing that Tasmania is one of the best places in the world, with friendly business conditions, an abundance of renewable energy, a government that is keen to invest, and plenty of fresh water resources to make sure that even an iron-ore pelletising plant can reduce its emissions in the far north-west of Tasmania.

These are the opportunities coming up for green ammonia, green hydrogen: massive inputs in terms of our investment, our manufacturing capability, our energy, and our sovereign capability right here in Tasmania.

These are the economic advantages that we have built over 150 years, and these are the economic opportunities we seek to realise in the future.

Mr Speaker, the Budget tomorrow will be bold, and it will have an enormous impact in Tasmania. Tasmania's economy continues to grow, and on this side of the House we have a clear, long-term plan to secure Tasmania's future for all Tasmanians, and we are getting on with the job.

Mr Speaker, the budget will deliver on our clear plan to secure Tasmania's future.

[5.36 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Ellis for bringing us his collection of ABS stats. It was his turn to do the stats this week and he has brought us his favourites from a large collection: mostly from July, although he referenced in his speech that some of the data was coming back all the way from March. It is a bit of a repeat of what we talked about earlier today, when we heard the minister for small business telling us about how things are in here.

The question really is: have you talked to people out there about how they are going right now, in late August? We are here in late August, and the borders have been closed for eight weeks to New South Wales. They closed again to Victoria, and businesses are struggling. I know you must be hearing it as well, because we are hearing it loud and clear.

When you come in here and tell us how wonderful things are in August, because of some stats you found on the ABS website from July, and from the CommSec report from March, I am not sure who that is reassuring. Collect all the stats that make the Premier look as good as possible. Boost the confidence before we get to another Budget tomorrow. Even in the Budget, in the motion at paragraph (7) it says:

... recognises that with our economy growing strongly and our recovery well underway, this week's State Budget will continue to support that growth and recovery to secure Tasmania's future.

I do not know how anyone who has not read the Budget is supposed to vote for this motion. I certainly have not read the Budget, so I have no idea what is in it. I am not sure how I could support something like this where I do not actually know what is in it.

Mr Ellis spoke quite passionately about what is in the Budget. I am not sure if he has seen it, or if what he read was written for him by someone who has, but we had a bit of a glimpse from some of the points he made. Things like investment in infrastructure. He talked about more money for health, more money for education. Of course, we heard today in question time on both of those issues, health and education, and the problems the Government is having in both of those areas - and in particular today with the Gutwein Government being put at the bottom of the class across every state, and absolutely abysmal results from NAPLAN.

It is devastating for our state that we continue to perform so badly, with a government that simply points to its year 11 and 12 expansion and says, 'That's education in one policy', without talking about some of the real issues that are impacting our education system.

In the lead-up to the 2018 election, the Liberal Party pledged that, by 2020, Tasmanian students would be at or above the national average in reading, writing and maths. Yet, in 2021, our results are the worst of any state across every age group in reading, the second-worst in every age group in writing, the worst in every age group in spelling, the worst in every age group in grammar and punctuation, and the worst in years 5, 7 and 9 in numeracy.

What an appalling record. This is a really important function of our long-term economic prosperity, because we need our young people in particular, but all Tasmanians, to have the skills they need to get a job, to support businesses and to grow our economy. If we do not have an education system that can support our great teachers and produce great attainment levels for our students, we are letting our state down.

Mr Ellis talked about the economy, and he compared it at various times to 2013. The problem with this argument from the Government is that if they are going to claim responsibility for having fixed the economy or whatever it is, they need to point to what they did to make the change. What were the policies of this Government? What were the reforms this Government implemented in order to produce the change? If they fixed it, how did they? What was the policy?

I was there in 2014 when then premier, Will Hodgman, stood at the Casino at a function I was at; it was either with the TCCI or one of those types of lunches. He told the audience, 'We are not ideologues', but essentially put up the white flag on any reform. I knew right then he was not going to do anything, and he did not. There is no economic reform at all, after seven years. We have not seen anything.

We saw the great TasWater reform attempt, which frankly fell pretty flat. It was poorly executed, hated by local government, and was not going to achieve anything. Then, the famous capitulation to create whatever they have created with TasWater, this hybrid beast of local government with a bit of state government, with them arguing over a corporate plan every year and huge amounts of debt - so much debt that they now require a Treasurer's guarantee just to keep operating and make the investments that were promised.

That was the reform attempt: to take over TasWater, to make TasWater's balance sheet work harder, as the Treasurer said at the time. He made it work so hard that it now needs his own guarantee in order to be financially secure. What a travesty in poor management of local government, and a bad idea in the first place, which left us in a terrible position compared to where we started.

