

**Wednesday 12 June 2019**

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

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Housing and Homelessness Crisis**

**Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HOUSING, Mr JAENSCH**

[10.03 a.m.]

On any given day 1600 people are sleeping rough in Tasmania. You have failed to provide shelter to people who will be sleeping out in the rain tonight, despite the housing summit last year and setting targets for yourself to build houses that you have failed to meet. The member for Clark, Ms Hickey, has today called you out on your failure to properly address Tasmania's housing and homelessness crisis. Is she not right when she says, and I quote Ms Hickey:

I do not believe the Government gives a shit about homeless people?

## **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her somewhat unparliamentary question.

I take my role, my portfolio, my responsibilities very seriously. This Government does as well and we have always said that the state Government cannot fix the housing shortage and reduce homelessness on its own.

**Mr O'Byrne** - No, you cannot. Manifestly shown, you cannot.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, Mr O'Byrne, you are on notice.

**Mr JAENSCH** - We do not have all the ideas and everybody has a role to play. That is why we are always open to hearing new ideas, innovative solutions to address the issues and new insights to understand the problems themselves as we proceed.

I meet with stakeholders in the sector regularly and hear from them a range of issues that affect people who are in crisis and who are in housing stress right now. Like you and like other members, I receive a lot of direct representations and correspondence from people in our housing system or wanting to be in it and needing relief and support right now.

Correct, Opposition Leader, the Speaker did present a proposal to the Government and we are actively considering that proposal. We convened a meeting of sector stakeholders yesterday. The Speaker joined me at a meeting to discuss her proposal and others, and it was a constructive meeting. It canvassed a range of opportunities and we are considering them all.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Minister, could I ask in this instance that you refer to me as member for Clark because I was not speaking in my capacity as Speaker. Thank you.

**Mr JAENSCH** - I stand corrected on that and refer to you as the member for Clark.

The member for Clark and I met with key stakeholders yesterday from the social services and housing sectors to discuss the member for Clark's proposal and a range of other ideas that we had asked them to bring forward to address growing and changing demand in this critical and sensitive sector. We agree that the absolute focus needs to be on getting people into safe, secure, supported shelter and accommodation as soon as possible as well as ensuring that the systems and the solutions we have in place right now have the capacity and the coordination to work to their very best.

We will be meeting with those same stakeholders again in coming days. We have asked them to come back to us with more specific proposals, particularly around a variation on the proposal that the member for Clark brought, which was to create a village and bring services to it to support people in homelessness. The variation on that, which is also being investigated, is how we take the village to the services that are already established by way of increasing the capacity of existing shelters and service providers on their sites to cater for more people coming through.

**Ms White** - Are you sabotaging the model?

**Mr JAENSCH** - We need to be working at all parts of the pipeline. We need to be able to take people off the streets and into shelter. We need to move them from shelter then into housing, which is why we are investing in more housing to move people into as well as investing more this last year and more in the year ahead into the services and supports needed to take people who are sleeping rough and get them to safe shelter.

**Ms O'Byrne** - There are 3200 people on the homelessness waiting list.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, Ms O'Byrne. I am going to start issuing warnings if there is more chirping.

**Mr JAENSCH** - If there was one simple solution, it would be done by now. We are listening to the sector, we are caring about people in need and we are prepared to put in place solutions that are as complex as the problem. By the end of this week I hope to be able to announce the next stage of our action.

### **Housing and Homelessness Crisis**

**Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HOUSING, Mr JAENSCH**

[10.08 a.m.]

This morning on radio, the member for Clark, Ms Hickey, said that she feels sick about the lack of leadership from this Government on homelessness. How do you respond to the member for Clark's claim that your actions as minister over the last 15 months on homelessness has been incompetent?

**ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I cannot account for the way that somebody else feels. What I need to do is to do my job to the best of my capability.

In the issue of homelessness and housing we have a situation where supply has not met demand, in terms of housing in the broader market, housing in our social services sector, and housing in our acute homeless service sector. We are investing in every one of these areas of need and demand and we are bringing forward money from out years into this coming financial year to address that at record levels of state investment that have not been seen before. Is there more to do? Yes, there is. Have we done everything we can do? Not yet. Is the need still there? It certainly is and we are working and meeting every day, as you know, to identify what is needed next, and most.

We are not going to be taking money out of building houses to build shelters because the people who are in shelters are going to need those houses. We need to invest in the whole system. That is where we need a task force, a coordination group, a command centre - call it what you will; I do not really care - a group of people who are tasked with ensuring that all parts of that system are talking to each other so that we have the best ability to place people in need with the services and facilities that are available. We will keep going at that job. People can think of that and make of it what they want.

### **Housing Tasmania - Eviction of Tenants**

#### **Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN**

[10.11 a.m.]

Your Government today stands accused by one of your own of 'not giving a shit about the homeless'. In the middle of a housing crisis where families are sleeping in cars and young people at the Domain, where the public housing waiting list is at its highest in a decade, you have not ruled out taking legal action to make it easier for Housing Tasmania to evict tenants into homelessness. Can you understand how one of your colleagues might reach that damning conclusion?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I do not accept the assertion. We are, as the minister has well-outlined, very aware of the complex nature of this issue; the need to be more responsive to increase our resources as we have done, including following the Housing Forum. In many respects that was a positive step in understanding what we can do better. From that came a number of initiatives, including a winter package and additional initiatives through Housing Connect to support homeless people. That was a coming together of all key stakeholders at that point in time. It has directed a lot of our efforts and our additional resources. There is \$1.9 million more into outreach services and programs in the 12 months since.

That is an example of those who want to contribute positively and constructively to this issue as opposed to those who are resorting to silly political games. That is all we are hearing from members opposite this morning. It will not distract us, nor will it distract those in the non-government sector. This is not only a government thing because, as the minister has outlined, he regularly meets with key sector representatives. He did so yesterday, including with the member for Clark. I have had meetings in relation to these matters myself. We are endeavouring to do all we can and more and to respond with additional urgency and priority, and will. Our track record shows that. That is our demonstration of how this Government feels about this matter. There is more to do. We will.

In relation to the matter that was canvassed yesterday, we will take advice as to the legal implications of those matters about any legal proceedings that are afoot. To conflate the two is entirely unreasonable. We are doing all we can.

**Members** interjecting.

**Madam CHAIR** - Order, please.

**Mr HODGMAN** - I urge all those who sincerely want to participate in this, including in a tripartisan way. We invited the Leader of the Opposition to the housing forum last year. She attended. She appeared, as did the member for Clark. We welcomed that but it was not long before the Leader of the Opposition went out and canned a lot of what we had discussed and agreed upon at that forum, and separated herself. That was a demonstration of the lack of goodwill and the lack of tripartisanship in that instance.

It is never too late to come to the table. We welcome anyone so doing, anyone at all. We are more prepared than any government to respond, as this one has done. I invite the Labor Party to come forward with something constructive in this place, other than silly political games which is all we are seeing here today.

### **State Service - Wages Policy**

**Mr TUCKER question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN**

[10.14 a.m.]

Can you advise the House on the steps the Hodgman majority Liberal Government is taking to deliver Tasmania's hardworking public sector workers a fair and affordable wage increase?

### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. It is self-evident, at least on this side of the Chamber, for us to do more in the essential areas where Tasmanians are in need, including Housing, Education or Health. We need to have our Budget in good shape. We need to manage our state's finance well, alongside our strongly performing economy. That does not happen by accident; it requires discipline and that is exactly what this Government is endeavouring to do when it comes to our wages policy.

We have consistently said that central to our ability to fund more services, to employ more nurses, doctors, teachers and frontline public servants is to have a fair and affordable wages policy for our State Service. We will always choose more frontline public services that Tasmanians need over unaffordable or unsustainable wage increases. Because of our strong financial management we have been able to hire 134 more police officers since 2014 and we are hiring another 104. We have employed 222 more teachers and over 550 nurses since 2014. We will continue to hire over 1300 more health professionals to work in our health and hospital system to meet increasing demand.

Our wages policy must strike the right balance between strong budget management and a wage increase that is reasonable and sustainable. This means that any offer on wages must be affordable, not just now but also for the longer term.

Unions have not moved on their demand for a pay increase of 3 per cent per annum. Some unions are continuing to make demands in excess of that. Such demands are simply unaffordable. The cost of an additional 1 per cent per annum is \$285 million over four years; that is less money to hire more staff and invest in the essential services Tasmanians need.

It is also important to recognise that the offers we have made were at the same rate or higher than most other jurisdictions across the country; higher than South Australia's wages policy, higher than the 2 per cent wage policies for the federal and Victorian governments, and higher than Western Australia and Northern Territories wage policies as well. My Government has been negotiating in very good faith. We have had more than 100 formal meetings with unions on wage agreements. Unions have been asked to come back with counter-offers and offset strategies. Some unions are now even refusing to engage with our negotiating teams to present their offers.

The recent decision of the Australian Education Union to reverse its own support for the Government's offer and ignore the will of 70 per cent of their members supporting the deal, demonstrates the union movement will do anything to make sure that offers put are not even accepted when they have been endorsed by a union executive and backed by a democratic vote of the workforce. The failure to negotiate in good faith has meant that our hard-working state service employees have not received a salary increase that would otherwise have been paid to many in December last year.

Our hardworking public service could have already had a pay rise of 7 per cent over three years locked in, if our fair and affordable offer had been accepted by unions. It is clear they are deliberately preventing the workforce from receiving the pay rise in order to put pressure on the Government to cave in to an unrealistic and affordable pay rise, as the Labor Party would do.

We are not prepared to accept our workforce being treated in this way so today we are putting forward a very simple proposition that will enable our workforce to receive the pay rise that they are due. We will write to the public sector unions today, offer a one-year extension of current agreements with a salary increase of 2.1 per cent. This 2.1 per cent is consistent with CPI, it is a larger pay increase than has been previously proposed for the first 12 months and, in the case of the education union, that they agreed to for the next year.

Our strong position with respect to our budget management together with the fact that an agreement has been reached on improvements to employment conditions means the new offer can be catered for within the broader budget, meaning that no savings are required to offset the offer. The acceptance of this one-year offer will ensure that our employees can enjoy the salary increase they deserve whilst negotiation teams can continue to negotiate on other matters, including future years' salary increases and improved employment conditions.

We want to reach an agreement by 30 June this year, which will enable the processing of the new salary rate and back pay as soon as the relevant agreement is registered. If agreement cannot be reached by 30 June 2019, then it is unlikely that back pay will be further considered.

Our Government has demonstrated that we are willing and prepared to compromise. We have done what members oppose and the unions have demanded and broken the 2 per cent pay cap. It is now time for the unions to accept that they are deliberately preventing their workforce from accepting a pay rise. We ask them to take this offer to their members for genuine consideration, as the Australian Education Union did, to cease the escalation of industrial action that is disrupting Tasmanians' way of life.

## **Housing and Homelessness Crisis**

### **Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HOUSING, Mr JAENSCH**

[10.20 a.m.]

The member for Clark was told that the Premier liked her proposal to fix homelessness and it would be a 'tick and flick' exercise for Cabinet but the Government would have to manage personalities. Is it not a fact that the personality you failed to manage was the member for Clark, Ms Archer, who refuses to support anything proposed by the member for Clark, Ms Hickey?

**Madam SPEAKER** - I am not going to allow this question but I will give the opportunity to ask another question.

## **Housing and Homelessness Crisis**

### **Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HOUSING, Mr JAENSCH**

[10.21 a.m.]

The member for Clark said she is not prepared to sit by and watch what this Government is doing to innocent people. She said she is genuinely concerned about the statewide situation of mums and kids sleeping in cars and living in dangerous and precarious situations. Is it true that you are simply trying to placate the member for Clark and that you have sabotaged her plan to provide shelter for families this winter?

### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her second question. The first speaks volumes as to where Labor is coming from on this. They have made homelessness an MPI and they have taken their second question, trying to weasel through some sort of political masquerade between members of the Government party. They are not serious about putting people into safe, secure, stable accommodation and shelter. They are far too fascinated with political games.

**Members** interjecting.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order. Things were progressing quite well. Everyone was very well behaved. I would like to remind you of your parliamentary obligations to debate in good faith, calmly and rationally. Please proceed, minister.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I mentioned before, we welcome good ideas from everybody within our party, within the sector and across the Chamber, if there were any. We will take good ideas any day of the week. We will consider them and we will take advice and expertise from those working at the coalface, on the front line, working with people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness any day. The idea you have brought to the Government is being considered in detail. It is being added to other ideas that have come to us through the sector and we are taking action. It is wrong for anyone to suggest we have not been taking action until now.

This time last year we commenced, for the first time, a special winter package, adding extra resources to enable those already on the ground to reach out to people in greater Hobart and our

other cities around the state. This was provided to ensure they can be connected to services available to them, which they might not know about or know how to access. Over this last 12 months, \$1.9 million has been spent. It has been uncapped and it has helped more Tasmanians to find shelter, to make their way into the housing system, which they have not had before; all this while we have been building the capacity of our shelters and homeless facilities in the state, in the south as well as in the north, and we are continuing to do that.

We have brought money forward in this Budget, we have invested another \$125 million, and under our second Affordable Housing Action Plan we will see -

- building a new youth foyer in Hobart for young people, including integrated learning and accommodation options for young people who are at risk of homelessness;
- more accommodation for homeless women in collaboration with Catholic Care in the south of the state;
- more accommodation for homeless older men in collaboration with the Hobart City Mission;
- the relocation and expansion of Bethlehem House Men's Shelter, the expansion of Magnolia House and the expansion of Thyne House;
- a new youth at risk centre for children under 16 years of age who are at immediate risk of homelessness to be constructed in Launceston;
- a new Burnie youth foyer to be purpose-built to provide again that integrated learning and accommodation service for young people;
- relocation and co-location of the Youth, Family & Community Connections youth shelter in Burnie;
- a new men's shelter in the north-west for single men or fathers with kids, moving them out of crisis and into stable living arrangements.

All those new projects will not be turning up in the weeks and months through winter. That is why we are working right now on how we expand the capacity of the existing shelters and homeless services in Hobart and around the state so that we can absorb people into that system as the new capacity is being built. There is no single silver bullet to address this problem. If there were, it would be done by now. We need to work every day with every idea and every partner to address these complex needs and provide the safe, secure accommodation these people need.

### **Housing Tasmania - Eviction of Tenants**

#### **Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN**

[10.27 a.m.]

Yesterday it was confirmed your Government has spent almost \$1 million of public money on legal costs to push your failed policies, including all the way to the High Court. You will not rule out a further expenditure of public funds to try to make it easier for Housing Tasmania to evict people into homelessness via a further High Court challenge. What does this say about your

priorities, and don't you think that money would be much better spent building homes for Tasmanians who desperately need them right now?

## **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Our priority is to provide more funding assistance to essential services. We need to keep our budget and expenditures under control and our public sector wages bill at a reasonable, affordable rate so we can invest more into essential services, including in housing and homelessness as the minister outlined. I totally reject the suggestions the member makes as to our motivations in seeking advice as to legal matters, which often require governments to understand implications of the decision, what it means for other areas of government, what funding impacts there might be and how it might impact other laws.

These are matters that should be appropriately and thoroughly considered by Government before any decision is made as to future legal courses, which we will inform the House and the parliament of in due course if such a decision is made. We are not doing so, as the member suggests, with respect to people's housing circumstances. We are responding, as the minister has outlined, through additional resources and, wanting to work collaboratively and engage all interested parties toward providing housing for Tasmanians in need.

## **Budget 2019-20 - Infrastructure Program**

### **Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.29 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's 2019-20 state Budget is maintaining momentum and investing for growth in job-creating infrastructure through our roads to support the Tasmania Visitor Economy Program? Is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

## **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question. It is important to his electorate. The 2019-20 state Budget delivers a record \$1.6 billion in partnership with the Morrison Liberal Government to build the job-creating transport infrastructure our growing state needs. We are investing into the intergenerational infrastructure we need to meet today's needs and to provide for Tasmania's future. This year we have delivered over \$280 million in the Transport Infrastructure Capital Investment Program for 2018-19. This is significantly higher than previous years and is investment delivered supporting local communities and jobs: civil contractors, project managers, engineers, material suppliers, earth moving people, plumbers and electricians, traffic management controllers, a number of whom I have met when I have recently visited road projects.

Our strong commitment to infrastructure investment continues in the 2019-20 Budget with a total budget of \$323.5 million in the capital investment program. The Budget provides \$58 million to support and further deliver the Hodgman Liberal Government's roads to support Tasmania's visitor economy program with some projects having already been delivered over the last year.

Tasmania is on track to reach our target of 1.5 million visitors per year by 2020 but we know that with this growth comes additional pressures. A good example of this is the increased use of



roads that lead to our attractions. Upgrading these roads benefits both visitors and locals alike. We must continue to ensure that our road infrastructure meets the needs and expectations not only of tourists but, importantly, the locals who call their areas their home.

The Government's \$72 million roads to support Tasmania's visitor economy program is the first ever road investment program specifically earmarked for visitor routes. This investment is sealing gravel roads, building more safe overtaking lanes and adding new courtesy stopover bays which are important for visiting motorhomes and caravans.

This Budget will help deliver a number of safety improvements to popular visitor roads including the Great Eastern Drive, Eaglehawk Neck, Stormlea Road, Arve Road, Glenora Road and Bruny Island Main Road and will continue to support thousands of jobs in the tourism and hospitality sectors. This work will improve the experience of the growing number of visitors to our state as they travel to these experiences such as the Three Capes Walk, Bruny Island, Tarkine Drive and the Great Eastern Drive.

The member asked if I was aware of any alternative approaches. Apart from relentless negativity and exaggeration, no, I am not.

### **Minister for Health - Performance**

#### **Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.32 a.m.]

This morning a member of your own Government has said it is time for you to consider your position. The member for Clark, Ms Hickey, said that you have lost the faith of the doctors and lost the faith of the nurses.

There is not a lot of faith in the Parliament. He just stands up every day and says thanks for this report. He cannot keep glossing over this.

Will you finally do the right thing and finally put the health of patients and the welfare of staff before yourself and resign?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I feel very grateful to have the strong support of my colleagues. I feel very grateful for the honour of performing a very difficult job as the Health minister, a job that members opposite did not even want. We relish the opportunity to work to provide Tasmanians with a better health system. We take this job seriously. It is not a game. It should never be a game. It should not be a political fun sport.

It is the serious business of the difficult challenges that we have in health and this Government embraces the responsibility to sort out these issues and give Tasmanians what they deserve. What they deserve is a strong plan. What they deserve is a Government and a minister who is committed to the task of seeing our projects through. It is not about an individual. It is about the team that brings the effort to bear for these significant challenges of, on the one hand, increasing demand for health services and on the other hand, the simple fact that we have run out of the physical capacity while we are building more buildings, which come on line in the next months.

With those pressures to bear I am grateful for the opportunity to serve. I reject any suggestion that the Government does not enjoy good and professional working relationships because those relationships have enabled significant reforms that have led to improvements in our health system. The fact is there is pressure in our health system and it is very difficult to meet that demand. That is why I asked members opposite to stop treating this like a game. It is a serious matter.

**Ms O'Byrne** - They had to write to the Premier to get you to do anything.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, please.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Again, those sorts of comments, including from the member who interjects, who was not able to make the same commitment to the health portfolio. The Government reminds the Opposition that next week we have the Access Solutions meeting. Call it a roundtable if you like, but we are working hard to bring all the right people together with that sense of responsibility shared so that we can get better outcomes for our community.

We have more money, more beds coming on line and we have more buildings coming on line. Before they are completed, and there is a parallel to the housing issue, where supply is not meeting demand. We are determined to help Tasmanians get access to their health care. It is important that the Labor Party stops playing the sport, the game, but gets on board and brings forward alternative policies that we can consider. With that in mind, I look forward to seeing you or your nominee at the solutions meeting.

### **Anglican Diocese - Increase in Burial Costs**

**Mrs RYLAH question to TREASURER, Mr GUTWEIN**

[10.36 a.m.]

Can you respond to media commentary that the Anglican Church will soon commence charging up to \$10 000 for burials?

**Mr Bacon** - Did you not recuse yourself from this? Did you not remove yourself from the issue?

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, please.

### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank Mrs Rylah, the member for Braddon, for that question and for her interest in this matter. I note Ms Butler has a strong interest in this matter as well.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I may be confused, but I have recalled the Treasurer recusing himself from any engagement in this issue because of a personal interest. Who does handle this issue for the Government now?