There was nothing wrong with TasWater when the attempted takeover occurred. The organisation was operating really well. It resolved the issue the Treasurer was claiming was the problem, the boiled water alerts. They were resolved very quickly. The organisation continues to work as hard as it can, albeit disadvantaged by the additional layer of red tape given to it by the state Government standing over the top of them.

Planning reform? This attempt has not had enough attention. The absolute rhetoric of planning reform. For so many years in opposition, they claimed they were going to have a single planning scheme; it is going to be faster, better, whatever the rhetoric was. The last update we heard was that only six out of 29 councils, seven years later, have moved to the new scheme - but it is not going to be a single, statewide planning scheme. There is still going to be a planning scheme for every council. It is a promise not delivered and, seven years later, it is still an absolute mess. We have people trying to build houses in Tasmania who cannot, because they are still waiting for the changeover to the new scheme.

We have not done land use planning in this state for a decade, all because the policy was very ordinary to start with. A policy on two pages: we are going to fix, effectively, statutory planning. They did not understand what land use planning was, and did not understand it is just as much of an issue as statutory planning is.

Statutory planning was an issue then and it is an issue now. One of the problems with the new scheme is that it looks to be two or three times as thick as the old one. It is more complex.

The problem has not been solved. The problem has only been made worse by the continuation of this ongoing seven-year attempt to change the planning schemes. We have a skill shortage so bad we cannot do land use planning in Tasmania at the moment.

A developer down at Snug came to see me a couple of weeks ago. He tells me he has been waiting for years to develop a block of land that just needs the new planning scheme to go through. He is still waiting for Kingborough Council to be able to get its planning scheme through because it has been stuck with the Planning Commission for well over a year. It sits there because they are understaffed. They do not have enough people to get things done - during a housing crisis.

The planning reforms that were put in place to make planning simpler have led to seven years of uncertainty from this planning scheme minister. Planning schemes across Tasmania remain in limbo. The minister says they are all going to be in place by the end of the year.

Mr Jaensch - Dragging the chain in your old neighbourhood, mate.

Mr WINTER - I recently checked where the Kingborough Council is for this developer. I was told unfortunately it is still sitting with the Planning Commission. They are not sure when we are going to be able to move on it. They still have not started their consultation. Are there only six across the line, or do you have a couple more?

Mr Jaensch - A lot of other councils have progressed a lot more quickly than Kingborough.

Mr WINTER - Is that right? So the problem is Kingborough Council?

Mr Jaensch - Kingborough has a lot of delays. There have been a lot of delays.

Mr WINTER - I will look into this. Planning reform is another failure. It has a huge impact. It does not just impact on the economy and our ability to get things moving in the state, but it is also impacting housing people, in particular affordable housing. Mr Ellis said one of the reasons people are coming to Tasmania is for the affordable housing. It might have been true a little while ago but talk to people about trying to get a rental in Tasmania at the moment, or trying to buy a home. It is really difficult for people, people in the sort of financial situation where only a few years ago they would have been able to get into the market.

That has to be a reflection on the inability to do planning reform: an inability to do any strategic planning or land use planning across Tasmania for a long time.

In tomorrow's Budget I am genuinely looking forward to seeing how the Government is going to respond to its Fiscal Sustainability Report, which we only received a couple of months ago. The report is really concerning. This is Treasury, the organisation in Tasmania which is beyond reproach when it comes to Tasmania's fiscal performance. It is raising the alarm about this budget and about the management of the Treasurer for the past seven years.

Mr Ellis talked about budget management in his speech. That was one place I did not think he would go. I did not think he would dare go to budget management. He did not mention debt or deficit anymore like they would in the old Brooksy speech. This is the new Brooksy speech. They have moved off debt and deficit because according to this report things are

demonstrably worse now than they have ever been, even in the mid-1990s when the Liberals built up so much debt that they had to try to sell the Hydro.

This is worse than that - \$30 billion in debt under the high expenditure scenario that was modelled by Treasury. By 2035 \$30 billion. The report says:

For all scenarios analysed, the results show projected fiscal outcomes that are manageable in the short to medium term. However, the size of the corrective action required to maintain fiscal sustainability increases over the projected period.

The high-level analysis of the impacts and updated data in the RER and PEFO indicate that changed circumstances over the short-term are not the primary drivers of outcomes over the longer-term. Rather, the outcomes over the full projection period continue to be driven by long-term expenditure and revenue growth trends.