**Mr GUTWEIN** - Madam Speaker, I handle the matter on the issue. I recused myself in terms of the original amendments to the bill, but I now handle this matter.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Thank you for that clarification.

**Mr O'Byrne** - How does the conflict disappear then?

**Mr GUTWEIN** - Because there were changes to the act. I make the point that all of us in this place will have relatives buried in graveyards around Tasmania. The issue that I faced at that particular time was that one of the churches identified for sale had relatives of mine in it. That matter has now been dealt with and resolved in the amendments that were introduced, which I played no part in.

In recent days there has been public commentary relating to the Burial and Cremations Amendment Bill 2018. Yesterday it was stated that the Anglican Church would soon have to commence charging people up to \$10 000 for the burial component of a funeral, noting that the Anglican website states a figure of between \$10 000 and up to possibly \$15 000. Of concern were comments made that the church's proposed increases are directly attributed to the amendments made to the act on 26 September 2018. It was also stated that the church would have to make provisions to maintain cemeteries for up to 120 years.

It is important that I point out that cemetery managers can apply to close cemeteries from 50 years since the last interment, which is in line with other jurisdictions around the country, noting that some jurisdictions are completely open-ended. There is a default time period for other things, such as the removal of headstones or the laying of the cemetery as a park or garden, or the removing of human remains, which is 100-years since the last interment. As I have indicated, by application, this time frame can be reduced to 50 years depending on the circumstances.

This approach responds to significant community concerns regarding the protection of graves and human remains, noting that many submissions during the review called for protections to be in perpetuity. The time frame is in line with community expectations that the right to honour the deceased is intergenerational.

When developing the amendments during the public consultation period, the Government met with the Uniting Church, the Catholic Church, the Funeral Directors Association, the Local Government Association and other cemetery managers to discuss the draft amendment bill. The Anglican Church chose not to engage with the Local Government Division during the public consultation period.

The matters that a broad range of cemetery managers raised during the public consultation, especially in relation to burial costs, were addressed through the changes to the closure period, maintenance provisions and audit requirements. The majority of cemetery managers have indicated that the changes made largely addressed any concerns.

In past days, along with the Local Government Division, I have made inquiries of a range of funeral businesses, private cemetery owners, as well as local government owners of cemeteries. All have indicated that they do not anticipate material increases in the cost of burial services and nor that the increase in costs suggested by the Anglican Church are expected to materialise for them.

Cemeteries are owned and managed by a range of organisations, including churches, local councils and private operators. Since the act was amended there does not appear to have been any significant increase in burial costs that can be attributed to the amendments to the act. Therefore, the comments made recently by the Anglican Church appears to be out of step with the broader sector. I expect they may create unnecessary anxiety for many in our community. Therefore, I will be writing to the Anglican Church today, requesting that they provide their modelling, an overview

of their business model, to justify their claims so that we can better understand why Anglican parishioners are going to be faced with such exorbitant increases, contrary to what the industry is suggesting will occur.

### **Minister for Health - Performance**

#### **Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.41 a.m.]

The member for Clark said that when she read the letter from the ANMF describing the daily horror story in the Tasmanian emergency departments it made her feel sick. This is the same letter that you ignored for nearly a month. If this letter did not provoke the same reaction from you and you did not act on it, is not the member for Clark right when she says 'It's time for fresh blood in the health portfolio and it is time for you to resign'?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, this is the same question I have answered. The Leader of the Opposition has only an attitude to play sport with and to play politics on what are serious issues. I have taken it seriously. The department has taken it seriously.

**Mr O'Byrne** - Why did you ignore the letter for a whole month?

**Mr FERGUSON** - Assertions about letters and dates that have been made by the Opposition are incorrect. The Government has been acting on these issues, including weekly meetings. I can say to the Opposition leader, who continues to assert these things and pretends to represent, for example, nurses and midwives, that the Government has a positive working relationship with the ANMF. I spoke to Mr Brakey only this morning and we agreed that we will continue to work together on improving health outcomes for Tasmanians. There are people in that organisation who feel that the Leader of the Opposition is misrepresenting them.

### **Health - Vaccination Program**

#### **Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.42 a.m.]

Can you provide an update on the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's work to improve Tasmania's vaccination program?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, the Hodgman Liberal Government has a very strong commitment to protecting Tasmanians from vaccine-preventable diseases. We all know that immunisation is the best protection we have against diseases. That is why we are delivering brand new programs funded by our Government to improve vaccination access since coming to office in 2014.

We have been getting some impressive results. It means more people remaining healthier and I believe less people falling victim to disease. Put simply, we want more vaccines for Tasmanians.

The report on government services, released in January this year, has confirmed that our state is in the top three states nationally for every age cohort with respect to childhood vaccinations. Tasmania is now the best in the country for five-year-olds. The vaccination rate has now risen to 95.5 per cent for five-year-olds, which is great. It is outstanding. It is a real testimony to our health community. We must continue the effort and maintain this momentum.

Just last week I announced that the Hodgman Liberal Government will fund a free measles catch-up vaccination for eligible Tasmanians on expert advice. We know that this germ is on the rise in this country. As soon as national supply has returned to normal levels, which I am advised is expected to be about September, the MMR vaccine will be funded and given for Tasmanians born during or after 1966 who have not received two measles-containing vaccinations or had the measles infection up to the year of birth 1994.

Our work to boost vaccination availability in the community was kickstarted early in our term. I could not understand why Tasmania was lagging behind with pharmacy vaccines. We have taken steps on this. We have made decisions to introduce pharmacist-delivered flu vaccines, a very simple initiative. That in itself has been taken up by thousands of families across the state since we made that important reform in 2016.

The flu vaccinations by pharmacists began by enabling them for anyone over the age of 18 years old. This year we took the further decision to lower the access age to 10 years old. This means there are now around 300 000 Tasmanians between the ages of 10 years old and 64 years old who can now be vaccinated against the flu in pharmacies. This is safe, it is convenient and it is opening up access. This will prevent the disease and it will take pressure off our hospitals.

This comes on top of our 2018 program, which we are continuing, that provides children aged six months to under five years with a free flu shot for the first time. I think that is to be applauded. We are seeing more young people being vaccinated, including quite a lot of young people who are getting their flu shots for the first time. We have also worked closely with our partners in pharmacy to roll out the free Meningococcal ACWY Vaccination Program last year in response to the Meningococcal W outbreak.

Our authorised pharmacist immunisers were given additional training as part of the Government's response. That provided vaccinations to Tasmanians from 10 years old up to 21 years old, resulting in some 96 000 vaccines delivered around the state, including the huge public clinics and general practices as well as nurse immunisers. This program which was informed by our key advisors in Public Health Services was one of the most successful mass vaccination campaigns in Tasmania's history, with more than 70 per cent of the cohort vaccinated. We are very proud of this record. We are thankful to all of our delivery partners for working with government, getting results, not focusing on the politics but focusing on the health of young people and following public health expert advice and getting the job done.

Other vaccination programs that we funded include the 2015 Hepatitis B vaccine program for vulnerable populations. That has resulted in around 5300 doses provided to Tasmanians. We funded the whooping cough vaccine for third-trimester pregnant women, which is improving the health of mums and bubs. We want to do even more in this space so that Tasmanians can have the best possible access.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I draw your attention to standing order 48; the minister has been on his feet for nearly five minutes answering a Dorothy Dixier.

**Madam SPEAKER** - I think he is trying to deliver an important health message but could the member do it quickly?

**Mr FERGUSON** - Thank you Madam Speaker.

I acknowledge the support of members on the crossbench, particularly for our meningococcal campaign. That was the support that we needed, which helped reinforce the message to Tasmanians that this was based on expert advice. We will continue to work closely with our primary health partners in general practice and pharmacy nurse vaccinators and local government. We will never stop striving for more Tasmanians to be protected from disease with more vaccines.

### **Minister for Health - Performance**

**Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.48 a.m.]

The member for Clark said this morning that your replacement has already been identified. That is because health is such a basket case. Will you stand aside to allow your replacement, as Ms Hickey also said, mend the bridges, at next week's Access Solutions meeting?

**Madam SPEAKER** - I am going to rule out that question because I do not believe the member for Clark said that the replacement was identified. Could you ask another question?

**Ms WHITE** - Minister, there is no doubt that you are struggling in your portfolio. Right across the state patients are dying avoidable deaths and staff are struggling to do their job because of your incompetent handling of the Minister for Health's portfolio. Will you stand aside to allow a replacement, no matter who that may be, to attend the Access Solutions meeting next week? There is no way that you can be taken seriously. There is no way that solutions from that meeting can be implemented because you do not have the confidence of the workforce.

### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, it is very hard to know how to answer the question, even version two of the question.

All I will say is that the Leader of the Opposition should stop treating the serious issues of health and the complex issues of helping patients get access to better care - the Government has a strong plan; it is not a future plan - we are implementing it now.

We understand that there are challenges around rising demand and while the Leader of the Opposition has only one stunt in her playbook, which is around the politics of health, we will actually focus on the solutions. It is with that in mind that I, again, question the Leader of the Opposition's seriousness when she says she wants to help, but actually never can demonstrate that.

### **Expenditure Review Committee - Membership**

**Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN**

[10.50 a.m.]

Last week in Estimates, your Treasurer took secrecy to a new low. He refused to tell the budget Estimates Committee who is on the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet. This is a complete

departure from past practice, even under your opaque government. Why is your Treasurer trying to keep secret the membership of the Expenditure Review Committee? Is it because there are no women at the table when you decide which services to underfund and which roads to build? Who is on your razor gang?

## **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for making that point again, as she did in the debate yesterday, and I responded to it. She has referenced the Treasurer's response to it. The membership of this committee and any recommendations that it makes will be endorsed, or not, by this Government; by its Cabinet, and by this Government.

**Ms O'Connor** - Why can't you just tell us who is on the ERC?

**Mr Bacon** - Why is it so secret?

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, Ms O'Connor and Mr Bacon.

**Mr HODGMAN** - We will accept responsibility collectively. This is another example of opposition parties being more worried about political games. They are not interested in our savings measures, our efficiency dividends -

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I take personal offence at that statement by the Premier to imply that when we ask for transparency around the decision-making bodies in Cabinet, it is somehow political and not about accountability. I find that personally offensive because it is untrue. Who is on the ERC?

**Madam SPEAKER** - Premier, would you like to address that?

**Mr HODGMAN** - If she is so wounded by that I certainly withdraw it. When the question itself asks who is on the so-called 'razor gang', it makes the case that this is all about -

**Ms O'Connor** - It has always been known as the 'razor gang'. Who is on that ERC?

**Mr HODGMAN** - personal politics. This is all about individuals. It is the same thing that we have had this morning from your colleague, Ms White. It is all about individuals. This is where we stand apart from those members opposite. We are a strong team, we back each other -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr HODGMAN** - and the loudest laugh comes from the man who is doing all he can to undermine his leader, including gatecrashing a media conference the other day.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order. The House has come into a bit of an uproar and it is most unparliamentary. We have to remember the dignity of the House at all times. I ask you to all be a little reflective on your behaviour. Thank you.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I wanted to point out to the Premier who is failing to answer the question so standing order 45, relevance. Yesterday we had answers to questions on notice that talked about the State Growth Subcommittee of Cabinet so we know who

they are, but this Premier will not tell us who is on the Expenditure Review Committee. I ask you to draw his attention to a very straightforward question of transparency.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Thank you very much. It is not a point of order; I have allowed it to be recorded on *Hansard* and I am sure the Premier understood what you were saying.

**Mr HODGMAN** - The point that is important is that we have to make savings; we have to be as efficient as we can as a government. We need to keep our budget in surplus as our insurance policy, and we need to have our budget in good shape so that we can invest more into the things that people really care about - housing, education, health, infrastructure.

The Leader of the Greens is more worried about who is on a Cabinet subcommittee than why it is necessary for us to have our budget in good shape so we can invest more into what Tasmanians care about: into housing, into health, into education, into infrastructure, and into keeping the cost of living pressures down. It is your priorities that are warped.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Point of order, standing order 45, Madam Speaker, the Premier has not even attempted to answer the question. It is a straightforward question. Never before has a government tried to keep secret the membership of the Expenditure Review Committee.

**Madam SPEAKER** - I have to rule that is not a point of order. Somehow or other protocol along the years has allowed for this situation to occur. I cannot dictate to the Premier what will come out of his mouth.

**Mr HODGMAN** - The member for Clark characterised the committee as a razor gang. It is not a razor gang.

**Ms O'Connor** - Even your own public servants call it the razor gang.

**Mr HODGMAN** - It is a committee that will work with agencies to identify savings to keep our Budget -

**Ms O'Connor** - Everyone calls it the razor gang.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, warning number two.

**Mr HODGMAN** - in good shape to invest more into essential services. Where we can do so those decisions will be made by my entire Cabinet with the support of this strong, unified, majority Government.

### **Minister for Health - Performance**

**Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.56 a.m.]

The member for Clark today said that if she were the Premier she would give you something else to do. How would you respond to that?

**ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I do not know how to answer that question either, because the Leader of the Opposition has spent half the day messing up the questions and misrepresenting other people. I



cannot explain what other people might have as their opinions. All I can say is the Government is focused on the job. I appreciate the compliment about being seen as capable and I appreciate the responsibility.

I say to the Leader of the Opposition, you have games; you have stunts; you have ploys; but we have a focus on solutions. I appreciate my conversations and the engagement that we have with our health organisations and health stakeholders. They are great people and they are putting up solutions to the Government. They want people to work together and that is what I want.

The Government wants to bring the right people together, but it has to be said, I think what is happening here is two-fold. I do not think the Labor Party feel very happy that we are bringing more supply on line, and that is a shame. What you are trying to do is undermine the sense of positivity that people have about the new redevelopment coming on line; the sense of positivity around the adolescent units coming on line; the sense of positivity about the Government opening 298 more beds in our health system. Leader of the Opposition, I suspect you do not like that.

**Mr O'Byrne** - Is this a dedicated commitment or just a commitment?

**Mr FERGUSON** - It seems that the Leader of the Opposition, knowing that the Access Solutions meeting, which we do not think is a silver bullet, but is an important bringing together of people, wants to wreck it. You want to undermine it. Why do you want to do that? Why are you trying to undermine the bringing together of key people who want to strive for solutions? The fact is we have a plan -

**Ms O'Byrne** - You cannot do it; you need to let somebody else do it. Do the right thing.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Labor has no plan. The Government has provided funding in the Budget and the Opposition has provided no alternative budget. The Leader of the Opposition has ditched all of her policies and sits on the fence and then comes in here and tries to make political hay around the real challenge that people face of getting access to health care, which we are determined to improve. We are determined to do that. We will never stop working for Tasmanians. That is our job. That is what the united, Hodgman Liberal majority Government is working to achieve. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to stop treating this like a childish game.

**Ms White** - Stop patronising everybody and thinking you know better, because you do not have the answers.

**Mr FERGUSON** - This is a serious business and getting better outcomes in our health system is a challenge. It involves real work, not the sport that I see being played by members opposite.

### **Biosecurity System - Supporting Growth in Key Sectors**

**Mrs RYLAH question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr BARNETT**

[10.59 a.m.]

Can the minister update the House on how the Hodgman majority Liberal Government is continuing to strengthen our biosecurity system, which supports growth in the key sectors of our economy of primary industries, trade and tourism?

**Mr O'Byrne** - Stop smiling. It is like he accepts the nomination to be health minister. I am very happy to take the nomination of health minister.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order. Mr O'Byrne, you are on warning two.

## **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her strong support for biosecurity and the strength of our economy, particularly in agriculture. This side of the House understands the importance of biosecurity and support for our agri-food production, our billions of dollars in exports, our tourism sector and the Tasmanian brand. Our biosecurity system underpins all of that. Market access and investment confidence are going forward in our premium products and the Tasmanian brand. This is really important.

Since 2014 we have consistently delivered additional funding support for biosecurity, year in, year out, and we have ensured it again in this year's state Budget. In this year's state Budget, we are investing an additional \$2.6 million per year to further boost front line biosecurity to protect the Tasmanian brand, to support agriculture, our economy, the tourism sector and our environment across the board. It means more biosecurity inspectors doing more inspections because it is a top priority. We want Tasmania to be pest-free, disease-free wherever possible and fruit fly-free. We have put in a huge effort in terms of the fruit fly incursion, the biggest response in Tasmanian history. We are protecting our industries, working in partnership with our key stakeholders; the fruit industry, agricultural sector and likewise. We have delivered in that emergency response capacity.

In addition, we will have a new tourism biosecurity program to engage with visitors about the importance of biosecurity. We are going to see improved signage, education and awareness campaigns in and around our airports, our ports and the like, ensuring compliance measures are put in place. It is really important. The Budget is also confirming that we are getting on with the job in a range of other areas, whether that be truck, marine or machinery wash down stations, on-farm hygiene measures and strategies. We have more biosecurity officers on our islands, Bass Strait Islands, Flinders and King Islands, and additional inspectors. There is a specialist fruit fly adviser, the industry collaboration manager in Biosecurity Tasmania. Do not only take my word for it. What does Fruit Growers Tasmania say about this initiative? Nic Hansen, what does he say? He said on 23 May -

Today's Government budget announcement is an important milestone for Tasmanian agriculture and horticulture. These extra funds will be vital for making sure Biosecurity Tasmania has enough biosecurity officers to help protect our state from pests, particularly Fruit Fly. We welcome the Tasmanian Government's commitment to funding additional education programs around Biosecurity in the Tourism space.

Fruit Growers Tasmania backed our Government's plans for biosecurity at their annual conference last week. The level of positivity was supreme in the fruit and horticulture sector. It was terrific to be there with those at the conference. Likewise, Peter Skillern, CEO of TFGA, who said -

Further funding for Biosecurity shows an additional investment in an area that the TFGA has advocated for many years.

We welcome the acknowledgement and the minister's genuine commitment to protecting Tasmanian agriculture.

This is good news. We have doubled the number of detector dog teams from six to 12. It was only six under Labor and the Greens. We have capacity to target 100 per cent of flights coming into Launceston and Hobart as well as attending regional airports, ports and mail centres. On top of that, TT-Line offshore biosecurity clearance is vastly superior. Around 20 tonnes of risk material have been seized, annually, from both passengers and vehicles in Victoria before it reaches Tasmania. This is a win-win for Tasmania. We are working shoulder to shoulder with our partners. We are reforming the biosecurity laws. We have ensured support for biosecurity, modernising it for the next 30 years. That is where we are going and all this is in stark contrast to what we heard last week: the unfounded, relentless negativity from the Opposition and reckless scaremongering from the Opposition about biosecurity. It was unfounded. I call on the other side to come on board, back us up and support these initiatives. Do not be so negative. Knock, knock, knock. You might be in a policy free-zone, but come on board and support our initiatives for a better Tasmania.

**Time expired.**

## **TABLED PAPER**

**Mr Shelton** presented additional information provided to Estimates Committee A by the Treasurer, Minister for Local Government and Minister for State Growth.

### **ROAD AND JETTIES AMENDMENT (VALIDATION) BILL 2019 (No. 25)**

#### **ROADS AND JETTIES AMENDMENT (WORKS IN HIGHWAYS) BILL 2019 (No 26)**

#### **First Reading**

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

## **MOTION**

### **Leave to Suspend Standing Orders - Move Want of Confidence in Minister for Health**

[11.07 a.m.]

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

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended to move a motion of want of confidence in the Minister for Health, Mr Ferguson.

This should not come as a surprise to anybody, given the continuing issues we see in the Health portfolio.

Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House -

1. Has no confidence in the Minister for Health, Michael Ferguson MP.
2. Notes that the Tasmanian health system has been under-funded by around \$100 million per year, as identified by the 2017 RDME consulting report titled An Analysis of Health Funding for the Tasmanian Health Service.
3. Notes comments from the Liberal member for Clark, Sue Hickey, on 12 June 2019, that Mr Ferguson, 'should consider his position'.
4. Further notes Ms Hickey's comments -

He's lost the faith of the doctors. He's lost the faith of the nurses. There's not a lot of faith in the Parliament. He just stands up every day and says thanks for this report. He can't keep glossing over this. This is a serious issue. And it probably just needs fresh blood.
5. Acknowledges correspondence from RHH registrars, Ambulance Tasmania paramedics, the AMA, the ANMF all describe unacceptable and dangerous conditions for patients and employees in the health system.
6. Highlights the minister's deliberately misleading statements regarding child and adolescent mental health facilities at the Royal Hobart Hospital and the Launceston General Hospital.
7. Notes that in the five years he has been the Minister for Health, the state of Tasmania's health system has become worse and he is unfit to continue in the role.
8. Notes the report of the Auditor-General No. 11 of 2018-19 Performance of Tasmania's four major hospitals in the delivery of Emergency Department services.
9. Highlights with concern an increase in ambulances ramped for greater than 30 minutes since 2012-13 of 239 per cent, despite an increase in overall ambulance presentations of only 20 per cent over the same period.
10. Further highlights with concern, a significant downward trend in patients with a length of stay of less than four hours in the Emergency Department at all four major hospitals in Tasmania, noting a wide body of research indicating that Emergency Department stays of greater than four hours are linked to high rates of adverse events.
11. Notes that the rate of Emergency Department adverse events has increased across all four major hospitals by around 60 per cent during the period he has been the Minister for Health. Adverse events are defined as an event or circumstance that could have or did lead to unintentioned or unexpected

harm, loss or damage to any person receiving care or services from Health Services and can include avoidable deaths.