There is a problem and you need to fix it, Treasurer. He has Treasury screaming at him to do something, but all we will hear tomorrow, I predict, is that things are going fine, he is in control. I do not think his caucus reads the thing. They could not feel comfortable with the financial situation we are in if they read it. I doubt that they are reading the Tasmanian Government Fiscal Sustainability Report or they would be concerned. You would have to be concerned. Anyone who reads this document would have to be concerned about how we are going to continue on the current trajectory in the long term without building up potentially \$30 billion worth of debt. It also says:

Projected health expenditure is the single most significant driver of the projected future fiscal challenges for the State. It is the largest expenditure category within the Budget and it is projected to grow at a significantly greater rate than projected revenue growth.

There is the problem.

This outcome is consistent with the outcomes of the analysis taken in 2016 and 2019 Reports and is also consistent with the significant health service funding pressures being experienced by all Australian jurisdictions ...

This is a big problem across Australia but it is particularly bad here in Tasmania. There is a range of drivers behind this growth in health expenditure but we have to deal with these issues. That is what Treasury is saying.

Tomorrow is the Treasurer's opportunity to fix things. There is a linkage. It is not just the budget for the Government and the provision of services, there is a linkage to certainty, to the economy. The Government does not have a budget. We are at 25 August, almost two months into a financial year, and we do not even have a budget. We will have one tomorrow, finally.

The Government likes to say it has a plan. The only plan they have is a plan to say over and over, 'We have a plan. We have a plan, a clear plan'. It is not just a plan anymore; it is a clear plan. But there is no plan, there is no budget, there is no plan. The only plan we have is

from Treasury, which shows how much debt we are going to rack up under this Treasurer. Seven years and all we have to show for it is more debt. The only thing that has saved us over the past few years from building even more debt has been the Infrastructure minister's inability to actually deliver infrastructure.

We are going to see tomorrow, we assume, an underspend on infrastructure promises of last year. The Treasurer in his speech says, 'We are going to build X million dollars' worth of infrastructure this year' and it never gets delivered by his Infrastructure minister. The only positive is that debt does not grow as fast.

We have potholes all over the north west coast and the Midland Highway. Outside of Ross, when I was driving there a couple of weeks ago, I have never seen it as bad. He continued to talk up the Midland Highway yet the maintenance on it looks difficult. I hope that the answer from the Infrastructure minister to our question without notice was accurate and there is not going to be a large decrease. A decrease would mean there will be even less for the maintenance of those state roads, which are not in great condition. The decrease in speed limit was due initially to the condition of the road and then to the roadworks on the Bass.

There is no certainty for Tasmania without a budget. We have not had one for a long period of time. Mr Ellis also talked about wages. He did an economics 101 piece where he said that the unemployment rate has got lower and our wages have increased. Tasmanians get paid on average per year \$11 000 less than people interstate.

When I was researching my own inaugural speech and I looked at quite a few other inaugural speeches. I read the Premier's speech and he made a very big deal of our wages in his maiden speech. He said that - and I am paraphrasing of course - we needed to increase our average wages. They are probably about the same. They may actually be even worse than they were when he started, so seven years as Treasurer perhaps he has forgotten that commitment that he made that day.

Average income and wages are a really important indicator for Tasmania, particularly as we continue to see that rising cost of living. We have talked about housing and one of the components being the failure of planning reform in Tasmania. What we used to get away with and what we used to hear from people was that it was okay that we got paid less in Tasmania because our cost of living was lower but that is over. That is from quite a while ago now. It is no longer relevant, particularly because of the increasing cost of housing. We have not seen the same increase to the same level in wages. So we have stubbornly low wages, fast increasing cost of living and it is making a lot of people do things really tough. As I said at the start, it is offensive when we have motions like this that effectively say, everything is great for everyone. It is not, but it is particularly not here in August.

This morning, Ms Finlay outlined in her questions and also in her MPI a really big issue for a lot of Tasmanian businesses at the moment and that is their inability to get the support that they desperately need right now. The answers that were given were not good enough. They did not seem to understand the desperation that particularly those in the tourism, hospitality and associated industries are feeling right now as we continue to deal with the borders that are closed. It is great that we can keep Tasmanians safe and I am so pleased, happy and thankful that we live here. There is no doubt that Tasmania is one of the best places in Australia to live right now.

However, we need to understand that by taking that policy action to close the border - the correct one - we also need to understand that that is putting people and businesses in a really tough spot. I know those businesses are talking to members of the Government because they have told me they are and they are certainly talking to us. They are raising their voice and they are raising real concerns, not only for themselves and for their business but for their workers.

As I said earlier today, Dr Broad and I went for a walk this morning and spoke to three business people this morning. We asked how things were going and they are really struggling. I spoke to one of the business associations last night about how things were going and they are really worried. It is not as though there is an opening to New South Wales just around the corner. I suspect we are a long way off from our border reopening. Until we are able to do that safely, which appears to be a long way off, we need to understand that there needs to be some long-term support.

Let us face it, it is time for the Premier to pick up the phone to Mr Morrison, the Prime Minister. I do not know if they speak anymore. According to Mr Turnbull's book, which I read with great interest, there is not a great relationship there. That is fair to say. Mr Turnbull said the word of 'mendicant' was used and Mr Gutwein did not like that very much. I appreciate that from Mr Gutwein. Of course, we know that Mr Turnbull and Mr Hodgman had to tie up the GST deal, one of the worst deals that has ever been done which will be unravelling in a few years' time. We have no idea how the Treasurer is going to deal with that issue either but if he cannot pick up the phone to Mr Morrison maybe he can pick it to Mr Frydenberg. Maybe Mr Ferguson can pick up the phone to them because we need additional support.

A lot of these businesses in Tasmania really need the additional support.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Road and Driver Safety

[6 00 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to speak on something I am certain will unite all of us and that is on the subject of road and driver safety.

Every death on our roads is heartbreaking. Twenty-five people have lost their lives on Tasmanian roads this year, two more than at the same time last year which, as we know, was a very difficult year in terms of road trauma and death. There have been 202 serious casualties - this includes fatalities and serious injuries - compared to 199 at this time last year.

The Government supports the Legislative Council select committee inquiry into road safety, currently underway. We recognise that while there has been good progress in reducing road trauma, particularly over the last two to three decades it has stalled and plateaued in recent years.

Sadly, on current trends, Tasmania will not achieve the 2026 road safety target of fewer than 200 death and serious injuries. We have to remain committed to our long-term vision of zero serious injuries and deaths on Tasmanian roads. When we are looking at a statistic like this one it is the only target to have. There can be no other target. No fatality on our roads is acceptable when we think of the people who we care about and we love and what we are seeking to achieve. Yet the statistics continue to be very confronting indeed.

Our over-arching road safety strategy has been based on the best practice Safe System Approach and draws on research data, analysis and modelling, advised to us by the great people on the Road Safety Advisory Council.

The Safe System Approach is a European model focusing squarely on safer infrastructure and traffic management as well as safer vehicles but importantly, safer behaviours. Many of our gains to date have come from protecting people when a crash has occurred like seatbelts, airbags, motorcycle and bicycle helmets, reduced speed limits around schools and so on. For Tasmania, at least in recent years, particularly over the last 10 to 15 years, wire rope barriers have proven very effective in preventing head on crashes and minimising crash severity when a vehicle does leave the road.

We have spent millions upon millions in improving our roads to mitigate poor driver behaviour. Not to deal with stretches of road that are dangerous because they ought to be fixed anyway, but a great road can lead to a fatality or a serious injury because somebody is making the wrong decisions. The treatment is to mitigate that risk and try to protect, to make up for a bad decision or a momentary lapse in judgment.

That is what I want to dwell on tonight. We talk a lot about road safety and I am all for that. I want to hear a lot more about driver safety, driver behaviour, not to be setting a blame culture but to be confronting each and every one of us personally in our heart that the real problem that we confront as to the cause of crashes, knowing what the fatal five are, it comes back to a decision point.

The fatal five are speeding, drink or drug driving, inattention or distraction, fatigue and failure to wear seat belts. The sad fact is that there are too many drivers - and we are all guilty of this at times if we are honest - who have chosen to ignore these dangers. This is a thing about being human; we are choosing to drive faster than what we know to be the speed limit. We choose to drive after drinking or using drugs. We have chosen to take our eyes off the road and to look at our phone or even worse, to use it. We have chosen to drive when we are too tired. Or for some reason, we have chosen not to buckle up, even though that is a message that is older than I am that goes back to well before the 1970s. We want this to change. I want this to be a unifying message for parliamentarians to take back to our communities. We need to target those who choose to do the wrong thing, and taking action to boost enforcement is coming, not only with the existing police resources but automated enforcement cameras are part of the government's plan. They will be in the tender in the near future.

Speed is an issue. In the past five years speed has been a significant factor in the death or serious injury of more than 370 people on Tasmanian roads.

The technology is a part of the solution. It is a deterrent and education through enforcement. I look forward to the support of who I know from the Road Safety Advisory

Council, the RACT, and I know that they are briefing opposition parties and independents on this matter.

We are looking forward to seeing support right across the political spectrum in our efforts with automatic enforcement to reduce road trauma. It simply is not acceptable to me or to anyone here that some of our community are choosing to risk their own lives and also to put at risk other people's lives on the road.