12. Points out with concern that mental health patients are languishing for more than seven days in the emergency department and while they are waiting for a bed they psychologically deteriorate, self-harm and attempt suicide.
13. Reminds members that the minister delayed the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment by a year and has now confirmed a further delay to completion of stage 1 of the redevelopment.
14. Notes the minister continues to deny women access to legal reproductive health services in the public health system.
15. Notes that this House has voted to establish joint roundtables with key stakeholders and all sides of politics to examine solutions to the health crisis and that the Minister for Health has done nothing to progress those cross-party efforts and has deliberately ignored the will of this House.
16. Reminds members that ministerial responsibility is a fundamental tenant of Westminster democracy, which means ministers must take ultimate responsibility for failure in their portfolios.
17. Further notes the minister has demonstrated through his lack of action a complete disregard for the health of Tasmanians, for the wellbeing of his health workforce and that Tasmania should not be expected to suffer the consequences of his incompetence any longer.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to debate this as an urgency motion. I ask members to support that seeking of leave and to also support the subsequent seeking to suspend Standing Orders so we can have a debate.

Twice now our attempts to have a debate around the confidence or otherwise in this minister have been thwarted by Government members using their numbers. The question has to be asked: what are they afraid of? It is clear they are a minority government. Quite clear.

Comments from their own Government members today demonstrate their lack of confidence in the Minister for Health. Why are you protecting this minister? Why will you not allow the debate? Is it the case that Michael Ferguson, the Minister for Health's incompetence will be the undoing of this Government and will bring this minority government down?

The only way for the House to resolve this issue is for us to debate the motion. We cannot continue to have this farcical situation where the Government play duck and weave and cover games and does not get up and defend their minister. At the same time, we have patients dying avoidable deaths in the hospital system. We have key stakeholders not being treated seriously or fairly by this minister, writing serious letters to him that are not responded to until an hour before question time yesterday.

Who wants to talk about playing political games when the Minister for Health does not take seriously legitimate concerns and then plays his own political games with the lives of people by not responding to concerns until an hour before question time?

The Minister for Health must be tested on this question. We must have this debate. The Premier must allow his members to either get up and defend the minister, or like Ms Hickey, demonstrate an alternative view. Ms Hickey was on the radio this morning and made some important comments about her concerns with respect to the minister, Michael Ferguson. Ms Hickey said -

I think it is time for Michael to consider his position. He's lost the faith of the doctors. He's lost the faith of the nurses. There's not a lot of faith in the Parliament. He just stands up every day and says thanks for this report ... He can't keep glossing over this. This is a serious issue. And it probably just needs fresh blood.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is why we must urgently debate this motion. We must resolve this matter that is before the House. If the Premier is worried that government members will not support the minister, then he should have that conversation with them and a conversation with the minister about doing the right thing and resigning. If he does not have the support of his Cabinet colleagues or his parliamentary colleagues, then how can we support him?

How can this parliament support the Minister for Health when his own colleagues do not support him and think he should no longer be in that role? This motion before the House must be dealt with. The Government can no longer run cover for this minister. It has to be resolved or this is going to continue on and on and on until there is a resolution. The only possible resolution now is that the Minister for Health must resign.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Education and Training) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Government absolutely supports our Minister for Health. I know that this minister is dedicated to his portfolio. He listens to key stakeholders with respect to this portfolio. He wakes up every single day wanting to improve our health system. He acknowledges the challenges in our health system in Tasmania but also wants to improve it, as we are all trying to do, which is evident over the investment that we have put into health over the course of the last five years.

We are now putting \$8.1 billion into our health system. That is a clear indication. It has been a top priority for this Government for the last five years. We are spending some \$2.3 billion more on Health now than the Labor-Greens government did between 2010 and 2013, the last year of the Labor-Greens government. That is our commitment to the health system and the commitment of this minister.

The reason why this is a rerun of the stunt yesterday is that it is still very clear that the Labor Party has absolutely no policies on Health. They had policies at the last election. They had them one every four days - seven versions of a health policy; more reruns than *Fast and Furious* when it comes to their health policy.

**Mr Bacon** - I would not have said *Fast and Furious* about you this morning while the radio was going.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order. Mr Bacon, you are officially warned.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - This is a Health minister who is committed to his job. He has opened 130 new beds, many of them previously closed as we know by the Labor-Greens government. Closed. Wards shut. Nurses sacked; 289 nurses in nine months - a nurse a day over the course of that period. This is what this health minister was confronted with when coming to the position of Minister for Health in March 2014.

He has now employed a record health staff, over 1000 new frontline workers. He has increased funding by nearly \$2.3 billion. He has invested \$100 million more in elective surgery delivering an extra 2000 extra surgeries a year, including the new \$7.2 million women's health package and turning around long waiting lists when it comes to the previous government.

The Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment is back on track. We had this discussion and this debate in this House on the Royal Hobart Hospital. In 2006 they were talking about a waterfront hospital. Tasmanian taxpayers spent \$10 million under the Labor-Greens government, investigating a new Royal Hobart Hospital. Over those \$10 million of taxpayer money discussions, not a single brick was laid on that important infrastructure, not until this health minister came along and provided long term permanent funding.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order. On the matter of leave if we could.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I respect your ruling, Deputy Speaker. The member for Lyons, the Leader of the Opposition detailed a number of matters concerning the health system. It is important in the context that we put on record the good record of our health minister, including providing long-term permanent funding for the John Elgrove Centre, securing 20 beds, reinstated hospital in the home services in Launceston under our minister's watch previously axed by Ms O'Byrne. In this Budget we are extending this valuable service to the north-west and south.

**Ms O'Byrne** - Mr Deputy Speaker, he is in blatant defiance of your ruling.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - This side of the House has confidence when it comes to this Minister for Health. We stand by his record because it is a strong record in challenging circumstances and the last budget, the \$8.1 billion we are investing into this portfolio, record amounts into this portfolio. That is why I have confidence in the Minister for Health. He and the Government, from day one, have been picking up the pieces of a Labor-Greens disaster in health between 2010 and 2014. The 2011 budget, Ms O'Connor and you would remember the 2011 budget very well -

**Members** interjecting.

**Time expired**

[11.21 a.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, it is déjà vu all over again. We have before us a notice of motion for a want of confidence in the Minister for Health. It is identical to yesterday's notice of motion except for the insertion of new material that relates to my Liberal colleague, the member for Clark, Ms Hickey's comments on the Minister for Health's performance.

As I understand it, this is the fourth no-confidence motion that has been brought by Labor in the Minister for Health in the past six weeks. I expect, as does Dr Woodruff, that the Government will seek to gag this debate. They will not want to have it because they probably have a sense that the Minister for Health would not survive a want of confidence motion and I am not flagging how we would vote, by the way.

I will make it clear to the House that our intention today was to move to censure the Minister for Housing. We believe that the housing and homelessness crisis is critical and urgent. I want to flag with the House that our notice of motion on the Minister for Housing, which we believe is an urgent issue, censures the Minister for Housing on the grounds that:

- (1) Just 316 of the 900 homes promised to be delivered by the minister by 1 July this year have been delivered.
- (2) The housing waiting list was at 3233 and the average wait time for priority applicants is 60 weeks.
- (3) The minister has failed to deliver measured and effective regulation of short-stay accommodation.
- (4) The minister has no winter plan for emergency accommodation to house the growing number of homeless people.
- (5) The minister has overseen the eviction of vulnerable tenants -

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - I need to remind the member that we are on the question of leave and not on your motion.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Yes, I understand that. I need to lay this out so that when people reflect on this debate in days, weeks or years to come they understand that the Greens regard housing and homelessness as an emergency. We want to be a voice in this place for people who, at the moment, are sleeping in their cars. I ask for indulgence to continue to read the censure motion because we regard that as an urgent issue.

- (5) The minister has overseen the eviction of vulnerable tenants solely on the grounds of lease expiration and has refused to rule out challenging the recent decision of the Full Bench of the Supreme Court requiring Housing Tasmania to provide the underlying reasons for eviction and right of appeal.
- (6) The minister claims tenants evicted on the grounds of lease expiration are not evicted into homelessness because they are referred to support services when he should know that referring evicted tenants to support services is highly unlikely to provide them with accommodation
- (7) The minister has failed to drive effective action to provide homes for Tasmanians who desperately need them.

We are consistent in this place; we will always support a debate around a want of confidence in a minister. We have questions hanging over this Minister for Health which will not go away. They are not just questions that are being asked by Opposition and Green's members in this place; they are questions that are being asked in the community. They are questions that are being



plastered all over the front page of our daily newspapers. They are leading our nightly news because they are questions that are at the forefront of the minds of Tasmanians who expect and deserve a high-quality public health system; who expect and deserve if they need emergency assistance, not to be kept waiting for days and weeks in the emergency departments of our public hospitals.

The House has been given another opportunity today to test confidence in the Minister for Health, and the Minister for Health clearly has the support of most of his colleagues, but the question of confidence stands. It should be debated by this House. We had the gag pulled on this debate yesterday and I have no doubt that the gag will be pulled again today because the Government does not want to be dealing with a vote on a want of confidence in the health minister in the middle of a deepening health crisis.

We strongly encourage the Government, if you have so much faith in the Minister for Health, let us have this debate. Let us have the minister stand up and defend his record, have the Premier come in here and defend this Minister for Health, and then every one of Mr Ferguson's colleagues stand up and express confidence in the Minister for Health. If there is such great confidence in this minister, then the Government should not be afraid of the debate.

We encourage the Government to allow for this debate because I get the sense from Labor, from the Opposition, that they will keep pulling want of confidence motions until we have a proper debate about confidence in the Minister for Health.

I also urge the House to deal with the other pressing social crisis, and that is the housing and homelessness crisis in Tasmania.

These are matters that the House should be enabled to debate; we should have a vote on them. We believe that the Minister for Housing should be censured. Certainly, the Minister for Health should have the courage to endure this debate and his Liberal colleagues and the Premier should allow this debate to proceed so that the House can resolve, once and for all, whether it has confidence in the Minister for Health.

[11.27 a.m.]

**Mr O'BYRNE** (Franklin) - For whom the bell tolls, Mr Deputy Speaker. It tolls for the Health minister because even he knows it is time. It is time for him to acknowledge that he has to put the people of Tasmania first, the health system first. He has to resign. He has plunged the Health portfolio into such a crisis; he has plunged this parliament and this Government into such a crisis that the only way for it to be resolved is for him to do the right thing, acknowledge that he has got themselves into this mess, take responsibility for it, and shuffle off and move on. He should get out of the way and allow this minority government to at least come together with some semblance of a strategy to respond to an extreme crisis within our health system.

We are here again. It is déjà vu all over again. We are here again because this Government has applied a gag on multiple occasions on a debate which is fundamental to the tenets of the Westminster system. It is about ministerial responsibility and the confidence of this House in the minister of the day to perform the functions appropriately within the portfolio. That is why we are here. You have used your numbers to gag debate. There is a whole range of strategies and theories around why you are doing it but, fundamentally, we know -

**Mrs Rylah** - We have confidence.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - By interjection, the member for Braddon, Mrs Rylah, said, 'We have confidence'. Well, bring the debate on and test that confidence. You are nodding. You are going to bring it on? Okay, let us see how that plays out in the next 15 minutes.

We will keep coming into this House, representing the people of Tasmania, representing those key stakeholders and health professionals who are crying out for help and assistance and a change in approach. We will come in here every day and call you to account. The reason why we are back here is because you are gagging debate because you know you cannot win it. You know that even your own side does not have support in the minister. We know it; we heard it this morning on the radio; we have seen it this morning in the newspapers. One of your own does not have confidence. I quote:

I think it is time for Michael to consider his position. He's lost the faith of the doctors. He's lost the faith of the nurses. There's not a lot of faith in the Parliament. He just stands up every day and says thanks for this report ... He can't keep glossing over this. This is a serious issue. And it probably just needs fresh blood.

This is a member of the Liberal Party, a member of this House and of your so-called majority Government. You have no credibility in this and that is why you are gagging debate and dragging your own Government into crisis. Imagine the tension in some of your caucus meetings in trying to debate this. You are not focusing on housing. You are not focusing on the economy. The TT-Line is potentially being delayed. There are all these other issues you could be focused on but you are so divided, you are so dysfunctional, you cannot focus on the matters beyond a minister's portfolio because you are desperate to save his political skin.

We know it is about politics because if it was not about politics we would have heard a ministerial statement on the Auditor-General's report and we have not. We would have heard the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation talk about a meeting they had with the minister on urgent issues they raised in mid-May. The hypocrisy of accusing us of politics makes me sick to the stomach. You accuse us of playing politics when the nurses write you a letter off the back of a paramedic's letter asking for help and asking for a meeting. You ignore their letter for two weeks, they have to go around you to the Premier for some sort of response, and you respond in writing only an hour before question time yesterday; a week and a half after the deadline they set because the matter was urgent and beyond crisis. Now, in question time this morning, you tell us you have had a phone conversation with the union this morning.

You accuse us of playing politics. The hypocrisy of your side is disgraceful and we will come back every day to prosecute this argument. This why we need to debate it now, today, as a matter of urgency. This minister disrespects the Auditor-General's report, he disrespects the health professionals who deliver the best possible health care to Tasmanians under the most trying of circumstances, he disrespects considered and well-regarded advice from members of our community who are calling out for change, he disrespects the member for Clark, who has called him out time and time again, and he disrespects this House.

This House voted to establish health round tables with key stakeholders and all sides of politics to examine solutions on the health crisis last year, not only in the last couple of weeks, and the Minister for Health has done nothing. This House passed a motion calling on those forums. He says during question time that the Labor Party is playing politics but that he wants us to work together, to be tripartisan on this and everyone's suggestion are welcome. The majority of members

of this House passed a motion for those forums to be scheduled. Have they been scheduled, minister? No. You disrespect health professionals and you disrespect this House. This House cannot stand for it or the petty little weasel games you play to gag debate because very few of you have the ticker to defend your minister. Very few of you have.

I cannot believe, as we look at the Government benches, they are barely there. Where is the Premier? Where is the Treasurer? Where is the Attorney-General? Where is the Minister for Women? Where is the Minister for Building and Construction? Where the Minister for Housing? We have the Deputy Premier, who spoke; one of the two contenders for the job.

The health system is in crisis and it needs leadership and we are calling for it; resign. The bell tolls. It tolls for you.

**Time expired.**

**Leave granted.**

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

#### **Move Motion Forthwith - Want of Confidence in Minister for Health - Motion Negatived**

[11.35 a.m.]

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

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the motion of want of confidence in the Minister for Health being debated forthwith.

It is incredibly telling that not more than one member spoke on the seeking of leave. Only the Deputy Premier, who was probably auditioning for the Health minister's job, who recited some facts and figures. Maybe the Deputy Premier knew those figures in Health because he has been reading the incoming government briefs. He is all across it now. We saw him this morning, taking a stroll through the park, drinking his coffee, having a lovely time, completely oblivious to the chaos around him, or was he? Maybe he is in cahoots, undermining the Minister for Health because he wants the job. Now is your chance, Deputy Premier, allow the suspension of standing orders and vote no confidence in the Minister for Health as you know you should. Deputy Premier, the Minister for Health does not deserve the privilege of being the Minister for Health in Tasmania. It is a privilege to serve in Cabinet.

We have the dregs of the Government coming in. They were not here before but they have started to roll in the door. Maybe they were having a crisis meeting outside, trying to work out if they should proceed with debate and test the numbers of the so-called majority Hodgman Liberal Government because they are clearly not a majority. If you were confident you had the numbers and support for this Minister for Health you would take the debate on as you have in the past. It has not been since 2003 that we have seen a Government deny a debate on a confidence motion in the way we see this Government do so now. What are you afraid of?

They are afraid the Minister for Health lacks the confidence of this parliament. It will be exposed because he lacks the confidence of his own Government colleagues. It has been revealed, exposed for what it is this morning on the radio, that his own colleagues do not support him. They

do not support him so how can we support him? How can the parliament continue to support him to continue in that role? How can health professionals have confidence that their issues will be dealt with by this minister when he does not even respond to the letters they ask him to respond to urgently? He misses deadlines they ask him to meet. He does not even have the courtesy to pick up the phone and make a phone call. I understand people are busy and perhaps you could not pen a letter but everyone has time to make a phone call. He is either incredibly disrespectful or he has simply checked out. If either of those things are the case he should walk away. I argue that both of those things are true in this instance and in the case of this Minister for Health.

We have seen Auditor-General's reports, hefty documents and the minister cannot even say whether he accepts all the recommendations of the Auditor-General's report. How long does the minister need to consider a report of this nature, which shows there has been an increase of 60 per cent in adverse events in Tasmania's public hospital system and an increase of over 230 per cent of ambulance ramping? These are alarming findings of the Auditor-General and the minister has not had the decency to respond to the Auditor-General's findings.

That is not the only statement of fact he has ignored. Let us think about the paramedics, who raised concerns and wrote to their CEO of matters we have also discussed in this parliament. What about the registrars from the emergency department, who wrote about concerns at the the Royal Hobart Hospital? What about the WorkSafe concerns HACSU has raised about ramping and the impact that is having on staff at the hospital? What has he done about that?

Let us talk about the Adolescent Mental Health Units and his misleading language, which he continued to muddle around with yesterday, through which he has claimed, falsely again, that these are dedicated mental health units - raising expectations for families and children that they will receive acute mental health care in dedicated units in the hospital system when the Chief Psychiatrist has confirmed that it may only be two beds. This is very different to the 'let us be clear' message he made in his press statement on 30 May. He said -

'To be clear ...'

in case there was any lack of clarity -

... the K block facility is designed and built as a dedicated Adolescent Mental Health Unit, and the Ward 4K Redevelopment will provide a new 36-bed contemporary facility, which will include Tasmania's first dedicated Adolescent Mental Health Unit.

Just to be clear. What happened last week in Estimates? He apologised. Then, yesterday, he made the same statement that they are dedicated. He is all over the place; he is not across his portfolio. His own members in his own party don't support him.

This morning on the radio, Ms Hickey said:

I think it is time for Michael to consider his position. He's lost the faith of the doctors. He's lost the faith of the nurses. There's not a lot of faith in the Parliament.

I can affirm that view, but let us test it.

He just stands up every day and says thanks for this report ... He can't keep glossing over this. This is a serious issue. And it probably just needs fresh blood.

Ms Hickey went on to say:

I know there's one person who would take on that portfolio, who would take it on and probably mend the bridges that have been broken.

She realises that you have destroyed relationships with the health workforce. She realises that this Minister for Health, Michael Ferguson, has completely eroded the trust that health professionals have in this Government. She realises that there is only one way forward here and that is for a new Minister for Health to be appointed.

The member for Clark went on to say that health is such a basket case that it is going to take a serious thing ... and also mentioned - and it is worth pointing out - that 'we, as Liberals, cannot go on another day saying it is okay, it is all your fault across the table'.

Ms Hickey takes responsibility as a member of Government. Why doesn't the minister?

**Time expired.**

[11.41 a.m.]

**Mr HODGMAN** (Franklin - Premier) - What we have seen today, is a most unedifying spectacle but nothing that has surprised us at all and that was a Labor Opposition who often brag and boast about how they will be back in government. They think that they will go through the motions, have some political playtime, sail back into government without developing any policies, without standing by the ones they took to the last election, without delivering an alternative budget and without actually presenting solutions to the problems they complain about.

As we have heard before, the Labor Opposition is good at complaining about things. They are not so good on solutions. That was a union leader who said that. Another of their closest colleagues, the Greens, said of the Leader of the Opposition, 'You don't even know what they stand for anymore'. That is the reality and the truth behind this Opposition. Their only skill is to play the politics of the person. It is all about individuals, personality politics, 'gotcha' moments, using the parliament as a political playground for distractions and disruptions to what we need to do and that is actually get on with delivering better health services.

We are delivering better housing options for Tasmanians. We are supporting investments into our essential services and infrastructure and seeing our state continue to move forward in a positive way. You wouldn't know any of that means a jot when you look at the Opposition because they do not offer anything positive. All they do is use this parliament as their own political playtime.

**Mr Bacon** - What about when your member brings something positive forward and it gets rolled in Cabinet?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order, Mr Bacon you are on a warning.

**Mr HODGMAN** - There is increasing demand in a health system that has capacity constraints, that now has more people working within it. We hope the public sector will be able to take the pay rise we are offering that will allow them, not only to receive that pay rise but for us to employ more

staff to support them. This is a fair indication of the progress that is being made under the minister, Michael Ferguson.

The additional resources and capacity that we have opened up across the state in our major hospitals, also in our regional areas, the additional staff we have been able to employ, the new model for delivering a statewide health system; no-one ever said it was going to be easy. When this minister commenced what was one of the most extensive consultations around a new health system we even imagined then that it would be something that is an ongoing body of work.

It took leadership, courage and it is taking resolve and it is certainly taking a resolute minister like Michael Ferguson to continue to deliver and finish the job that we started, and that is, improving our health system to the standard that all Tasmanians deserve.

We accept there is a long way to go. There probably always will be ongoing challenges in our health system, like every other state across the country. Look at how much we invest in our health system. Now 32 per cent of our budget goes into health. That is a fair indication of a commitment under this Government, under this minister, with the support of the Treasurer, myself and his colleagues, to invest more, to do more and to support Tasmanians who need better health care.

All we get from the Opposition is a political stunt. Again, another one, and it is not in any way helping the people they say they care about. We have seen them sink to very low levels using mental health issues and people who are affected by mental ill health as political playthings. That was an outrageous and disgraceful thing to see happen but it is a fair sign of where the Labor Party -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order. Mr Bacon, that is your second official warning. Another time and you are out.

**Mr HODGMAN** - has gone under this lacklustre, leaderless Opposition Leader and her team who are more worried about political pointscoring than about actually serving the state.

I remind members opposite about what our health experts have said. In addition to the ongoing engagement that occurs under this minister the AMA President - do you actually bother to listen to what the AMA President says about changing the health minister? Professor John Burgess said:

Changing Tasmania's health minister is not going to change the realities of increasing demand and increasing costs ...

Rather than concentrating on failures in the system we are more interested in trying to work with the minister and management to find solutions.

There is leadership for you from the head of the AMA. Dr Frank Nicklason previously acknowledged that Mr Ferguson had taken on the concerns of the Royal Hobart Hospital Medical Staff Association and Dr Simon Judkins from the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, the President said:

We need to agree on a strategy and we don't need it to be flip-flopping between one minister and another. We need to agree on what the long-term strategy is and we need to implement it.

We will always take the advice of experts who can contribute positively and in an informed way on what is in the best interests of the Tasmanian public and those who are within our health system, either as patients or staff. That is what we are doing but your defiance of the request from those experts to even desist from the latest in a long line of stunts shows that you are not serious.

All we heard today was personality politics. All we heard today were Labor members worrying more about what happens in here and not what is happening outside in our health system because they have very little to contribute to the debate and they certainly have no policies. I am sure it will not be the last time that I utter these words but I have said that we are not going to be distracted by the Labor Party and their allies, the Greens. We will not be distracted. We are getting on with the job. Michael Ferguson has our support, whether you like it or not, and we are not going to give you the green light for yet another political stunt.

[11.48 a.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, you have to be kidding if you think that was a defence of your minister. You basically stood up here and said these are all the reasons, it is everybody else's fault except mine because you do not have the guts to test your numbers on the Floor. You do not have the guts.

You talked about leadership, courage, and resolve: three things that you have failed fundamentally to show in your Premiership. If you had leadership you would have already dealt with the fact that your minister does not do his job. If you had courage you would allow a vote in this House and if you had resolve then you would deal with the fact that you need to appoint a new Minister for Health. They would be the things that you would do, Premier. Do not come into this House and blame Labor for what you call stunts because this House will continue to do its job.

Our job is to hold this minister to account. Our job is to hold you to account. Our job is to represent the people that you fundamentally ignore. You talk about the great working relationship this minister has with stakeholders. What absolute rot. Paramedics' letter where they are begging support because of the pressure they are under: what happened with that? Crickets and frogs, Premier. Enter your registrars who have to write to the hospital executive begging for their voices to be heard because they are not being heard. An Auditor-General's report which has not even been properly considered by this House. The Leader of the Opposition raised a very good point that if you had that kind of Auditor-General's report there would be a ministerial statement and a capacity for this House to debate it, but you are too gutless to do it. Do not talk about leadership, courage and resolve to us. We then have you quoting that the AMA want to work. Of course, they do. But things are so bad that they publish a letter that they forwarded to the Opposition so that we can ask questions in Estimates because their minister will not answer them.

Then we have the ANMF who wrote last month, begging for this minister to take some action and meet with them before the end of the month. He failed to even respond. They had to go to you, Premier, because your minister does not have a relationship with them. Then the ultimate in politics - you come in here and talk about us playing politics - less than an hour before question time yesterday they get a response. Do not talk to us about playing politics when that is what governs every single one of your decisions.

Premier, the suspension of standing orders that we are debating now is crucial. It is the process of this House, a process that was stymied by you yesterday. You need to allow the parliament to express whether it has confidence in the Minister for Health. The only way you can prove this minister has the House's confidence is to allow the vote. You cannot continue to protect him by

denying the processes of this House. You cannot continue to run for cover. If you are so confident, as the Deputy Premier stood and said in his contribution to the seeking of leave, to the interjection by Mrs Rylah that the minister for Health has confidence, then prove it.

You do not have to spend all day on the debate if you do not have the guts to all defend him individually. We did have one want of confidence motion in him and we made you all stand up and talk. How many of you could fill your time? How many of you filled your time in defending him?

**Mrs Rylah** - That sounds good from that side.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - No, you did not. Check the records. I timed you. You could not even fill your own time defending him because you know it is indefensible.

You can talk about increased demand because increased demand is an Australian condition. What is not an Australian condition in every other health system is the contempt that this minister treats issues with. He gets through a media conference. He gets through a question time and then he moves on. It is always somebody else's job to resolve things.

The problem is, next week you are asking people to come together to resolve our health crisis, to genuinely find a pathway forward. The huge number of people who are attending this short meeting are not going to be able to do so because there is not a person in that room who is not going to walk in knowing that the minister is a dead man walking. You need, if you are genuinely concerned about our health crisis, to draw a line under the last five years and say, 'He did try his best. He did work but he is not capable or competent enough to get the answers and the solutions we need'. You need to draw a line under it and put someone in that meeting who can do the job.

Let us talk about the last five years of hell, shall we. Let us talk about what has happened. We have a blowout in the waiting list. We have a 60 per cent increase in adverse outcomes in the emergency departments. Don't you dare blame five years ago for that. It has happened under your watch. Ambulance ramping has blown out. You are responsible for the decisions you have made. If you do not accept responsibility, then how can you accept the solutions that need to be done?

This minister is not capable of finding a resolution, it is clear. However, if each of you on that side of the room are so confident, call it on the debate. Make it a really long debate so you can spend the whole time tracking in and out of the Speaker's office trying to convince her to vote for him. Make it go all day so you have time to send Mr Rockliff in - the only one for whom she seems to have any respect. Try to win the Speaker over and prove you have the confidence of this House; that this minister can do his job. Right now you are all sitting there knowing that you do not have the votes because you do not have the confidence and you do not have the confidence because you are not very good at it.

**Members** interjecting.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - I do not doubt that you try; I do not doubt that you work. I do doubt that you have the capacity to resolve the situation. You ignore the stakeholders, because no-one apparently knows more about the solution to the health crisis than Michael Ferguson, the minister who has presided over the crisis that we have.

You have been here for over five years. Every single one of the things that is happening in Health right now is set firmly on your desk, minister. We do not have confidence in you; the



stakeholders in health do not have confidence in you; the multitude you have invited to come along next week do not have confidence in you, and neither does this House. If you have the guts, call it on.

**Time expired.**

[11.55 a.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Mr Deputy Speaker, we drew a very big black line under the Labor-Greens government's performance in health between 2010 and 2014. The irony of the member's contribution over the course of the last seven minutes staggers me. It was a litany of ironic comments, given that the previous speaker closed down hospital beds and entire wards, removed beds from hospitals and put them in storage. Do you remember that? Sacked over 280 nurses in a nine-month period, a nurse a day.

Tasmanians do not forget it and they will not forget it; they still remember it. They still remember the 2011 horror health budget, when \$100 million was ripped out of Health; over \$50 million slashed from elective surgery. People will remember those times.

**Ms O'Byrne** - Are you addressing the suspension of Standing Orders?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - They promised that the new Royal Hobart Hospital would be built in 2016. We remember the debate - since 2006 - on the redevelopment, the \$10 million of wasted money when they could not make a decision on the Royal Hobart Hospital.

It is important to reflect on that development and that massive infrastructure development of well over half a billion dollars. Not a single brick was laid between 2010 and 2014, but it has been under this health minister. In their time, the cuts were devastating. The Australian Medical Staff Association said that this health system would feel the effects of their cuts for years to come. They were warned, and we knew, for years to come. We are still feeling the effects of that despite the fact of the record amounts of expenditure that we are putting into Health, and some \$8.1 billion in this Budget. We are in the budget session that is delivering more funding on health; more funds into Education, Housing; and more funds into infrastructure that keeps people employed and the economy going. That is what a functioning economy looks like. You can fund essential services and give that fundamental right to every Tasmanian who wants access to a quality health system.

That is what drives every single member of this Government to keep a functioning economy going, to ensure that we can deliver on essential services that Tasmanians rightly deserve. The health minister is a very good example of that when it comes to his delivery, not only on essential infrastructure but the horror years between 2010 and 2014 and rebuilding a health system that was devastated as a result of the contributions of those opposite. He has employed more frontline staff, more nurses in our hospitals - 550 more nurses - 94 more paramedics. These are the figures that are important. It does not mean that we have solved all the problems because demand is increasing. We recognise that demand is increasing.

We will not be lectured by those opposite when it comes to our health system in Tasmania. They had their opportunity between 2010 and 2014 and they dropped the ball. They wasted their opportunity and now they are wasting the parliament's time. On 30 May we had a comprehensive debate on a want of confidence motion in the Health minister - a comprehensive debate, a lot of

discussion. Now we are in the middle of a Budget session, passing a Budget that puts more money into health, delivers for health and education and housing. That is what Tasmanians want to talk about.

They want to talk about the fact of what this Government is doing and this parliament is doing when it comes to addressing those critical issues they care about. They do care about our health system, they do care about elective surgery, they do care about response times, and this Health minister cares that they care. This Government cares because the evidence is there to support it. The evidence was not there to support it between 2010 and 2014 because the decisions that you made in government not only further -

**Time expired.**

[12.02 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, there is no doubt we should suspend standing orders to debate this want of confidence motion in the Minister for Health.

The Premier got up before and called the Labor Party's motion an unedifying spectacle. It is the fourth time in six weeks that a no confidence motion in this Health minister has come before this House. What is an unedifying spectacle is a member of the Government's own party, sitting here, who was on radio this morning making it very clear that the Health minister should consider his position, making it very clear that it is untenable to have this Health minister in this position.

What is the unedifying spectacle is that this Government is falling apart. The wheels are coming off and it is clear that there are torrid conversations happening in the Government rooms and in Cabinet. It is an example of what we have seen being playing out in the way that this Government has managed the health system over the past five years.

Where we have got to now is the result of chronic underfunding which started with the first budget this Treasurer brought in when he came into his position as Treasurer. The very first budget was to rip the guts out of the health system. Hundreds of millions of dollars were gone and a paltry amount put back in. Here we are today with a health system which started off being gutted and chronic underspending each budget since then.

Whether any millions of dollars have gone back into it in this Budget, or not, we need to debate the veracity of the claims of the Health minister about the money that has gone into the Health budget, the veracity of the Health minister's statements about the things that will or will not be provided in this year's Budget. The Greens very much doubt the truth of a number of things that the Health minister has said over the last couple of weeks in parliament.

Regardless of that, it is quite clear that the chronic underspending has got us to a situation today where the health system is in a desperate situation. As the Auditor-General found, we have ramping continuing apace with no end in sight of ambulances waiting in queues. This means that people who need to get access to an ambulance in a timely fashion cannot do that if they live in regional parts of Tasmania and those ambulances are sitting there in the driveway at the Royal Hobart Hospital. It is simply the fact that if they are tied up in a driveway they cannot get down to Dover; they cannot get back to Triabunna; they cannot get to the places they need to go if they are sitting in the driveway.

The reason they are sitting in the driveway is because of the chronic bed block. The Auditor-General told us in his report two weeks ago that the chronic bed block is in large part due to the failure of this Health minister to change the culture, to do the things that needed to be done to create the bed days. The bed days that could have been created without any increase in the budget, 3000 bed days a year, the Auditor-General found could be found without extra expenses. This could be done by improving the way things are managed with the flow within the hospital, with the conversations between different parts of the hospital; by getting rid of the dysfunctional silo mentality and by improving discharge from hospital to GPs.

These are all things which we have heard for five-and-a-half years. What has happened is a minister who fails to listen to people. Now all the chickens are coming home to roost right at the same time, and we are expected to believe that a single day of a sit down talking next week is going to solve it all. We need to have the conversation today. We need to have a proper conversation instead of the Government closing down a debate about this. We need to hear from every single member of the Government about the confidence that they have, or do not have, in the Minister for Health; the confidence they have or do not have in his abilities to lead this incredibly challenging portfolio.

It is a serious issue. Yes, it is the fourth time in six weeks but things have changed and we have never had a proper debate on this issue since the Auditor-General brought down his report. It was such a bombshell of clarity. Finally, somebody has provided the clarity that is required who points to the issues that need to be fixed: doctors and nurses, the patients in particular keep saying to us, but they have been papered over with spin and language for five-and-a-half years; a pretence of a budget with money going into the places where it is clearly not going, nothing into preventive health; nothing to stop the increasing number of people going to hospital.

There are things that can be done in a modern economy like Tasmania. We have the ability to do so much better. It is not good enough to cry poor, especially after the Treasurer has spent five years telling us what a desperate situation we are in. Now we are in a fantastic situation, a windfall situation and instead they continue to cut the money out of essential services that people need the most. We do need to hear from every person in the Government. The top headline about the Budget was \$1.6 billion into roads and bridges. You cannot sit here, look into the eyes of that man, Tex, who was in the newspaper who is homeless and tell him that that is money well spent.

### **Time expired.**

### **The House divided -**

#### **AYES 11**

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

#### **NOES 11**

Ms Archer  
Mr Barnett  
Ms Courtney  
Mr Ferguson  
Mr Gutwein  
Mr Hodgman  
Mrs Petrusma  
Mr Rockliff  
Mrs Rylah  
Mr Shelton

Dr Woodruff

Mr Tucker (Teller)

PAIR

Ms Houston

Mr Jaensch

**Madam SPEAKER** - The outcome of the division is 11 noes and 11 ayes. Given the requirement of Standing Order 358 that a two-thirds majority is required, the noes have it.

**Motion negatived.**

## MOTION

### Leave to Move Suspension of Standing Orders - Censure of Minister for Housing

[12.14 p.m.]

**Ms WHITE** (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion to suspend standing orders to prevent a motion of censure against the Minister for Housing being moved forthwith.

Madam Speaker, I move -

That this House -

1. censures the Minister for Housing, Roger Jaensch for his complete lack of urgency in responding to the housing and homelessness emergency; and
2. notes the Liberal Government promised to build 900 new homes and has only delivered 316 homes in the past five years;
3. recognises the public housing wait list has grown to over 3000 people;
4. notes waiting times have tripled to an average of 56 weeks for priority applicants, including women escaping domestic violence;
5. notes children have been removed from their parents' care due to homelessness; and -

**Mr FERGUSON** - Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition should be getting better at her stunts. She cannot move the suspension of Standing Orders without first seeking leave.

**Ms WHITE** - I am seeking leave. You should learn the Standing Orders.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Leader of the Opposition, clarify your motion, please.

**Ms WHITE** - I am seeking leave. That is what I moved when I first took the call from you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I will read the final point, which is -

6. calls on the minister to direct additional funding to provide shelter for people this winter and work with the sector to implement urgent solutions within 30 days to support Tasmanians facing homelessness.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am seeking leave, which is the motion I first put, to suspend Standing Orders to move this motion of censure in the Minister for Housing, Roger Jaensch.

There is a very urgent situation facing many Tasmanians right now. There are 1600 Tasmanians who are sleeping rough, who are sleeping without adequate shelter and we have a Government that has been in power for five years and seems unable to recognise when winter is here. Provision has not been made to cater for people who are homeless this winter, to bring them in out of the cold, in from the rain tonight and provide them shelter, a warm place and a bed for them to rest their head.

This is an urgency motion. We are calling on the minister to act within the next 30 days to provide support and shelter for people this winter and direct additional funding to enable that to occur. Last week, the minister talked about funding being brought forward this financial year, around \$10 million but he didn't detail how that could be spent. The minister could use that money to ensure people have shelter this winter, not next year or the year after but right now. We have local governments working urgently to try to provide solutions because they can see the crisis that is unfolding across our state right now. It should not be up to local government. It should be the state government providing leadership on this issue.

That is a sentiment echoed by your own colleague and member for Clark, Ms Hickey, who made a very important statement on the radio this morning that she will not stand by and watch what this Government has done to innocent people through a lack of action. She made the point that there is no leadership and it must come from the state government. This is an important motion that must be dealt with before the House because there are people in desperate need. Families and children are living in unreasonable and untenable circumstances. They are being split apart, with children unable to go to school. We have to act urgently. We have an obligation. We need to ensure that action is taken within the next 30 days, before winter becomes worse and these people are subjected to even worse outcomes.

I also draw attention to the points made by the Government member, Ms Hickey, this morning, who said, 'When I was elected, I raised housing and the homeless situation ... as one of the biggest priorities and here we are, 15 months later, and it appears I was only one who knew that winter was coming'. Ms Hickey was not the only one who knew winter was coming. Many of us could see that was occurring but, unfortunately, the Government has failed to recognise that winter is coming and they have failed to provide adequate shelter, adequate resources or adequate support to families to keep them together and to provide a safe place and safe shelter for them this winter.

We also heard from the member for Clark this morning that she tried to take a proposal to Cabinet that would have immediately rectified the concerns raised with her and her office about people seeking shelter this winter and that was not able to proceed. The member for Clark said this morning on radio that she was told she couldn't take it to Cabinet but she was assured the Premier was across it and that it would be a 'tick and flick' exercise. The Premier liked it and it would simply be a matter of managing personalities. What happened? The member for Clark has a good proposal. The sector has terrific ideas for how we can support people who are in desperate need of shelter this winter. What we do not have is a firm statement from the minister about what he is going to do, why he has not done something before now, given that we knew winter was upon us, or how we

can allocate that money, the \$10 million brought forward, to make sure that people have shelter that is safe, keeps them dry, keeps families together and ensures children can keep going to school this winter.

This has to be a priority for this House. We need to debate this motion. We need to have confidence that, as we embark on the winter recess, action will be taken by the Government over this period, that people in housing stress or in homelessness will not be left to languish and that those 3200 people on the waiting list for housing will be given support and access to housing. It is, on average, 56 weeks for a priority applicant to be housed. The waiting list has blown out and is now about triple what it was when this Government took office. It is a disgrace. It is causing enormous troubles right across the community and the Minister for Housing seems incompetent in managing this responsibility.

### **Time expired**

[12.20 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Deputy Speaker, as I foreshadowed in my contribution on the earlier debate in relation to the matter Labor had brought on the want of confidence, we too had prepared a motion to censure the Minister for Housing to be debated today. Obviously, it has been preceded by the Opposition's motion but I want to lay on the record some detail of our concerns in this portfolio. This is most certainly an urgent issue. There is no question of that.

Our motion reads that - on tomorrow, I shall move that this House censures the Minister for Housing on the following grounds.