We will continue to take policy advice on road safety from the Road Safety Advisory Council. I want to welcome to the role of chair recently retired former deputy police commissioner Mr Scott Tilyard. He is an exceptional appointment in my judgment. He brings four decades of experience and he is highly respected as a contemporary police professional right across the nation. He will be leading the Road Safety Advisory Council and has already commenced that role and is doing so with distinction.

We have a shared challenge on our hands here and when we go away from this place tonight, those of us who will use motor vehicles want to do so safely and get to our destination but more important are the people we love. Let us continue our efforts with better roads and safer roads. Let us continue our work with safer vehicles but importantly let us continue to be safer drivers.

Time expired.

Integrity Commission Summary Report - Investigation Tyndall

[6.07 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on the adjournment today to discuss the Integrity Commission summary report of Investigation Tyndall. In a media release yesterday the Attorney-General made the following statement. She said: 'As Dr Woodruff has repeated allegations today outside of parliamentary privilege found by the Integrity Commission to be false I will be considering all options available to me.'

Mr Deputy Speaker, I interpret that as a not-so-veiled threat from the Attorney-General to pursue legal recourse in response to our media release. I want to place on the record an assessment of the veracity of our respective media releases. In our media release we made three claims which I believe the Attorney-General may be claiming to be aggrieved by.

First, we said:

The allegations made by former Worksafe Tasmania CEO Mr Mark Cocker suggests the Liberal Party engaged in politically motivated attempts to interfere with the work of independent regulator Worksafe Tasmania.

Mr Cocker did make allegations that suggest this and the Attorney-General has not disputed that Mr Cocker alleged that.

Second, we said:

The Integrity Commission's findings highlight a number of ways in which the Liberals inserted themselves into Worksafe's handling of the matter.

It is true that several matters in the report were not in dispute and the persistent requests for updates from the regulator about Ms Wilton's concerns is one of them and also the requirement by the Attorney-General's office that any media comments by the WorkSafe regulator on this matter go through the Government Communications Office in the Premier's office. That is a fact. The Integrity Commission found documentary evidence obtained in the investigation that supported the evidence requested of Mr Cocker. The Attorney-General herself has not disputed this.

And third, we said in our release:

That the former WorkSafe CEO's evidence notes that while he was considering issuing a prohibition notice to the Bob Brown Foundation, the Attorney-General asked Mr Cocker what he was 'going to do about stopping these protesters'.

Mr Cocker did make that claim in his evidence to the Integrity Commission and the Attorney-General has not disputed that Mr Cocker alleged this.

As far as I can tell the Attorney-General has not disputed any matter of fact contained in our media release. She seems to be agreed that we do not share the view that the Integrity Commission took, which is that her testimony is more credible and believable than Mr Cocker's.

I draw the attention of the House to the Attorney-General's media release which contains a number of erroneous claims about the contents of the commission's report. First, she said:

The Tasmanian Government notes today's Integrity Commission summary report of Investigation Tyndall, which stated that there are no findings of wrongdoing.

The report makes no such statement. In fact, the report explicitly states that the Integrity Commission's investigator cannot make findings of misconduct; only an integrity tribunal has the power to make misconduct findings. The second error, the Attorney-General said:

The Integrity Commissioner has also stated that there was no evidence that the Government attempted to pressure or influence the Regulator.

The commission made no such statement. The report did state there was no evidence that either Mr Barnett or the Premier, or their offices, attempted to pressure or influence the WorkSafe Regulator. They did not make the same statement in relation to the evidence presented by Mr Cocker, which was that the Attorney-General attempted to influence him to take action to stop the protesters. The commission did have Mr Cocker's evidence in relation to the Attorney-General, although it indicated it believed the Attorney-General over Mr Cocker.

Third, the Attorney-General also said this investigation was found to be yet another example of the Tasmanian Greens using the Integrity Commission for their own political

purposes. It was not; that is false. The Integrity Commission has objected to referrals of the commission being made public. It has not accused the Greens of using the commission for political purposes. In fact, the commission's acceptance of our referral and their subsequent investigation suggests they found our referral to be legitimate.

I want to raise the brazen hypocrisy of the Attorney-General. She has attempted to silence me and the Greens through legal action on the very same day that she tabled the Defamation Amendment Bill 2021. That bill is the result of a Council of Attorneys-General review process. It is intended to empower the publishing of information in the public interest and to inhibit so-called slapp suits, which stand for 'strategic law suits against public participation'.

I want to draw attention to some of the provisions in that bill that relate to our media release and the Attorney-General's barely veiled legal threat. The new section 29A [TBC] in the bill would make it a defence in the publication of defamatory matter if the defendant proves that the matter concerns an issue of public interest and the defendant reasonably believed that the publication of the matter was in the public interest.