1. Only 316 of the 900 homes promised to be delivered by the minister by 1 July this year have been delivered.
2. At the March quarter the housing waiting list is at 3233 and the average wait time for priority applicants is 60 weeks.
3. The minister has failed to deliver measured and effective regulation of short stay accommodation.
4. The minister has no winter plan for emergency accommodation to house the growing number of homeless people.
5. The minister has overseen the eviction of vulnerable tenants solely on the grounds of lease expiration and has refused to rule out challenging the recent decision of the full bench of the Supreme Court requiring Housing Tasmania to provide the underlying reasons for eviction and the right of review.
6. The minister claims that tenants evicted on the grounds of lease expiration are not evicted into homelessness because they are referred to support services when he should know that referring evicted tenants to support services is very unlikely to provide them with accommodation.
7. The minister has failed to drive effective action to provide homes for Tasmanians who desperately need them.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if you want an understanding of the urgency of the situation, you need to go to the budget papers. I note that Labor's censure motion talks about the public housing waiting list growing to more than 3000. This Government and this minister have acknowledged their own failings in this portfolio because the target for the housing waiting list, page 29 of budget paper no. 2, volume 1, is for the housing waiting list to climb by almost 200 applicants in this financial year and then in the next financial year.

We went from a situation where we, under a Greens minister, had the Housing Tasmania waiting list at its lowest level in a decade. Now it is at its highest level in a decade and climbing, and projected to climb as a target of this housing minister and this Government.

Labor's motion talks about an average of 56 weeks to house priority applicants. When you go to the budget papers, the average time to house priority applicants at a quarterly metric is actually 60 weeks. It is taking this Government more than a year to provide homes to people who desperately need them.

I have said it before and I will say it again because it has to be put on the record: for the first term of the Hodgman Liberal Government the underinvestment in increasing the supply of social and affordable housing was wilful, it was chronic and it was damaging. It happened at the same time as this Government let the free market go berserk and let the number of short stay accommodation listings soar. It took its hands off the housing portfolio for its entire first term of Government. It was heartbreaking to watch all that good work that had been done before come unstuck by a government which totally deprioritised housing to an almost criminal extent. That is why we have people who are sleeping in the rivulet, in cars, and at the Domain.

This is an urgent issue. It is not only the member for Clark, Ms Hickey, in this place who cares about this issue. I think everyone in here actually does. We come into contact every day, every week with people who are in housing distress.

This is an urgent matter. It is one of the most pressing social issues this parliament faces right now. Sadly, it is on this minister's head. This minister has inherited a legacy of wilful neglect of this portfolio from a Cabinet and a Treasurer who prioritised and continues to prioritise the building of roads and bridges over the building homes for people who need them.

We believe the Minister for Housing should be censured. We believe he needs a rocket put under his chair. There does not seem to be the appreciation of the pressing urgency of the housing and homelessness crisis in Tasmania. There is so much talk, but when you go back to Budget Estimates *Hansard* from last year I am pretty sure that the minister confirmed 249 homes had been built by the Liberals in government; 316 as at Estimates this year - 51 and 16 is 67. Have 67 new homes been built since Estimates last year? These are questions that the minister should answer.

It is a most disgraceful performance from the whole Government, but right now it is sitting on this minister's head. We have not heard a plan for emergency accommodation. When you go back and read Estimates *Hansard* from last year, all these questions were put to the minister. He surely understood then that we were dealing with an emergency yet we still do not have an emergency accommodation plan. With all the resources of government, all the brain power of government agencies we still do not have homes for people who are sleeping at the rivulet and at the Domain this winter.

We should be looking at models like Finland which has its Housing First. It says to a person who is homeless, we know what you need, you need a home, and it provides a home which is the foundation for all social and economic wellbeing. We support the censure of this minister.

**Time expired.**

[12.27 p.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** (Bass - Minister for Health) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I have a few things to put on the record. Obviously, we are on a seeking of leave motion. We do not support what the Labor Party is trying to do. We do not support what the Greens have said that they would have done, but they are obviously supporting each other in wanting to move a censure against my colleague, the Minister for Housing, Mr Jaensch, who is an outstanding minister who is working very hard for the people of Tasmania. Those people of Tasmania are not served by this continuation of petty blame game, point-scoring and political games in this House. The way in which it is again being treated by the Leader of the Opposition with, now the support of the Greens advances the cause of zero people.

This is not a motion that would if passed result in action. It is not a motion that calls for action. It is not a motion that reflects an alternative budget. It is a censure motion which puts mealy-mouthed calls at the very end, but it is fundamentally a censure motion.

**Ms O'Byrne** - You just said there was not one and now there is one at the end. You are a liar.

**Mr FERGUSON** - I ask for that to be withdrawn, please.

**Ms O'Byrne** - The minister has deliberately misled the House. He said there was not a call to action and then said there was a call to action. Could he just tell the truth?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Ms O'Byrne you have been asked to withdraw. Do you withdraw?

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Mr Deputy Speaker, I withdraw 'lie' but he deliberately misled this House.

**Mr FERGUSON** - If the Labor Party cannot behave the way we are all expected to, again it shows that it is about the game-making and the stunts.

I will be very clear. This is not a motion on the Government or the minister to do something. It is a censure motion, which then has the mealy-mouthed call at the end. That is what I said. If the Deputy Leader cannot handle that simple reality, it shows again that they just want to bring this place down. We are supposed to be doing the people's work of looking after their needs, including in Housing. That is precisely what the Minister for Housing is doing. I do not mind what Ms O'Connor had to say, which was a reasonable point at least: that this is a House of people who care about Housing, the dispossessed and the vulnerable. I have to agree with that point. It was probably the fairest one made so far. This is a stunt motion. We have important business for the day that this motion would set aside in an open-ended, second attempt by Labor to begin a debate that could run for 10 hours. You are aware that we have budget bills, which provide the support for housing you would be intending to hold up.

The Minister for Housing is working with stakeholders and with members of this House, including the member for Clark, Ms Hickey. The Leader of the Opposition takes this opportunity to do these stunts because she and that party have decided on no alternative budget. At least the



Greens had an alternative budget. I am not absolutely au fait with every line of their alternative budget but I can only imagine the Greens have more for housing, more than I can say for the Labor Party with no alternative policies.

This minister is delivering the largest increase in public housing investment in the state's history; \$125 million. We would all like to snap our fingers and see it materialise overnight. We realise that short-term actions need to be taken while medium- and longer-term investments are taking place. The minister is doing that and he was very clear about it this morning. The Government is working very hard on this and the minister should not be censured; he should be applauded for his efforts in this area. Is it enough? No, there is always more to do and the minister also said that this morning.

There is a fundamental question here for the Leader of the Opposition, the Labor Party and the Greens and this House. How would this debate help people? It would not. If there is an expectation that the minister would continue to work very hard, as every minister of this Government does, toward better outcomes, that would be a reasonable expectation to be placing upon him. He is doing so, including assessing and getting good advice on proposals received by Government.

These are stunts. I listened carefully to the Leader of the Opposition's speech, riddled with conspiracy theories, full of half-truths, and you misrepresent people over and over again. What matters to the Government and to this House is that the Budget is approved so that we can make those investments a reality. The Labor Party can try to hold up the Budget with their stunts yesterday, today and probably tomorrow but these stunts will not help anybody.

**Mr O'Byrne** - If you are so confident, why didn't you take it to a vote?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

**Mr FERGUSON** - The number of people you are assisting is zero. You could help people if you support the Budget being passed. Additionally, you could have shown you were serious and not wanting to play games if you had bothered to propose an alternative budget. You could not be bothered. You chose not to do it. I cannot remember the last time the Opposition could be bothered writing an alternative budget. You might show how you would do it differently, you might show where you would make savings and other investments. You might show how you would avert what you claim is the net debt crisis. You might be able to put forward what you would have done with the declining revenue, but Tasmanians are onto you and they know that you cannot be trusted because you play for the politics. I am sure there will be more to say in the next debate.

We will not oppose the seeking of leave. We will have more to say in the suspension motion the Leader of the Opposition wants to make. We will not be distracted by this second stunt today.

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### **Recognition of Visitors**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Honourable members, I welcome the Perth Ladies Lunch Group, escorted by Dee Alty. Have a marvellous time here in the parliament.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

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**Mr O'BYRNE** (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, on this matter of censure and seeking of leave, it is crucially important we understand that a censure motion is a shot across the bow of the minister. It is a message to the minister regarding the crisis - sometimes the word crisis is thrown around too much, but it is absolutely clear that there is a crisis - in housing in Tasmania. The censure motion and the seeking of leave to debate this as a matter of urgency is a response to what the sector is saying, what the community is saying, what the Government's own members are saying. It is a message to the minister that business as usual is no longer acceptable.

They have been in Government for five years. This minister has been a minister for over a year and the situation has become demonstrably worse. If you do not take our view, you can take the view of TasCOSS Chief Executive, Kym Goodes, who said -

The housing crisis requires leadership and a strategic approach that moves beyond the current 'business as usual' options and initiatives.

This was published in the editorial section of the *Mercury* and this is the head of the Council of Social Services in Tasmania speaking, yet the member, who has only now resumed his seat, called the issue of housing a stunt. He says they are getting on with the job but the sector is saying that your job is continuing with business as usual and it is not good enough.

The reason we need to debate this censure motion as a matter of urgency, as local members of our community representatives, is that housing and health are the two major issues that come through our doors in our electorate offices. I do not think a day goes by when an issue of housing is not raised. Housing is fundamental to people's lives. It starts a slippery slope. If you cannot put a roof over your head, how can the kids go to school? How they can go to school clean, being happy, being loved and comforted in a home, being able to have food in their bellies, to sit and learn if they do not have housing? People cannot get to work or get around their community.

Housing is fundamental to people's human rights; to live in a community with a house that allows them to conduct themselves with a level of dignity and have a fulfilling life. If we as a community cannot provide a roof over people's heads that is needed; if we cannot do that, we are creating so many other issues across our community, for the day they cannot find shelter, that week and in years to come. Many people find themselves in adverse circumstances, through no fault of their own, and since the depression era it has been the role of government to intervene and say that we are not going to judge you for the circumstances you are in, we are going to provide you with shelter so that you can get back on your feet and into a situation where you can make better decisions and see that there are more options and choices in front of you. If we, as a community, cannot say we do that, we have failed; all of us in this place have failed.

We even have organisations like the Property Council, which came out yesterday and said that housing is the number one issue in our community. It is not only us saying that there needs to be urgent assistance, we are seeing it in virtually all corners of the state. There are people in dreadful and heartbreaking circumstances. I am not saying this minister does not care about it - we are not saying that at all. This censure motion is a message to him that he has to do more than feel concerned about it. We need action and the actions of this Government to this point are not enough; it has become worse during the terms of this Government.

When the Hodgman Government came to power in 2010, it inherited a public housing wait list that was the lowest in a decade but the latest figures from December of last year show that applications have since tripled to more than 3200 families on the housing register. Around

75 per cent of those 3200 families are high priority and the average time to house priority applicants has now blown out from 20 weeks to 56 weeks. We heard from the member for Clark; 60 weeks.

Walk in the shoes of people who are the victims of a lack of housing: the decisions they have to make to get their kids to school; find ways, whatever way they can to give their children and their family a life with dignity. As a community we need to do better. This is not a no confidence motion in the minister. He has had 15 months.

This is a censure motion because what he has been saying and the Budget that has been produced is manifestly inadequate to deal with the crisis. On questions today, he was almost surprised that winter is upon us. Last year, straight after the election, before this House was formed, the Premier brought a crisis meeting together, a housing summit. Things have changed since last year, for the worst. They have not improved. We are now going through a second winter. This censure motion and the seeking of leave is an urgent matter. It is getting colder. People are getting desperate.

The plans the Government has announced are inadequate to deal with the short-term crisis. We have a member, and it is not just the Opposition, the member who just resumed his seat called it an Opposition stunt. He is a member of the Government. Ms Hickey, the member for Clark, 'dear God. What has she been doing for the last 15 months I've been in government. There is no leadership'.

**Time expired.**

[12.41 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin) - We urgently need to suspend Standing Orders today to have this censure motion debated because it is clear from what the Leader of the Greens, Ms O'Connor, said, what Mr O'Byrne said before he sat down, that this minister is not listening. He came in on the back of a tenure of four years of the previous minister, Mrs Petrusma, who manifestly failed to move all the indicators in Housing Tasmania. She failed to continue in the positive direction of the gains made by the previous minister, the Greens' housing minister, Ms O'Connor, where Housing Tasmania was trending in the right direction. Housing Tasmania was reducing priority waiting lists. It was increasing the number of people who were housed. It was increasing dramatically. Over 9000 homes received energy-efficient installations.

**Ms O'Connor** - For free.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - For free. That is right. The tenants of 9000 homes that Housing Tasmania manages reduced the cost of their power bills and had warmer, healthier, happier lives as a result. That is what good government can look like. This minister has been here for about 15 months and it is clear that he started to speak 'the speak' that people were hoping they would finally hear from a minister in this Government about understanding the housing crisis. The action has not followed.

We are in a desperate situation. Winter is here. For the people who are on the streets we have not had serious rainfall combined with blisteringly cold nights, but we will. We have had rain. We have had terribly cold nights and, in places in Tasmania, I am sure people who are homeless have been snowed on.

On every single measure this minister is failing to listen and more. In Estimates' responses last week it was clear that he is being deceptive. He is deceiving Tasmanians about the truth of the end

of lease eviction that happened to Gregory Parsons, an intellectually disabled man. An attempt was made to kick him out into homelessness, under this minister, with no reasons given. No statement of reasons; no opportunity to remedy whatever the problem was that was never given to him and no opportunity to appeal the decision. Fortunately, the Full Bench of the Supreme Court, understood this minister was failing to act and to give that tenant natural justice. Failed.

Now, disgracefully, the Premier has not ruled out wasting money that should be spent housing homeless people, improving the quality of life of tenants in Housing Tasmania. He has not ruled out wasting money appealing this to the High Court of Australia. Why? Why would you want to do that? It is staggering.

We have a whole list of reasons. Not only is this minister clearly deceiving us about the reality of what he is doing in his portfolio, trying to hide the truth, although the Supreme Court judgment says it in black and white what is really happening. He is trying to pretend that people aren't being evicted into homelessness. They are. I found out under questioning last week that in the last year, 10 people have been evicted into the same conditions as Gregory Parsons. This is under his mismanagement of the portfolio.

There are things that can be done. We have to have this censure motion today because there are things that the minister can do right now, that the Government can do right now.

The Greens brought on two solid motions in the last year that would have made a real difference to people's lives. Last year, we moved to have the crime of begging removed from the statutes. It was supported by the Labor Party. That would have made a real difference to people who are homeless and desperate. Unfortunately, the Speaker, Sue Hickey, did not use her ability with the casting vote to vote in favour, otherwise that noxious bill would have been removed; that crime would have been removed.

We also moved to put a pause on new listings for short-stay accommodation, again, supported by the Labor Party. Unfortunately, the Speaker, Sue Hickey, did not use her casting vote; otherwise we would have had relief for the over-heated short-stay accommodation market.

I am gratified to hear that the Speaker understands and has real clarity now about the situation for homeless people: the housing, the desperately difficult situation for people not able to access a tenancy, not able to have security of tenure. We will be back, and I expect and consider it very likely that the Labor Party would support both of those incredibly important changes that the Government could bring in.

You could bring them in, introduce them tomorrow. We do not mind. We will vote with them; for the same things that we put up, pause the short-stay accommodation, get rid of the crime of begging. These are disgraceful things. Things can be done today but instead you are trying to pretend that you are not evicting people into homelessness when you are.

You are going to spend taxpayers' money that should be spent housing those people, fighting that all the way to the High Court. At least you will not say you will not do it. It is a disgrace and we have to have a proper conversation in this Chamber today about what is happening in the Housing portfolio, why this minister is failing and why he needs to understand that he has to do things differently. He has to listen to the people who know, and the people in the housing sector who have told him 15 months ago what needs to be done.

**Time expired.**

**Leave granted.**

## **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

### **Censure of Minister for Housing - Motion Negatived**

[12.48 p.m.]

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

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent a motion of censure on the Minister for Housing, Mr Jaensch, being moved forthwith.

This is an urgent motion and we ask the Government to allow the time for the debate to occur. It was only a very short time ago that the Treasurer declared a 'golden age' and yet here we are in winter, with 1600 Tasmanians without a place to call home. They do not have adequate shelter and they do not have a minister who is able to articulate a strategy for how they will be provided shelter this winter.

It appears that the Government is lacking the ambition that is required, the heart that is required, to actually tackle this issue of homelessness meaningfully. We have seen the action from this Government previously when it comes to commitments they have made to the people of Tasmania, declaring they will build 900 homes by the end of this financial year, a target they will fall woefully short of meeting. They will only have delivered 316 homes by the end of this financial year of the 900 homes they promised.

We all know now, the way the minister has changed his language, so that it is homes and lots. Blocks of land, perhaps where someone might be able to pitch a tent. That is not adequate shelter and that is not what we were promised. It is not what they told the people of Tasmania.

Last week in Estimates, this minister could not answer the sector, who asked very serious and specific questions about homelessness services. The Tasmanian Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-25 and Action Plan 2019-23 include a number of initiatives. I will make the members in the House aware that, last week, the minister was asked to identify whether there was funding in the Budget for ongoing operation of key services: the new youth at risk centre in the north; the expansion of Thyne House, the expansion of Magnolia Place, the Hobart Youth Foyer; the Burnie Youth Foyer and the new men's shelter in the north-west. The minister could not answer straightforward questions about whether those facilities would have funding to operate.

It is all very well and good for the Government to commit funding for bricks and mortar structures but if there is no funding to operate those structures then the people will not be able to use those facilities and there will not be the support to provide the care that they need to maintain tenancies. These are straightforward questions. The sector, again, has asked the opposition parties to ask the minister because the relationship is so fraught. There can be no other explanation as to why they could not directly obtain this level of detail from the minister. That is why we need to have this debate, because it is not only homelessness services. We have concerns about the Government's handling of the portfolio of Housing and the promises they have made to the people of Tasmania to build 900 more affordable homes, which they have not kept. We need to have the

debate about this Government's intentions for the \$10 million brought forward. Will they direct that to finding shelter for people to make sure that they are brought in from the cold this winter?

Last week, I asked a specific question of the minister about how the allocation for the coming financial year in his budget would be spent, how many homes would be built for people and what the work plan was. The minister could not answer the question. Yet, we are expected to believe that he whipped up this document over the weekend, which details the program of construction tenders for several projects. He could not answer the question last week, yet the document was tabled yesterday. Either he is not across the detail, which is probably part of the explanation, or he was trying to hide from scrutiny and that is why we need to have the debate. We do need to understand what this Government's plan is.

When will they keep their promise to build 900 homes for people; homes, houses with a roof and not a block of land? The minister said they are serviced blocks of land, which means very little if you are living in a caravan or a tent and you do not have an insulated home to live in to get out of the cold. A home is a building with a roof. It is not a block of land. Up until about a year ago they were continuing to maintain the commitment to deliver 900 homes by the end of this financial year and then the language changed. That is because they are falling woefully short of keeping the promise they made to the people of Tasmania.

In this era of the 'golden age', there are many people who come to us daily with heartbreaking stories. I want to share some with members in this Chamber, shared yesterday on my own personal Facebook page. This is from a woman, who I will quote but not name -

Regardless of their circumstances, these people are human beings with feelings just like everyone else. They must be FREEZING out in the cold weather. The Government has had ample time to take proactive action in this instance and little appears to have been done. All I have noticed is the usual spin and word bites in the media while charities take up the slack. It is not up to charities to solve this problem, Mr Hodgman and Co, it is up to your Government.

I have a message from another person. He said -

When is this going to change I have been living in a park in a tent for over 18 months, I have mental health issues, which have got to the point I just spent a week in hospital. I have been bleeding from my bowels, only having access to a public toilet 12 hours a day. I am 49 years old. I can't live like this much longer. It is killing me. When is the Government going to help its homeless? We need help fast.

I have another from another gentleman who says -

I gave two blankets and a pillow to a 50-year-old homeless woman recently who was curled up on the concrete only 200 metres from Roger Jaensch's office in Burnie.

This is a statewide issue. There are people of all ages sleeping rough on streets and the Government does not have a comprehensive plan to bring these people in from the cold this winter.

**Time expired.**

[12.55 p.m.]

**Mr HODGMAN** (Franklin - Premier) - Mr Deputy Speaker, housing stress is a very important issue to us all and certainly is to our Government, which is why we have made such significant investments in recent times to match increased demand and to deal with issues that are not isolated. They are not isolated to Hobart and they are certainly not isolated to Tasmania.

These are nationally significant and devastatingly real circumstances many people find themselves in and which Government has a key responsibility to address, as we are, but fundamentally must be met by our broader community. This is, first and foremost, in the non-government sector, those who are part of an active group assisting our minister to determine the best ways to allocate public funding resources, to work with other key stakeholders, to provide that home for people who need it and to address the incidence of homelessness, which is shocking to us all. It is something this Government gives a lot of thought to and cares a lot about and I reject any assertion from anyone that this is a matter we are not caring about nor acting upon.

We are engaging closely with key stakeholders in the sector. We are willing to discuss the issue more broadly, including in an upcoming Hobart City Council forum and in any other forums in which there are opportunities or solutions for us to get on with the job of delivering more homes and supporting people in crisis. It is not true to say we are not responding and have not responded. In response to the continuing high demand, this year's Budget allocates almost \$68 million in 2019-20 to boost the supply of new social and affordable homes.

To accelerate the building of more houses as we have discussed and as we have debated at length in this place, we have brought forward, heavily front-ended, our \$125 million Housing commitment, stage 2 of our Affordable Housing Action Plan; \$10 million of the funding brought forward, bringing the total allocated in this financial year to \$40.5 million. In the 2019-20 Budget I am advised there is over \$171 million allocated to build housing capital stock, which includes funding toward our Affordable Housing Action Plan. In comparison, in the last Labor-Greens budget in 2013-14 it was \$52 million for the same purpose. We are investing more than three times the amount that the former government did, almost \$120 million more. That does show how much more we are doing to bring forward affordable housing for Tasmanians, to alleviate housing stress and to reduce homelessness.

We have extended funding for emergency support to provide secure safe accommodation options to those Tasmanians who are homeless or at risk of experiencing homelessness as part of the action plan stage 2. This provides for additional staff in outreach support and the capacity to provide a mix of accommodation options with a great emphasis on providing safety and warmth to those in greatest need throughout the year. One hundred stakeholders were involved in the development of the second action plan. Since Mr Jaensch took on responsibility for this important portfolio, 1000 families have been housed. The housing register has stabilised and we are keeping track with new demand for social housing.

On 28 March, we released the next stage of our action plan and we are investing an additional amount to bring forward a number of actions, which the minister will speak to. We do recognise the significance of homelessness. We do welcome the input of those who want to make a contribution to this to ensure we are doing all we can. The Leader of the Opposition says that we need to continue to debate this. We are happy to do so as long as it does not stop us delivering a budget that is going to provide more for essential services. We are happy to debate things, but consider how much time they have spent on no confidence motions and censure motions. In Estimates hearings, they had the minister for hours and they were still not able to -

**Ms O'Byrne** - He couldn't answer anything. He couldn't answer questions and he didn't stick around for the reply yesterday.

**Mr HODGMAN** - That is not true and the minister made that very clear. What we really need now are less stunts, less talk and more action; that is what we are going to be focused on. Our priority is to deliver safe and secure homes for Tasmanians, not to provide you a comfortable, safe and secure place for you to engage in stunts, which is all you do.

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

## **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

### **Censure of Minister for Housing - Motion Negatived**

**Resumed from above.**

**Mr HODGMAN** (Franklin - Premier) - Madam Speaker, following from the adjournment at lunch time, I have a minute or two left to address this matter. This is a serious matter that warrants a proper inquiry and, most importantly, action. I genuinely believe that whilst this issue is one of importance to us all, the track record of this Government is such that it demonstrates a willingness to invest more, a willingness to engage with key stakeholders, and a desire to, as the Leader said, spend less time on debating matters and actually get on with addressing matters by way of action. That is precisely what we are endeavouring to do.

We welcome the engagement of key stakeholders. The minister has mentioned that he was engaged with them just yesterday in relation to a number of matters, including that which was brought to us by the member for Clark, Ms Hickey, which we have not rejected. We will consider appropriately with key stakeholders to ensure that all that we do has the best possible outcomes to complement the additional resources and initiatives we put in place and have done since the housing forum of last year, and also through other budget allocations I have already outlined.

In our view, Tasmanians, especially those who are homeless as we speak, and Tasmanians more broadly want us to be getting on with the job; not wasting our time arguing with ourselves about these matters, but arguing about the best way forward. What are the right policies? How can we best apply our resources? That is what we will get on with the job of doing.

[2.33 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I rise on the motion to suspend so much of Standing Orders that we can get on with debating a censure motion in the Minister for Housing. As I stated earlier, we support this debate being brought on, just as we believe the House should have been given the opportunity to debate the want of confidence in the Health minister.

If the Minister for Housing, and the Premier who just sat down, have so much faith in their response to the housing and homelessness crisis, let us have the debate. Let us talk about the policies that will be the most affected; where the shortfalls are in funding; how we can support the community sector to support people who need help with housing and the extra services that should be wrapped around particularly disadvantaged tenants.



The Premier says, 'We are just getting on with the job'. He derided the importance of quality debates on issues such as how we as a state can make sure every person who needs a home has a home. We are in this place, we are elected to debate laws and policies. We are debaters. We should have a meaningful conversation about housing in Tasmania; how it can be that five years after the Liberals took office, the housing waiting list is soaring, people are sleeping at the rivulet, on the Domain, and in their cars. How can it be, Madam Speaker?

I believe the answers are reasonably straightforward: the double effect of a conservative government in Canberra that ripped the guts out of National Partnership Agreement money and ended the National Rental Affordability Scheme. Even in its last federal budget across the forward Estimates, it cut money from social and affordable housing. On the one hand, you had the conservatives in Canberra crab walking frantically away from the responsibilities that government has to provide homes for people. On the other hand, we had four years of this Government and this Treasurer talking about 'the golden age' and 'being back in the black', 'back on track' and 'record infrastructure spends,' and complete neglect of the housing portfolio.

It is there in the numbers for anyone who wants to better understand. The numbers speak for themselves. Of the target that the Liberals had set, which was originally to build 941 new homes by 1 July this year, in five years they are about one-third of the way there.

If we had honesty around this debate, we would have an acknowledgement by the Premier and the current Minister for Housing - I know it won't come from the Treasurer because he is congenitally incapable of telling the truth - that it was the four years of neglect of the portfolio that has brought us to this sad point that we are at today. The momentum accelerated when we were in government. We had a responsive government in Canberra, we had the then prime minister prior to Julia Gillard, Kevin Rudd. For all his flaws, and they are manifold, he said, 'Tackling homelessness will be a priority of my Government'. That investment was coupled with economic stimulus package money. We had NRAS, we had big capital budgets that we connected to the Housing Fund, state money. We delivered more than 2000 affordable energy-efficient homes. If that momentum had been maintained, because we had governments both in Canberra and in Tasmania who recognised the responsibility of governments to provide social and affordable housing, we would not be having this debate today. I believe that, because the metrics tell the story.

We have a government that is admitting failure almost before it has begun, through the projections in the budget paper for the housing waiting list. They are shocking. It is shocking that you can have a Housing department that projects an extra 200 people waiting for a place to call home within the space of a year. That is what we see on page 29, budget paper No. 2 Volume 1. Out to 2019-20, 3400 people is the target for applicants on the Housing Register. That is an admission of failure.

It is an admission that the Treasurer has won the day in Cabinet. He wants to call this an infrastructure budget. The Treasurer believes that the future of Tasmania is under a layer of concrete, roads and bridges. Just imagine if one-tenth of the roads and bridges budget was dedicated to increasing the supply of social and affordable housing. Just imagine if we had a treasurer who heeded the calls from Shelter and TasCOSS to absorb that \$150 million Commonwealth State Housing debt into the Public Accounts. We unburden Housing Tasmania; we take that albatross from around its neck and we make sure that every cent we receive from the Commonwealth, the \$20 million each year under the National Affordable Housing Agreement, is dedicated to increasing the supply of social and affordable housing.

I believe that, had momentum been maintained, the attention to investing the capital into new supply, we would not be having this conversation. It is an indictment on the Liberals in Government that five years after they came to office, there are more people sleeping on the streets and there are more people requiring the support of shelter services. Children are made more vulnerable. Meanwhile, the acknowledgement, partially, of the impact of short-stay accommodation on the housing market has been flabby and ineffective. It has been window-dressing. It is really clear that the explosion in listings on short-stay accommodation has had as massive impact on housing and homelessness and we want to censure this minister. We want this debate to happen.

**Time expired.**

[2.40 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** (Bass) - Madam Speaker, I enjoy, sadly, following the Premier because it gives an opportunity to highlight the complete lack of understanding and knowledge that this Premier has of the circumstances before us.

This Premier stood up here in his response and said that we did need a proper inquiry and we do. That is why we want to have a censure motion. That is why we want to have this matter debated urgently and the House suspended so that we may do so. We do want a proper inquiry and the Premier says it is words.

He also said that we should judge the Government on their track record. Well we do. I will talk a little bit later about the targets that move and the actions that are wanting.

First of all we need to debate this censure because we have to elevate this issue. Platitudes from this Government simply do not cut it any more. This matter is beyond urgent. It is not a want of confidence motion. It is a censure; it is a call to action, it is something the Government should allow to be properly debated.

I need to tell you a story before I address the Premier's comments about judging him on his actions. Last night I dealt with a woman in tears. She is a small business owner. She is a mum of three. She is a woman who has fled a violent relationship. She is not even on the category one list. She has been told it is very unlikely that she will get a home. She daily rings her provider. She daily rings the women's shelter seeking refuge. She has had to separate her children because the \$300 a week that she has been able to scrape together does not afford her a place that she can fit all of her children in. They share a room; there is not enough for all of them. She is actively considering returning to her violent partner. She is actively considering going back, despite her fears for her safety and her children's safety.

The most dangerous time for a woman in a violent relationship is the point at which she leaves. If we cannot provide a safe refuge for her - and there is no way she is getting into Magnolia House for the short term because the list is too long. If we cannot do that then we as a society are failing to keep her and her children safe. If the most dangerous time in a violent relationship is leaving just, for a moment, consider how dangerous going back will be.

She has given me permission to read into *Hansard* just a little bit of the conversation that she sent me last night because she said:

You never know, maybe I will get my very own contact on the 1800 housing number for assistance line. Can you save him the trouble of that generic response

and please inform him. Please tell him that I am doing everything I can within my power to get myself out of here and that I would appreciate him to please do everything in his power and help too and that his generic responses are not okay. That they are actually quite heart breaking. He inspires no confidence.

In fact, me personally, I feel like it is almost an out-of-sight, out-of-mind issue for him. If he could find it within his heart and his budget to help the other women who have abusive partners and wind-up finding themselves homeless with their children out also, well that would be amazing too. Because we have already suffered at the hands of our abusers. We do not need to be subjected to more kicks to our self-esteem by being left in the cold and treated like we do not matter by our government.

This woman has fled a violent relationship and we are not there for her, minister. When the Premier says that we should judge you all on your record, please be assured we judge you on your record. There are 3200 people on a waiting list. It takes nine months longer to get into a house than it did before you came into Government.

We know that the Government promised to build 900 new homes and that target, which they gave in 2015, was going to deliver homes by June this year. There were going to be 900 new homes. By June 2018 the Government changed their language. A mismatch of words perhaps if we use Mr Ferguson's explanation for why he says things that are not true. By June 2018 they were homes and lots - 900 homes and lots. A lot would not help this person. A lot will not help those people on the waiting list.

To date I understand there are 316. The minister says he has another 100 but frankly, given he has not been able to come good on any of his other commitments, we will wait and see if those ones are there. To reach the 900 target by 30 June we need another 584. We need him to produce 32 homes a day between now and the end of the month to deliver on his commitment that he made in 2015. He would have us believe that he is capable of delivering on target in a short period of time when he has failed since 2015 to deliver on that original commitment. Judge you on your record. You have no idea how much we judge you on your record. When you came into government you had one of the shortest waiting lists for our public housing that we have ever had, certainly was one of the best ones in the country.

You can say there is increased demand but it is not like you did not see it coming. The member for Clark, Ms Hickey, in her comments said she felt like she was the only one who knew winter was coming. I have stood here and talked about winter. The other thing, it is not like you did not know there was demand. There are unspent dollars in the brokerage funds that you have not been able to use effectively. There is a ridiculous number of people sleeping rough.

There is no detail in the Budget about how you are going to deliver these things because until you received some media pressure, there clearly has not been a plan. There is nothing new in the Budget. It is more of the same failure to meet the same targets. I listened with interest to the media this morning and some of the things did strike a chord with me. There is no leadership. It should come from the state government. I will not stand by and watch what this Government has done to innocent people through lack of action, incompetence.

This is not the first time we have raised this minister's inability to deliver in this House but it is an important opportunity to get an action now. The motion before the House calls to account this

minister for what he has failed to do. It notes that promise of 900 homes. It notes the wait list has grown. It notes the waiting times have tripled, 56 weeks for priority applications, including stories like the woman I just spoke about, except not including her because she is not even category 1. Despite that she has broken up her family, she has somewhere to house temporarily. It will send her broke. It will kill her small business and it will destroy her family. That is okay. That is not enough to be category 1.

It notes the children are removed from their parents' care due to homelessness. The minister stands in this House and says, 'No-one has been removed just for homelessness'. Not being able to safely house and home your child is a contributing factor to why children are being removed. This minister knows it.

We want additional funding to provide shelter for people this winter and we have to have this done in urgency, not in the time that suits.

[2.48 p.m.]

**Mr JAENSCH** (Braddon - Minister for Housing) - Madam Speaker, in Mr O'Byrne's contribution he said at the beginning, 'Business as usual is no longer acceptable'. There is nothing 'business as usual' about the Hodgman Liberal Government's response to housing and homelessness in Tasmania, now or at any time over the last four years, or the next four years: \$200 million for an Affordable Housing Strategy for Tasmania, state-funded 100 per cent, is not business as usual for Tasmania. It is a first under this Government and they waited too long for it.

In our Budget, \$68 million in 2019-20 alone to fast track, to drive our delivery of housing is not business as usual; \$30 million negotiated with the Commonwealth under the City Deal delivering another 100 homes in the greater Hobart area is not business as usual. Development of an Australian-first, a brand-new piece of legislation to rapidly convert Government-owned land for housing - and nothing but housing - under our Homes Act is not business as usual. Short-stay accommodation: it is the first of its kind in Short Stay Accommodation legislation. The first of its kind in Australia is not business as usual.

That will help us to develop planning and policies to address the range of issues and assertions and guesswork that has been out there about the impact of the short-stay market on housing availability, which we are not in a position to measure until we have this data that our new legislation will afford us.

The housing register has stabilised. I do not say that it is fixed but it is has not been growing over the last year that I have been minister. Waiting times have fallen over the last year. Over 1000 families have been housed since I have been the minister. There is more work to do. If these are times of unprecedented growth in population, demand and housing stress in Tasmania, we are, at the very least, meeting that new demand. The situation is not business as usual and neither is the response and we have a plan to further drive those numbers down. I must address the continuing falsehoods being pedalled about the targets I am currently responsible for meeting by the end of this year. In 2015, when the Affordable Housing Action Plan was published it included a clear target to deliver 941 affordable lots and homes. There was a map of the state and a list of initiatives that showed what that number included. It includes 327 social -

**Ms White** - Including a motion in this parliament.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, please.

**Mr JAENSCH** - housing dwellings of which, at the end of May, we have delivered 316 and we have more than 100 nearing completion right now. We will meet our targets and we will exceed them.

When that plan was put together, as for our second action plan, the research and consultation, we made it clear that we must address supply across the spectrum of need in social housing and the ability for people to build their own home and for third parties to build homes for Tasmanians to live in.

**Ms White** - What about this press release on 17 July last year? You said it will, 'deliver over 900 homes'.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Labor only counts government-owned housing as if everybody in housing stress -

**Mr Bacon** - It's what you said.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order. We are all getting a bit hysterical. Please resume, minister.

**Mr JAENSCH** - in Tasmania only wants social housing, as if that was the only solution.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I am concerned that the minister is now misleading the House by saying he never promised 900 homes. I have a press release here, which says, 'which will deliver over 900 homes for low-income Tasmanians by this time next year.'. It is not okay and it is a serious matter to mislead this House.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Madam Speaker, on the point of order, that is a garbage attempt at a point of order. If the member truly believes that, then there are forms in the House to do it, not to simply disrupt a contribution she does not like listening to because she does not want the facts.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - On the point of order. The member talks about stunts. He has suggested we use other forms of the House and I am sure he would call it a stunt if we did.

**Madam SPEAKER** - I am ruling it out of order. Please proceed.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Labor seems to believe that everyone who is in housing stress only wants to be in social housing and that is not the case. Maybe, once upon a time when the only game in town was broadacre public housing, whole suburbs of houses that looked the same, which the Commonwealth government paid for, maybe they were the good old days they are harking back to.

Madam Speaker, we are taking a far more nuanced, comprehensive and complete approach to dealing with Tasmania's housing and homelessness needs across many markets and demographics across the whole state. When the construction of the Affordable Housing Action Plan was put together, they were in the room. They were in the room for the round tables listening to what people were talking about, including land and houses and the ability to help people into affordable home ownership, shelters, services and brokerage. It is not one size fits all. Every Tasmanian in housing stress is an individual and needs to be treated with dignity and needs a solution that meets their needs; not suburbs of government housing like in the good old days, paid for by the Commonwealth.

**Mr JAENSCH** - That is all the people on the other side of the Chamber will count as housing when it comes to delivery on our plans.

**Ms White** - You said it, minister. You are misleading the House and putting yourself in a big hole.

**Mr JAENSCH** - This time last year, we introduced a winter package with extra resources in greater Hobart, Launceston and Burnie, to put people on the beat, out finding people who were homeless, who were sleeping rough and to connect them with services. We have spent \$1.9 million on that service over the last year. It is uncapped. We have not been asked for more than that but we have embedded that level of service in your forward four-year plan.

**Time expired.**

**The House divided -**

AYES 11

NOES 11

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

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

PAIR

Ms Houston

Ms Archer

**Madam SPEAKER** - The outcome of the division is 11 noes and 11 ayes. This motion requires a two-thirds majority; therefore, the question is resolved in the negative.

**Motion negatived.**

## **MATTER OF INDULGENCE**

### **Standing Order 2 - Alleged Misleading of Parliament by Minister for Housing**

[3.00 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** (Bass) - Madam Speaker, I wish to raise a matter directly with you I hope that there is a response from the Government. It goes to standing order 2. Standing order 2 says -

A Member must only make statements in Parliament and in public that are, to the best of their knowledge, accurate and honest.

A Member must not mislead Parliament or the public in statements that they may make.

Whether any misleading was intentional or unintentional a Member is obliged to correct the Parliamentary record or the public record, at the earliest opportunity in a manner that is appropriate to the circumstances.

Madam Speaker, I refer you to a motion that was passed by this House on 13 June 2018 which was amended by Mr Jaensch, and in the final clause, Mr Jaensch amended it to say -

- (e) Commit to the delivery of 900 new homes by the end of June 2019, with over half of that supply to be delivered in the Greater Hobart region.

The minister said that he had not made a commitment to 900 new homes. It was a resolution of this House, which was amended by this minister. He had, whether intentionally or inadvertently, misled the House. He can either resolve that now or have us take a short amount of time to reflect on whether standing order 2 applies to ministers of this Government.

**Madam SPEAKER** - The member who raises that is on indulgence; there is no formal question before the Chair. I have to move on to Orders of the Day

**Ms O'BYRNE** - If I can, Madam Speaker, I advise that there are other forms in the House. We will give the minister a short period of time to reflect upon on his behaviour and, if not, obviously the others forms of the House can be utilised.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Thank you. I am sure the minister will take that on board.

## **MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

### **Housing and Homelessness**

[3.02 p.m.]

**Ms STANDEN** (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: Housing and homelessness in the state.

I begin with the obvious statement that if you move the goal posts, it is easier to hit your targets. It is clear that this minister has become paralysed with fear over the commitment that he has made in this House on the *Hansard* in relation to delivering 900 new homes.

It is clear, at the beginning of his 10-year Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-25, that the Premier has committed the Government to deliver 900 new homes. It is clear, in many statements over the last 15 months, that this minister and this Government have committed to 900 new homes. Yet, he is trying to dodge and weave from these very statements in order to deflect blame from himself.

He needs to accept responsibility. It is not as though he has only had 15 months to address this issue. We are, in fact, half way through a 10-year strategy. This Government has had half a decade to address the grave issues of housing and homelessness in this state.