Mr Deputy Speaker, that subsection three sets out matters -

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff. You are out of order. You cannot reflect on an order of the day and that bill has been tabled. I am afraid you are out of order.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I believe it is entirely reasonable to repeat allegations of improper conduct of the state's highest law officer, particularly when they come from credible sources. Our media release has explicitly acknowledged that the Attorney-General has refuted Mr Cocker's allegations. The sources of relevance that we quoted were the Integrity Commission's own report and the words of the WorkSafe Regulator, Mr Cocker. The Integrity Commission's report, by definition, has integrity which is also of relevance in a matter of defamation. We issued our media release in response to the commission's report on the very same day that it came out. It is in the public interest for matters of the Integrity Commission investigation to be made public.

The Attorney-General can threaten all she likes but it is a fact that this report does not vindicate the Attorney-General's role in influencing the WorkSafe Regulator and we will not give up shining the light on this Government's shady, opaque and shonky processes.

Time expired.

Afghanistan - Challenges facing Women and Children

[6.14 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about a very serious matter that has been exercising all of our minds. Everybody who has the merest passing concern about international relations will be aware of the challenges faced by women and children in Afghanistan. Indeed, our local Afghani community and their friends are deeply concerned and I have been working with them to try to assist better outcomes. We have been watching it on the news and everybody has been quite horrified by the speed with which the situation has changed.

There are a number of things it would be beneficial for us to focus on, from our small island state where we know we have a strong Afghani community, in particular the Hazaras, who I have known and worked with over more than a decade now, establishing refugee assistance. We have people who are trapped there. We have people who cannot get to the airport. This is happening now, as we sit here. The Australian Government is, I understand, doing everything they can do, but they are somewhat in the good graces of the Taliban, who are allowing some airlifts to occur if people can get to the airport.

I also believe it is a moment in time when we can show our best selves as Australians. We need to make sure we do not turn our backs or leave our friends behind. That is not something we ought to do. I have heard the Prime Minister say that the 3000 limit that has been put in place is a start, and it is a baseline. I hope that will increase. We know it needs to go somewhat higher.

There are things we can do locally to reach out to each other, working through the Migrant Resource Centre, the Multicultural Council of Tasmania, and also directly with our friends in the local multicultural community. We are endeavouring to do that.

If this contribution is being listened to, particularly nationally and at a federal level, we implore everybody working in the Australian Government to do what they can to ensure neighbouring countries' borders remain open. I understand people are walking out. By all accounts, it is safer to be in neighbouring countries than it is to be in Afghanistan.

At the heart of this is the loss and the change to women and children's lives after 20 years of emancipation. I attended the rally and was really taken with the good men who were holding up the signs, 'Protect Women's Rights'. It made me want to cry. For 20 years, women have had the right to participate in education, be a true part of Afghani society, free to make their own choices and decisions. That 20 years of emancipation happened because we were there. It is not true to say nothing changed when we went to Afghanistan.

Something did change. An entire generation of women and girls was educated, freed, they could dance, they could sing, they could go to university, they could make choices, they could choose their own husbands; that happened. That in itself is a remarkable achievement. It should be cherished.

I do not know what the answer to Afghanistan is. I do not think anybody really does, but I do think we need to stand up, particularly for women and children, and for all of those who care about them, and who care about women's rights generally. We ought to be doing everything we can to reach out, protect and save people internationally, and to wrap around our local Afghanis and Hazaras true Tasmanian love and care, and to take all the steps we can to protect them, to listen, to care for them as true Tasmanians, as true Australians, and step up in the way that we have stepped up before in these circumstances.

Let us get that cap lifted. Keep the borders open if we can. Get people out. Look out for each other and take care locally, reaching out to everybody who we think might be having a very difficult time.

Encore Theatre - *Mamma Mia*
Ravenswood Heights Primary School

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Education) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to reflect to the Chamber two lovely community things that I was able to enjoy in the last week and a half. First, I was able to attend the relaunch of Encore Theatre's *Mamma Mia* production. The team from Encore Theatre, a crew around 150 people, have borne the brunt of trying to keep a show going through COVID-19.

They originally planned to put on the show of *Mamma Mia*, had done all the rehearsals, had done all the dress rehearsals, had bumped into the theatre ready to be able to perform and then restrictions hit and they were not able to do even one public performance. This was not only devastating for all the crew and cast members who had worked so hard towards being able to put on a production, it was also an enormous financial impact on the company.

Furthermore, I know from talking to members of the community how much people were looking forward to it because Launceston really is a place that loves musical theatre. However, the team from Encore Theatre persevered and despite many setbacks they are due finally to put on *Mamma Mia* on 22 October at the Princess Theatre.

I pay tribute to the producers, Belinda King and Jamie Hillard, as well as Danny Gibson, the director. These people put an enormous amount of volunteer hours into their community. Each of them is incredibly passionate about young people's participation and as a Launcestonian I feel really humble that we have such generous people in our community.

Furthermore, I pay tribute Belinda King in the role that she played throughout COVID-19 and her advocacy for the arts community more broadly. Her contributions were always excellent and the way that she advocated so strongly for the arts community made significant differences for the arts community in being able to open up.

The resilience, the determination that each of the crew members has shown is just fantastic and it shows why in Launceston the theatre is so important. The fact that we have already sold 5500 tickets is a brilliant way for our community to welcome them back. I urge all members if they are free to attend *Mamma Mia*. We saw a few of the excerpts from the rehearsals and it looks like a lot of fun and the talent is just extraordinary. I congratulate Belinda, Jamie, Danny and the entire team for what they have achieved.

I also had the privilege of visiting Ravenswood Heights Primary School recently and met Mr Jason Gunn, the Principal and some amazing SRC students, Daphni, Shakaya, Kynan and Tyler. The Ravenswood Heights Primary School has an amazing sense of pride. To be able to walk around that school and see so many learners busily engaged in their classrooms brought me great joy. It also brought me great joy to be able to tour the courtyards and see the amazingly beautiful murals that have been produced. The artwork that the children have been engaged with in a range of different areas of the school has brought to areas that were shabby and dull and lifeless an amazing vibrancy and energy. The fact that the students themselves have been part of the painting of them shows the great artistic talent that they have at the school.

I commend the work of Mr Gunn and his fellow teachers at the school. The sense of pride as you walk around, the fact that there is so much beautiful artwork on the walls and it is such a well-resourced library with books, shows the pride of the school does have in learning.

I feel confident that the trajectory that the school is on is a really good one. Thank you to Mr Gunn for the tour. To Daphne, Shakaya, Kynan and Tyler, it was wonderful to be able to meet you and your very proud representatives for your school.

Members - Hear, hear.

Headstone Project

[6.25 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to talk about the Headstone Project. On 30 August in my role as the shadow minister for veterans I was honoured to provide the closing address at two ceremonies: one at the Uniting Church cemetery in Oatlands and the other at Woodsdale for privates Sydney Hayes Palmer and Cornelius George Hardwick.

The Headstone Project came into being with the sole purpose of ensuring that all Australian First World War veterans have their last resting place suitably marked in such a way that recognises their service. Research has shown that there are many returned First World War veterans who for a variety of reasons have ended up in unmarked graves around the country. It is estimated, based on the work carried out so far by the Headstone Project, that in Australia up to 12 000 returned soldiers could be in unmarked graves.

Andrea Gerrard organises and runs the Headstone Project in Tasmania. It has been operating since 2011 and they were the founding members. I will read a bit about the history of the two soldiers that were commemorated at the ceremony in Oatlands and Woodsdale on 30 August. According to the Tasmanian war records Oatlands had a population of 739 at the outbreak of the war. Farming areas such as Jericho had a population of 187 and there was 184 living in Woodsdale. From these four villages 90 men enlisted and embarked for overseas service. In total around 270 men from the Oatlands municipality enlisted. No doubt more may have tried and failed and 20 would not return to their homes.

At least 65 men from the municipality lost their lives while serving with the Australian Imperial Force whether through illness, wounds, or being killed in action.

Among the first of these was Private Herbert Kingston from Woodsdale. Kingston was serving with a Victorian unit and did not reach the beach at Anzac Cove. While both George Hardwick and Sydney Palmer were single despite being in their early 30s, many others were married at the time of enlistment and left behind wives and in some cases young children.

We often think of the impact of war on the men themselves - the sight, smells, privations that they endured at the front. The women who were left behind were also traumatised as they waited at home trying to keep their families together, worrying about their soldier husband or son, not knowing and simply waiting for the next letter or item in the newspaper. That was very stressful for those families.

As pointed out by Stephanie Burbury in her book on the Oatlands war memorial it is not possible today to understand the impact of the news of each death on the small communities that made up the Oatlands municipality. Many were related by marriage. Most families in the Oatlands area were affected as they lost sons, fathers, husbands, grandsons, cousins, nephews and uncles.

After the war there were the hideous injuries to cope with, along with the Spanish flu. Somehow the returning men and women had to fashion new lives for themselves, find work and hopefully a wife if they were not already married. Sydney Palmer did marry but George remained single.

From the order of service I will read a little bit about each of these two gentlemen. Private Sydney Hayes Palmer was a relative of my husband, which we found out that day. The ceremony for him was at the Woodsdale cemetery. It was a freezing cold day and we had the bugle player from the Army Band. It was very moving and fantastic but very cold and windy.