Five years ago, this Government was handed a gift: a gift of a housing wait list and waiting times that were at a decade long low. Some 2200 new social housing dwellings had been built by the previous government. It was a gift that was handed to this Government. There is no doubt that in the first four years of this Government, those good times were squandered, the targets that the Government set for itself -

- a decrease in the proportion of low-income Tasmanians experiencing housing stress
- a decrease in the proportion of Tasmanians experiencing homelessness

has been abysmally met. There has been zero progress on those key outcomes in the Government's own Affordable Housing Strategy.

The public housing wait list was at the lowest in a decade. What can we say about the latest figures? The applications have since tripled to more than 3200 families on the Housing Register and around 75 per cent of those are at the highest priority.

The average time to house priority applications has now blown out from some 20 weeks when this Government took office to somewhere between 56 and 60 weeks. The average waiting time, as we heard in the recent debate in the budget paper sits at 63.4 weeks. That is two birthdays and two Christmases. That is a long time for a family waiting in, sometimes, the most desperate of circumstances in insecure housing, waiting for a public home, a roof over their heads.

I have spoken with countless people who have been waiting far longer. I have spoken with people who have been waiting in tents, in sheds, in garages and in other people's homes, straining relationships within those families while they try desperately to enter the housing market. They languish on the Public Housing wait list. They have no hope of entering the private rental market. It is an absolute indictment that this Government has set a target of 3400 people waiting to be housed, an increase in the number of people over the next year and the out year beyond that in the budget papers.

The short stay accommodation market has impacted significantly on the private rental market with estimates of around 10 per cent of entire properties being removed from the long-term private rental market. The minister gloats about action being taken to regulate this market. The fact is, it will not be until later this year that we have the first available data before this Government will act.

In my view, it is unforgivable that for more than 15 months now, this minister, on his watch, has known that the market has been deteriorating significantly. He has sat upon the Affordable Housing Action Plan (Action 1) that had its settings set five years ago, when this Government inherited decade-long lows in terms of public housing wait lists. Yet he has failed to act.

To his shame, this minister has shifted the goal posts. I note with interest that as of the end of March quarterly progress report on new social dwellings last year, there was an abysmal progress of 37 against a target of 430, so less than 9 per cent to target. This is what this minister inherited.



At the end of June, he could see that he was falling further behind on that progress with some 190 at that stage. He thought, 'What shall I do? Shall I recommit to that target of 430? I know there is also that target of 900 sitting there as a sleeper in the strategy'. In a panic, when there was a motion before the House to call upon the Government to put a pause on short-stay accommodation, he recommits to that target of 900 new homes by end of June 2019. That is on *Hansard*, with over half of that supply to be delivered in the greater Hobart region. That is on 18 June 2018.

If my memory serves me correctly, some two days later, all of a sudden, he is talking about lots and homes. He says, 'Crikey, I didn't mean to say homes there. Whoops. I've just been in Estimates and I committed to a total target of 444 social housing dwellings by 30 June 2015 and yet there is this awkward target in my affordable housing strategy that says 900 homes. I know, I can spin a line that land will somehow, at some stage, equal a building'.

Even this week, members of the Cabinet, in introducing the first- home owners grant, have recommitted to 1400 new homes in Affordable Housing Action Plan (Action 2). What did he do? He revised down in June 2018 to the target of 372 rather than 430.

Shame on you, minister.

**Time expired.**

[3.10 p.m.]

**Mr JAENSCH** (Braddon - Minister for Human Services) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak about the Hodgman Liberal Government's delivery on housing and homelessness; our targets in our plan for the coming period.

As I pointed out just a moment ago, we build our targets with the help of people in our sector, with researchers, with up-to-date data. We refreshed our targets for our second Affordable Housing Action Plan as late as December last year, with members of the Greens and Labor in the room, participating in the roundtables with the social services sector and the housing sector, building sector, local government and others.

They confirmed for us again that we needed to address the issue of supply, right across the spectrum of supply: the provision of houses for those who needed houses and the provision of land for those who could not find affordable serviced blocks in the areas they wanted to live in, and the means by which they could be assisted to do that through things like our HomeShare program, a nation-leading program which has assisted many, many Tasmanians into home ownership for the first time. It goes again to highlight the point that the response to homelessness and housing stress in Tasmania is not all about social housing and broadacre development of government-owned housing. We need to ensure we have as many answers as there are questions out there and that we are offering solutions to the whole range of Tasmanians who find themselves in housing stress.

I particularly want to speak about the issue of homelessness because it has been very topical this week and the source of a lot of public concern, rightfully. It is a good thing Tasmanians are motivated to reach out to their fellow Tasmanians and to understand their circumstances. Homelessness is not new in Tasmania and we have seen even in the newspapers a profile of a gentleman who is 48-years-old and has been homeless since he was eight. A sad story; he is a real survivor. I do not know the full circumstances of his homelessness, but it is not something that has come about suddenly in the last couple of years on our watch. He is not alone.

We know that in Hobart through the services this Government supports, through Housing Connect and its outreach teams and the networks it works with - through the Salvation Army and other organisations - that there are people they visit regularly. They know where they camp and many of those people are regularly approached and offered support but do not want it; however, they need to know it is there for when they need it. It is a complex thing, not driven only by the lack of a house or a suitable form of accommodation.

**Ms O'Connor** - Primarily it is driven by the lack of a house, which is why Finland's model works.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Good on Finland, but we are here in Tasmania and we need to work with what we have here, including investing Tasmanian state money in the solution rather than relying on rivers of gold from the Commonwealth, as has been the case in the past. We need to ensure that we keep -

**Ms O'Connor** - We actually have both.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr JAENSCH** - reassessing and re-understanding the need and matching the solutions to the problem. That is what we did back in October through to December last year with our Affordable Housing Action Plan 2 consultation process. Our roundtables, which the parties here all participated in, heard the same things we did. We locked those priorities into our plan, we funded it as it has never been funded before with state money and now we are delivering those plans.

The overwhelming priority was to address supply right across the market, and we are doing that. That is why all our money is not in developing social housing. Of that which is, we are bringing forward \$10 million from the out-years to make sure we can maintain the high-level of delivery of housing we have right now.

I have been briefed again today, and we are confident of meeting and exceeding our target of 372 social housing dwellings before the end of June, and exceeding it by a healthy margin. We will keep on building more homes. That is why we released our tender document. I heard a member of the Labor Party earlier make some comment that somehow, because of their questioning in Estimates last week, over the weekend we stitched together a four-year schedule of tenders; \$138 million or thereabouts of investment by location, by the number of units, by the estimated number of dwellings to be provided and put a price on that and a date on that because we had been triggered into action at Estimates. You are not to believe your own ridiculous dot-joining on that one, Ms Standen.

**Ms Standen** - I think we said 'are we to believe' that you did not have it last week.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr JAENSCH** - We do not generate those documents either around the political calendar of when Estimates is going to be. We put it together as soon as we can to get it out to market because Action 3.1 of our Affordable Housing Action Plan 2 says we will issue a schedule of works across the four years so that our suppliers, our partners, the developers of these properties. We are going to deliver under that plan -

**Ms Standen** - You will not disclose your work plan.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms Standen** - You have brought forward \$10 million and you will not set any targets.

**Mr JAENSCH** - They know where and when the work is and they can plan their workforce, their resources and suppliers accordingly. This will ensure there is a continuous pipeline of delivery which we are committed to, and we are going to help them to help us meet our targets for the next action plan.

**Time expired.**

[3.16 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, here we are again in this House, on this day, debating one of the most critically important issues confronting this parliament and the entire state of Tasmania. The minister, who has escaped a lengthy debate that sought to censure him for his performance in his portfolio after 15 months, has just sat down after - maybe it is a neo-Liberal view of the world, I do not know - suggesting that people who are homeless do not require support and a roof over their head -

**Mr Jaensch** - I never said that. I said it is reported to me, with your indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker, from people working on the ground around our cities, talking to the people who are homeless, extending the offer, the option of assistance to them, that there are people who at times say, 'Go away, I want to be by myself. I do not want this help right now', but it is important that we extend it.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Thank you, minister. We have heard a lot from you today. I have a friend who is a long-term homeless person, someone I treasure very much in my life who is a source of great wisdom and support to me. The only time I see my homeless friend is in and around the streets of Hobart and down at parliament when he comes to visit. It is possible that this homeless person fits into that very small cohort of people for whom a part of what they are doing is pushing society away. I understand that.

**Mr Jaensch** - You cannot arrest them.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - I understand that. Just let me talk for a bit, thank you minister. No, of course you cannot arrest them. If you have a system that applies the Housing First principle to people who are at risk, experiencing homelessness, poverty, addiction, mental illness, you can tackle homelessness right down to its foundations. You can and we know this is possible because of the experience of Finland.

In Finland the Housing First policy looks at an individual who is homeless and says, 'You need a home, clearly. There are a whole lot of other parts of your life that you probably want to improve but the first thing you need is that foundation.' As we know, a home provides the foundation for wellbeing for children, families or people who are experiencing disadvantage. Without a home, you do not have that sense of security in your life that there is somewhere safe that you can be, making it harder to access education, skills, training and employment.

**Mr Jaensch** - In that case -

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Minister, you have interjected at length and not been pulled up by Mr Deputy Speaker. We can have a conversation about this afterwards but I do not really feel like it, to be honest.

It would be preferable to have a philosophy that applies the Housing First principle and a government that is prepared to prioritise the construction of houses. Whatever this minister, the Premier and the Treasurer say on this matter - and I do not doubt that they would like to see more houses built - the bottom line is solid and it is that this Government has prioritised the construction of roads and bridges over homes for people. That is the foundational, unarguable fact we are dealing with. You have seen it in every budget paper since 2014. It is heartbreaking when you look back through those budget papers and see what scant attention was paid to the housing capital fund and, at the same time, not putting new money into the housing budget until the year we went to an election. How cynical is that? At the same time, you are standing back and watching as home after home is listed on Airbnb and Stayz, letting the free market take care of things. I use the word 'care' quite loosely.

If you are looking for the root of the philosophy, as to why we are in this situation, we are dealing with neoliberalism, a resistance to the responsibility the government has to provide social support structures and a blind faith in the market to do its thing to stabilise and sort out the problem. If it cannot do that, it does not matter anyway because the market is God. That is what we are dealing with here - a philosophy. We saw it coming out of the Abbott government, continued by the Turnbull government and it continues with the Morrison Government. You only have to look at the budget papers. Across the forward Estimates, about \$800 million has been taken out of the National Affordable Housing Agreement. This Government in Canberra really, honestly, could not give less of a - an expletive, as we read in the *Mercury* this morning - about people experiencing housing disadvantage. Right to the top of this country, philosophically, they have walked away from disadvantaged people. The people who sleep in their cars or on the rivulet are the victims of the greed of neoliberalism and that awful lot we have in Canberra right now.

[3.23 p.m.]

**Ms BUTLER** (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, there are 1600 homeless people in Tasmania on any given night, right now. That is not counting the people who have fallen out of the statistics or the people who are couch surfing.

I know a lot of people who couch surf. I know a lot of people who have been couch surfing for such a long time that they have used up all their favours with the people who have let them couch surf. There have been fights with parents, brothers and sisters. They have worn out all of their relationships and friendships because they have been homeless for such a long time, relying on other people's generosity and kindness and there is only so far that will extend. That is the human face of couch surfing and homelessness. We do not even know how many younger people there are who are couch surfing in Tasmania because, a lot of time, we are not collecting those statistics.

Whatever statistics we are talking about in this House, whatever statistics you throw at us and we throw at you across the Chamber, they are not really accurate. They are always a lot higher than the numbers we are discussing.

I have written to the minister about one situation and I wrote again yesterday. I had some more information to provide in relation to someone who has been couch surfing for quite a long time, who has an older, intellectually disabled son. There is a very sad track record of history in this

person's life. I am amazed some people are able to pick up the telephone to call me, if we look at some of the backgrounds these people have. Life has not been kind to them at all. This person is now living in a tent, courtesy of the Salvation Army and it is winter. It is really cold and this person has been trying to deal with me since January and this is only one example.

Tasmania's Affordable Housing Action Plan 2019-23 is an indicative program of tenders so it does not provide any concrete targets. It was only released last Tuesday and it is interesting that we did not receive it before we went in to Estimates. It does not outline a sustainable, broader program of what we are going to do about homelessness here in Tasmania. It is a really big problem. I am not surprised we had the member for Clark, Ms Hickey, on the radio this morning, 'Dear God, what have they been doing for the last 15 months I have been in Government?'. That must have been quite interesting to listen to on the radio this morning, I imagine, minister. Incompetence was another term that was used by the member for Clark, who said, 'I am the only Liberal with the most available time and passion in this particular issue'.

This had me looking into the Liberal Party philosophy. I am still trying to find answers as to why more has not been done about this. According to a statistician, Cuthbertson, since 31 December, a count of 58 878 homeless jobseekers were on the Centrelink books and 55 000 jobseekers who were without a home or on the cusp of homelessness had their welfare payments temporarily suspended. There is this philosophy of punishing people in plight. There is not a philosophy of seeing what we can do to bridge the gap between the haves and have nots. That is another reason why we are seeing such an increase in homelessness.

In Tasmania, we have one shelter that apparently turns away 220 requests for accommodation each month. If you are trying to find accommodation in the shelter, that means that you have exhausted most of your avenues and we are rejecting 220 people from only one shelter in a month. I hope some of this is hitting home. This is something we are attempting to help find solutions to but it is very much a government task and needs to be looked at.

People on the cusp of homelessness are trying to fit into Centrelink policy arrangements, which have strengthened a lot since the Liberals have been in federal Government. They are your counterparts. These are people apparently operating on the same principles and philosophies as you, even though I am sure you are a broad church. You have tightened the system so much that there are 20 000 people on the cusp of homelessness who are receiving demerit points at the moment. A lot of these people might have mental health issues, or they may be out of work and out of luck. They may have had their landlord tell them, sorry, we are going to rent this out for twice as much when your lease expires. You do not know the background to the story. This is your party. This is the Liberal Party and all I keep seeing is this intention to try to make life as hard as possible for people who are not privileged. I keep seeing it time and time again.

What is worrying is that the housing crisis appears to have emerged from the perfect storm. We all knew it was coming. I am sure you knew it was coming when you first came into government.

It has included unprecedented demand for student accommodation, population growth and tourism. The Government has stood by witnessing the rapid growth of the industry and refused to regulate it. It has been five years. As the member for Clark said, 'Dear God, what have they been doing for the last 15 months I have been in government?'.

**Time expired.**

[3.30 p.m.]

**Mrs RYLAH** (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, every Tasmanian needs a roof over their heads. Reducing homelessness will continue to be a top priority for this Government. For the entire Hodgman Liberal Government, for those facing homelessness is a heart-felt priority.

The Hodgman Liberal Government is maintaining the momentum and investing very strongly. In so doing, we are working hard to alleviate homelessness across Tasmania. Growing our housing pool, growing our shelters; we are and will continue to reach out through this minister, every single day. The Government's commitment of \$125 million into stage 2 of our Affordable Housing Action Plan takes our total investment into affordable housing to almost \$200 million over eight years, the largest ever state investment into affordable housing in Tasmania's history.

To accelerate the building of more houses to address supply challenges which we recognise, we have heavily front-ended our plan with \$10 million of the \$125 million funding being brought forward, bringing the total allocated in this financial year to \$40.5 million. A further \$27.4 million is allocated for Housing Tasmania's capital program, including the purchase and construction of new social housing to support the initiatives of our second action plan. Bringing forward this considerable investment is only one of the ways we are building more homes for Tasmanians in need faster.

As part of the Affordable Housing Action Plan, there are a number of initiatives to address homelessness across the state. The Hodgman Liberal Government recognises the complex problem of young people at risk of homelessness. We are working to address this difficult issue. One such initiative to alleviate youth homelessness on the north-west coast will include building the new purpose-built Youth Foyer at Burnie. The new facility is an investment of around \$10 million and will provide approximately 25 units for young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, giving them the prospect of a much brighter future. The Youth Foyer is a safe environment which will give young people experiencing homelessness not only supported accommodation, but also a pathway to education and the opportunity to participate in a job in a growing economy.

This is in addition to what we have already delivered under our first action plan. In the north-west, an innovative new model of supported accommodation commenced in Devonport in May 2018 with Anglicare as manager of the new facility, Eveline House. I have had the pleasure to see the success of this house already. The major project involved the significant subdivision of vacant land and construction of a newly supported accommodation facility. The subdivision of the site has released 23 fully serviced residential lots in a prime location to provide additional affordable housing.

The new supported accommodation facility has provided 25 self-contained units including five for people living with disability. Eveline House also includes a caretaker's residence, communal areas including lounges, kitchens and dining rooms, administration and office spaces, consulting rooms for visiting services and a commercial kitchen for a social enterprise.

Local community leaders have been instrumental in advocating for the facility and will be invaluable in providing linkages with local education and employment opportunities for the young residents. Residents need to be eligible for social housing and aged between 16 and 24 years of age. The model for accommodation is based on an education-first youth foyer, EFY model of practice.

This involves integrated learning and accommodation to support young people to engage in education and employment. The strengths and capabilities of young people are a key focus when assisting them to achieve their goals. The implementation of the model has involved training and orientation of new staff, the setup of equipment and furniture, having information sessions with service providers and very positive discussions with neighbours.

Residents have been assisted with on-site support and case management and important linkages with education, training and employment. They will live independently, cook their own meals and pay rent. There will also be 24/7 supervision onsite. The residents will be supported to access long-term accommodation, education and employment opportunities when they move out of the facility. There are unique social enterprise initiatives that will also operate on the site. Action Against Homelessness Limited, trading as Loaves and Fishes Tasmania, will be leasing the commercial kitchen to produce a range of fabulous gourmet foods, jams and sauces, which will sell online and through retail outlets to provide vital funds for the emergency food relief and training. Loaves and Fishes provide training, mentoring and community engagement for young people, including for residents of the supported accommodation facility.

Eveline House opened and the first residents starting moving in last year. This is a very welcome addition for accommodation and support available to young people in the north west of Tasmania. I absolutely endorse its innovative and frontline approach to this issue.

Some of the shelters and projects that have been delivered in this state, as we seem to have lost sight of that are: expansion and relocation of the Hobart Women's Shelter; the construction and ongoing funding of Colville Place; and the construction and ongoing funding of Eveline House in Devonport. New homelessness accommodation under action two plan includes: a youth foyer in Hobart to provide integrated learning and accommodation for homeless women in collaboration with Catholic Care; accommodation for homeless older men in collaboration with Hobart City Mission; and relocation and expansion of the Bethlehem House men's shelter; the expansion of Magnolia House women's shelter; the, expansion of Thyne House, a youth-at-risk centre for children under 16 years, and the list goes on.

**Time expired.**

**Matter noted.**

**APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2019 (No. 21)**

**APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2019 (No. 22)**

**In Committee**

**Resumed from 11 June 2019 (page 115)**

**DIVISIONS 6, 9, 10 AND 11 -**

(Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Arts and Minister for Racing)

**Ms HADDAD** - Madam Deputy Chair, I rise to make my comments on the Estimates committee hearing held last Thursday of Committee A, which examined many of the Attorney-

General's portfolios. I will comment on the portfolios of Attorney-General and Corrections. If time allows I will briefly touch on Environment which I also attended on behalf of the Labor Party.

The first half of the Estimates morning was spent looking at the portfolios of Attorney-General and Justice. Much of what we spoke about in that output surrounded the very significant issues around court backlogs which are recognised by the Attorney-General. There are funding commitments in the Budget which will to some extent alleviate some of those backlogs; namely some funding for the DPP, a new justice of the Supreme Court, and a permanent new magistrate in the south.

We fleshed out in a little more detail in some of those other structural issues that add to the backlog of court cases, particularly in the Criminal Division of both the Magistrates Court and the Supreme Court, is that what causes some of those backlogs are really quite messy and systemic issues in the justice system generally. They do cross portfolios between the justice system and the corrections system.

In our consultation with the legal fraternity, we heard that quite often the reason Magistrates Court Criminal Division cases are put off, leading to backlog, is the inability of lawyers to be able to access their clients in prison. They have to put off a court date they might otherwise have had set because they have not yet received instructions from their client. The reasons for their lack of access to their client are manifold. For example, often it is caused by a lockdown. We touched on lockdowns in the Corrections portfolio, both in the lower House and in the upper House committees.