As mentioned earlier, Woodsdale at the outbreak of the First World War could boast a population of having 184 people; seven from the district left to serve with at least one not returning. Interestingly, the AIF database lists eight men who gave Woodsdale as their address including the three Dare boys.

Sydney was born on the 22 November 1885, the third of eleven children to Richard and Margaret Palmer. Sydney enlisted on 2 November 1916 at which time he gave his age as 31 years and was working as a farmer. He was allotted to the 7th Reinforcement for the 40th Battalion. Sydney managed to keep out of the way of any bullets but was gassed in June 1918. In early July he was evacuated to a hospital in Birmingham for further treatment. He did see some heavy fighting and shared that with his cousin. He wrote:

I have been through a batch of rough fighting since I last wrote and I was through two battles; one on 4 October and the other on the 12th. The one on the 4th was a great success. Their artillery put up one of the best barrages ever put up. No man could live in it.

These are his words:

There were Germans lying everywhere. I don't think you could realise what a barrage that our fellows put up. All we had to do was walk over after it dead, but with a few that it did not get and they were stuck in concrete pill boxes. The Germans have adopted a new warfare. They build concrete dugouts and pill boxes which a shell won't burst open unless it's from a very big shell and they also get in bits of trenches and shell.

It is quite remarkable what these men went through and the stories that they were able to provide. He then goes on to state:

Holes scattered about and they have these full machine guns which they turn on to use when we are going over.

On the next adjournment I will go into more information and read these stories.

Time expired.

Burnie Musical Society - *Do You Hear the People Sing*

[6.34 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to speak on the adjournment to congratulate the Burnie Musical Society on their recent production of *Do You Hear the People Sing*.

I attended the matinee on Saturday, 31 July with my daughters. It was an absolutely fantastic show. It was good to be back in the Burnie Arts and Function Centre from the following year where we were unable to have their production of the Carole King musical which would have been an amazing performance. It was good to have local theatre companies and musical companies performing in our local Burnie Arts and Function Centre once more.

It was a showcase of over 15 years of each of the shows that the Burnie Musical Society has put on and brought back great memories to me during my time when I performed in the *Annie* musical, which was a long time ago now. It is always good to reflect on that and the great joy that being part of a musical brings to you and those others who are involved.

I congratulate the crew, the cast, the orchestra, and make note of the fact that there were members there who had performed in previous performances and travelled from other places to be part of that and celebrate the achievements of the Burnie Musical Society. I also acknowledge that there were the youngest member and the oldest member, which was an amazing tribute to the wonderful performances that they have provided to the community over many years and many generations.

Thank you for *Do You Hear the People Sing*. It was a fantastic performance. I wish all the very best to the Burnie Musical Society for their upcoming performance of *Mamma Mia*.

agriCULTURED

[6.34 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise this evening to celebrate a new event in the Tasmanian calendar, particular to northern Tasmania, agriCULTURED. We had the pleasure across Tasmania to come into Launceston a week ago to celebrate all that is amazing about Tasmanian producers, farmers and also agri-food industry professionals, as a way to talk about what we do in Tasmania in a new way, in a way that helps people to understand opportunities to innovate, to learn, to inspire and to evolve, to build a platform and create an ecosystem of great conversations, and for advocacy and to challenge the norms and the status quo.

It is a new event. It was actually put on by Visit Northern Tasmania as a strategy to create an event in the winter season, in the cool season, but it also goes to the heart of what is important in northern Tasmania.

There are a number of features to the program. I had the opportunity to participate in a book launch by Matthew Evans - *Soil* - which discussed what is most important about great production and great food production. They had food conversations in and around the city. They had an incredible event called Landscapes of Learning. Acoustic Life of Farm Sheds was a creative way of bringing together different members of our community. Then there were

producers' dinners at Grain of the Silos and at one of my favourite places in northern Tasmania at Timbre.

Over the four days people came together to discuss large ag, small ag, and what are the opportunities to create new experiences and new opportunities with all the great produce that we create in Tasmania. There were some really solid and robust conversations across the city across different themes about growing food, using food, and securing a food system in Tasmania.

One of the things I love about this is that it brought different people together and created the beginning of what I am sure will be an annual event to celebrate all that is important in northern Tasmania.

On the Sunday morning it wrapped up with hard conversations about where to go next. I have no doubt with all of the partners that are involved in the development of agriCULTURED that it will continue to provide a great place for good conversation, for good ideas, and to produce great outcomes to secure food safety in Tasmania, food access in Tasmania, and provide a great innovation for people to think of new ways of learning and developing products and using the great produce that we create here in northern Tasmania.

The House adjourned at 6.37 p.m.