The Attorney-General was at pains to explain that lockdowns do not affect the entirety of the prison, and that is true. When people hear on the radio that there is a lockdown at Risdon, it does not mean the entirety of the prison is in lockdown. What we know, and what was revealed with the disclosure of average out-of-cell hours in the upper House Estimates committee, is that there is a lockdown somewhere in the prison every day. Somewhere in the prison - it might be for a short time, it might be for a particular division of the prison, but somewhere in the prison there is a lockdown. You could describe it as 'rolling lockdowns' across the prison.

One of the effects of that is lack of access to phone appointments with lawyers and other professionals, leading to what the lawyers described as one of the major issues leading to backlog in the Criminal Division, particularly in the Magistrates Court but also the Supreme Court.

We talked about some of the solutions that might alleviate that problem further. It would be interesting to know more from the Attorney-General and from her department about what some of those solutions might be. Clients cannot be brought to the phone because of the lockdown. Often it is not because of the lockdown. It is also because of other factors in the prison. For example, if an inmate has moved divisions - they may have been a medium category prisoner who has moved to minimum or vice versa - or if they have moved yards within minimum, sometimes that means they are unable to access their phone appointment.

That was one of the things we covered in Estimates: many of the more multifaceted issues around lack of access to justice leading to court backlogs.

In the Estimates committee, we spoke at length about some of the infrastructure projects the Attorney-General has announced since coming to the portfolio and to government. In particular, some of the infrastructure works that have been pushed out by at least a year are the Southern Remand Centre and the Burnie Court upgrade. Those are things that are also frustrating for the



legal fraternity and their clients going through the justice system. No doubt they are frustrations for the government as well in terms of finding the budget required to meet the commitments that they have made over several months and years.

We also spoke about funding of the community legal and legal aid sector. That is a shared responsibility, as you would know, between the state and federal governments.

One of the things that concerned me most in reading over the budget papers after the Treasurer handed down the Budget was the drop in the state commitment to that particular line of funding; community legal and legal aid. It drops by a little over \$8 million. It might be up to \$8.5 million over the forward Estimates from next financial year. That drop is because there is an assumption that the national partnership agreement when renegotiated with the Commonwealth will be to the tune of \$8 million or more.

With respect to the Attorney-General, I still hold the worry that when it comes time to negotiate that national partnership agreement with the Commonwealth, there is a chance it will not be as high as expected and that could mean there is a gap in the budget from next financial year, a very significant gap in the budget.

The Attorney-General described my questioning in that area as hypothetical. It is true we do not know what the Commonwealth is going to commit to, but certainly the approach in the Budget has not been hypothetical, because there is a black-and-white printed reduction in funding for that line item.

In recent days members would have seen members of the legal community, including the Law Society of Tasmania, the Law Council of Australia and also the Womens Legal Service and other community service providers in the legal sector, express their concerns around the ongoing funding for Legal Aid and community legal services. The President of the Law Council of Australia described Tasmania as having the biggest drop in Commonwealth funding and went so far as to say there are now two classes of people: people who can afford legal assistance and those who cannot. I do not think that is something anyone in this place would want to aspire to. In my view, at least, access to justice and access to legal representation is a fundamental human right.

People rely on state and federal governments to ensure that when they are facing the criminal justice system they are well represented. If they cannot afford to pay private legal fees, they can rest assured that the society we all live in, and the governments that support them, will support them to receive well-funded community legal and legal aid assistance. That is something that is still to be resolved, and I will watch with interest as that national partnership agreement is renegotiated. I very much hope we do not see a further reduction in legal funding for the community legal and legal aid sector.

In the upper House Estimates the Attorney-General was asked about the release of the review of the community legal sector, which was commissioned, I believe, in late 2017. It may have been earlier than that. The Attorney-General advised the upper House committee that she would be releasing that report very soon. She did release it very soon; at 10.15 a.m. the following day, just about an hour into the lower House Estimates.

That was really disappointing, not just for the Opposition in terms of not having sufficient time to really absorb the recommendations of the report and to establish some reasonable questions

around the recommendations, but also to the community legal sector which had been waiting with bated breath for many months to see the results of that review.

Reading back over the *Hansard*, I think maybe the Attorney-General thought I was questioning the ethics of the review itself. I was not. I was just questioning why it had taken such a long time for the sector to see the results of that review, which was conducted, as it should have been, with all due regard to process and so on by the Department of Justice. That review has now been released and it raises some really serious questions. It also makes some very cogent recommendations about the future funding of community legal assistance in Tasmania.

Still in the first output, Attorney-General and Justice portfolio, we spoke about some of the diversionary courts. That was another area that crossed over between the two portfolios, Corrections and Justice. First of all, the mental health court list, which I recognise has been a great initiative of the Tasmanian Magistrates Court and which is operating very well for people with mental health conditions and also for people with cognitive impairment and acquired brain injury.

A concern was raised with us by the community sector, quite a serious concern, which is not in the Attorney-General's control because it is about community sector funded organisations who have been funded by the Department of Health or Department of Communities. Notwithstanding that, it is an issue for the court and the corrections system to deal with in the future. That is, at the moment people with acquired brain injury or cognitive impairment who are facing charges in the Magistrates Court are able to be heard on that mental health court list. Instead of facing a custodial sentence, they are able to be diverted into services in the same way as someone with a mental health condition might be diverted into a mental health service, or people with an alcohol and drug condition who are being heard on the Court Mandated Drug Diversion Program list can be diverted into an alcohol and drug treatment program rather than receiving a custodial sentence.

Those services that provided service to people with an acquired brain injury risk losing their funding very soon under the roll-out of the NDIS. That was an issue we brought to the attention of Government through the Estimates process. I hope there will be collaboration between those relevant portfolios to ensure that people with an acquired brain injury and people with cognitive impairment facing charges in the Magistrates Court or elsewhere in the Tasmanian justice system will not be disadvantaged by that lack of available services in the community sector to support them as an alternative to a custodial sentence.

I will touch on the Court Mandated Drug Diversion Program. I was very encouraged that the Attorney-General indicated that she might consider extending that court list to hear alcohol-related offences in future. As members might know, you can have your case heard on that list if it is a suitable matter but only if the offence you have been charged with relates to a drug issue but not alcohol-related offending. Once you are on that program, if you have an alcohol addiction, you can be treated for that through the alcohol and drug counselling you receive, but it does cut out a large number of offenders who are not able to be heard on that list. That said, we also heard of some concerning issues of under-funding of resources relating to the Court Mandated Drug Diversion Program. It is noted that the program is not at capacity but I argue it is not at capacity because there are not sufficient alcohol and drug counsellors available around the state to deal with the case load of offenders on that program.

We heard from the Attorney-General that there is one alcohol and drug counsellor available to the program in the south. I cannot remember the number of places available in the south but it was about 45. In the north and the north-west, the alcohol and drug counselling services for Court

Mandated Drug Diversion Program clients are outsourced to the sector. I am the first person to commend the work of community sector alcohol and drug services and I know what an amazing job they do but, as far as diversionary courts go, there is a lot of evidence to say that the counselling is best provided in-house, through one wholistic service through the justice system. That was one of the issues that we touched on in the Justice output and again in Corrections.

In the Corrections portfolio, we talked mostly about the significant over-crowding being felt across the Tasmanian Prison system and most acutely at Risdon. There have been multiple occasions during which parts of the prison are made to open in a fully operational capacity without enough staff numbers to cover the shift. We heard from correctional officers during the Estimates process as to how dire the situation is for them while working at Risdon Prison. Nobody shies away from the fact that working in a prison is going to be a fairly full on job. Everybody who puts their hand in any kind of frontline service, particularly one as a correctional officer, knows that there are inherent dangers in doing a job like that.

Some of what we heard in the Estimates process showed us that the Government is not doing all that it can to ensure we are providing a safe place for correctional officers and a safe place for inmates. Assaults on prison officers are rising year on year, and inmate on inmate assaults are also on the rise. There are serious questions to be asked of the safety of inmates and of correctional officers that lead to things like lockdowns having to occur across the prison each day and significant reductions in morale amongst correctional officers across the prison service and inmates.

The effect of these poor working conditions is felt far and wide. There are significant numbers of resignations from the prison service every month. The numbers of prison officers who are being employed new into the service are, at best, only plugging the holes of those leaving the prison service, either resigning or because they have suffered workplace injury and are receiving workers compensation. We left some questions on notice as to the number of people receiving workers compensation. I look forward to receiving those answers.

We heard the very disturbing account of a death in custody that occurred during a night shift at the prison on 14 January 2019. There was an attempted suicide and some correctional officers attended. The inmate had attempted to take his own life and, although CPR was attempted, that inmate did pass away. In the process of attempting CPR, the correctional officers who were attending to that inmate became covered in blood and bodily fluid. The Attorney-General assured us that there had been an opportunity for those staff to go home, or to shower and change their clothing but it became a little bit of he said, she said because we were assured by those correctional officers and those who represent them that this was not the case.

We also heard from correctional officers that those correctional officers had to work out the remainder of their shift in those bloodied clothes and had to go home in that state, and at least one of those correctional officers is now on workers compensation suffering the effects of that disturbing incident. We also heard that it is not an isolated incident.

That was an extremely disturbing incident that I reported into the committee. I was worried about the Attorney-General's response to those well-founded concerns of mine, of correctional officers and of people across the prison system. I would like to know whether conditions are being changed as a result of that and other similar incidents that have happened across the prison; simple things like making sure that showers are available -

**Ms Archer** - The director told you. It wasn't me, it was the director.

**Ms HADDAD** - He eventually did. The director did say that lockers are now being installed. It would be good to hear from the Attorney-General, on the record, that there are now facilities in place to deal with something like that if it occurred again.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - I want to talk to you about a horse, minister. I rise to speak specifically about the minister's animal welfare responsibilities and the response to information we put to the minister in the closing hours of Estimates last Thursday relating to the death of a horse at the Brighton training tracks on the night of 31 May. The question is, what happened to that horse?

I asked, on the basis of very solid information from a racing industry insider, if the Office of Racing Integrity was aware that a horse had died, cause of death unknown, at the Brighton training grounds on the night of Friday, 31 May. I also asked if an investigation was underway. It was confirmed to me that the Office of Racing Integrity had begun its investigation into the death and disappearance of that horse the day before the Estimates hearing. I believe that day was 2 June. I will get this sequence absolutely right.

I raise this today as I did in Estimates the other night: there have to be some people in this place defending the welfare of animals consistently. That is the Greens.

Other members might go, 'It's just a horse, why the fuss?' The fuss is because we are supposed to have a set of standards in place for the racing industry in Tasmania. The Greens will always argue it is not sport, it is cruel. It produces beautiful animals for profit and then disposes of those animals when they no longer turn a sufficient profit or they have simply passed their use by date. That is why I come in here and talk about this horse.

We had it confirmed by Mr King from the Office of Racing Integrity that the ORI was made aware of the disappearance of this horse on Sunday, 2 June. The investigation into the disappearance of this animal did not begin until Wednesday, 5 June.

The first question is, where was the Office of Racing Integrity on the Sunday, Monday and Tuesday? They had information that points to an unexplained horse death, no vet present and an allegation that the horse was sent to the local zoo to be fed to the big cats. That is information we got from a highly respected industry insider.

Where was the Office of Racing Integrity for those days when it knew that a horse had died? It had information to say that there was a problem, yet did nothing until the Wednesday before the minister was due to appear before Estimates. Where has the Office of Racing Integrity been since then? Horses do not evaporate.

Horses, when they die, are large objects. The allegation is that in the dead of night, this trainer piled that horse onto a trailer and took it to the local zoo. The local zoo, Zoodoo, has denied the allegation. They have confirmed that they do feed ex-race horses to the big cats but they say in this instance this situation has nothing to do with them.

What we need to know is: what is the status of the investigation? Can the minister confirm that this trainer is notorious for not paying his bills and therefore vets don't want to work with him? That is a matter of very serious concern.

Can the minister confirm this trainer has stated to the Office of Racing Integrity that the horse's carcass was buried but he refuses to take them to the alleged burial site? This is a matter of standards

in the racing industry. A horse has died. We do not know what happened to it. A very solid tip to us is that it was spirited away on a trailer to be fed to the lions.

Until there is confirmation that the Office of Racing Integrity has found that horse's carcass, that is the most solid information we have. It has the ring of truth about it. That is the problem the minister and the Office of Racing Integrity have.

If, as alleged, this trainer is refusing to take the Office of Racing Integrity to the site of that horse's burial, he should be struck off the Tasmanian Racehorse Trainers Directory. We cannot have people like that looking after those beautiful animals. I use the words 'looking after' somewhat loosely.

We need to know what happened to that horse's carcass, just as we need to know what happened to the 13 beautiful ponies that died on the *Spirit of Tasmania* in January 2018. A year and a half after those deaths, we still don't have an answer from government about what happened to those animals. We do not have an answer from TT-Line about what happened to those animals.

There is an appalling track record on animal welfare under this Government, which came into office, lifted the Treasurer's Instruction on procuring cruelty-free eggs, removed the ban on the use of 1080, which leads to such excruciating deaths for animals that ingest it, will not answer questions about what happened to beautiful ponies on the *Spirit of Tasmania*, and now has not provided to this House or the people of Tasmania any update about what happened on the Brighton training ground on the night of 31 May. This is a really serious matter.

Mr King said when I asked him, 'A horse dies; there is no vet present, there is no cause of death determined, how can this be? - '

The requirements are outlined in the National Racing Rules. Where a horse dies within 14 days of racing or trialling there is a requirement under the national rules for the trainer to contact the controlling body, which is the Office of Racing Integrity, within 24 hours of the death of an animal. We do not get notified when a racing animal is ill beforehand but the rules do require them to notify us. In this instance and like I said this is ongoing but we were not notified, our office did not become aware of the incident until two days later.

We have confirmation from the Racing Integrity Body that a horse died at the Brighton training ground on the night of 31 May. We have confirmation that the Office of Racing Integrity began its investigation into the horse's death and disappearance the day before the minister came to the Estimates table. We have a very clear understanding of what that trainer was supposed to do in that circumstance and what he failed to do. We now have an allegation from inside the racing industry that the trainer is refusing to cooperate with the Office of Racing Integrity and take them to where that horse's body was allegedly buried.

I hope that when the minister gets up to respond we have some detail here. Someone in this place has to speak for that horse and all the horses caught in this cruel industry. It will be the Greens. I note that in the budget papers, rather than strengthening the capacity of the Office of Racing Integrity - and do not talk about the steward cadetships because that is not about increasing the capacity - we have a racing industry that is being funded to breed more thoroughbred and harness horses. As the paper says 'funding of \$350 000 per annum was provided in 2018-19 over five years

to breed more of these horses'. If the Government cannot ensure the wellbeing of horses which are bred into a cruel racing industry, what is it doing providing more funds to that industry?

We need to have some explanation here. We need to know what happened to that horse. We need to understand why a trainer can apparently be so negligent in paying his vet's bills that the local vets do not want anything to do with him. We need to understand how the Office of Racing Integrity can claim that the carcass was buried but have no proof whatsoever of its being buried. We need to understand how someone can give evidence to the racing industry's integrity body that is at best deceptive and misleading. How can it be that a trainer charged with looking after these beautiful animals can be allowed not to tell the Office of Racing Integrity where he disposed of the carcass? That is disgraceful. It is a damning indictment on the Office of Racing Integrity. It casts a very poor light on the minister's animal welfare responsibilities.

**Time expired.**

[4.08 p.m.]

**Mr BACON** - Madam Deputy Chair, I rise to speak on the Estimates examination of the Attorney-General but also the Minister for Racing.

What we had this year from the minister is the same thing we have every year. She was very happy to talk about the \$36 million it has provided to the racing industry. Of course, most of that is administered through Tasracing.

The minister was not happy to answer questions on initiatives mentioned in the Budget. She did not say that she would not answer. She talked about the fact that she could not answer, which is a strange thing to say. The minister could have given some indication, particularly around Budget initiatives such as \$50 000 a year for a breeding program within the harness industry and then refusing to answer questions about it. It makes a mockery of the Estimates process when you have a government initiative in the Budget, in black and white, and then the minister cannot talk about it at budget Estimates. It is a very strange situation.

In her opening statement the minister talked about the \$36 million for the racing industry. Then she could not or would not answer any questions about the bulk of the issues surrounding the racing industry in Tasmania.

You had issues such as the Devonport Showground lease, where the minister said briefly that she believed that Tasracing had legal advice around that situation. Her expectation was that the two codes, the harness code and the greyhound code, would be able to continue at the Devonport Showground. That is not our understanding, having talked to people in the industry and people in the local area about what is going on there. The minister refused to shed any light on that, which is disappointing in terms of the racing industry and what they see as the long-term sustainability of greyhound and harness racing in the Devonport area. That was a very poor performance from the minister.

The harness breeding question is mentioned on page 228 of the budget papers, and is talked up as an initiative that was going to get breeding in the harness industry up and going, but no word from the minister on exactly how that would happen. They seem to have a little or no understanding about how that money was going to be spent, which is particularly disappointing, given the problems that we have seen in the harness industry when it comes to the breeding of harness horses over recent years. Very disappointing from that point of view.

We did not get any information about a guarantee in terms of the track at Elwick and its availability for the next Hobart Cup. No information to set people's minds at ease. Nothing on the Devonport Showground lease; nothing when it comes to harness breeding; no information from the minister when the question was put to her about a contract in place between Tasracing and Racing Clubs Tasmania around that \$50 000 a year harness breeding. No real outline, particularly around the questions that were asked last year about issues within the Office of Racing Integrity and staffing issues that have been talked about a lot in the department. There are staffing issues when it comes to Racing Integrity. I am sure there is more of this that will come out in the following weeks and months.

When it comes to this minister, we are not only disappointed in her role as Minister for Racing, we also see that there seems to be some kind of - I am not sure if it is a vendetta or an agenda at play when it comes to blocking ideas going to the Government from the other member for Clark, Ms Hickey, who came forward, it has been reported in the media today. The headline is: Was it Elise Archer who blocked Sue Hickey's homelessness idea?

It goes on:

Labor has tried to ask the Government whether it was Attorney-General, Elise Archer, who was blocking Speaker, Sue Hickey's ideas on a homelessness fix, but we may never know. A historic spat between the Speaker and the Attorney-General threatened to resurface in Parliament this morning, until Sue Hickey blocked Labor's push to have it discussed.

Ms Hickey, yesterday suggested that internal politics had prevented her from presenting to Cabinet her short-term solution to Hobart's growing housing crisis.

'I was told that ... the Premier was supportive of my idea, and that they would need to internally manage some people', Ms Hickey told the *Mercury*.

'Clearly, internal politics has overtaken commonsense'. Opposition Leader, Rebecca White, this morning tried to ask the Government whether it was Attorney-General, Elise Archer, who was blocking Ms Hickey's ideas - but the Speaker, upon consultation with the Clerk, ordered Labor to ask a different question.

Ms Archer was visibly shocked at Labor's line of questioning, as were her Liberal colleagues.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR** - Mr Bacon, you need to be relevant to the dot points. I have just checked on housing, and there is no housing.

**Mr BACON** - No problem. It definitely fits in there, Madam Deputy Chair.

Ms Archer was visibly shocked at Labor's line of questioning, as were her Liberal colleagues.

The Attorney-General left the lower House immediately after question time -

**Mr GUTWEIN** - Point of order, Madam Deputy Chair. I believe you have just made a ruling in coming back to the dot points in terms of the committee. I ask the member to come to his point or come back to the dot points.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR** - Can you refer to the dot point?

**Mr BACON** - Yes, absolutely, Madam Deputy Chair, I can refer to the dot points.

There is no doubt that the Government is -

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR** - I want the dot point, please.

**Mr BACON** - No problem. There is no doubt that the Government is trying to shut down any kind of discussion around this. It is very similar to what the minister did through the Estimates process, happy to trumpet the \$36 million that goes to the racing industry but then, of course, cannot answer a single question about Tasracing. This is a minister who refused to answer questions when it came to her own opening statement. You have to set yourself up for a fall when you mention things in your opening statement that you are then afraid to talk about when the questions come out. This is a minister who only had to put up with 30 minutes. We had two Dorothy Dixers, I believe, from Mr Tucker, and that is all well and good but when you have 30 minutes, you have two Dorothy Dixers and you cannot even answer questions about your own opening statement, you do have to wonder what is going on with your priorities.

**Ms Archer** - You try it every year on every racing minister. It is GBE hearings; wait until the end of the year.

**Mr BACON** - Why did you talk about it in your opening statement? Why did you mention the \$36 million? Why is it in the Budget on page 228, the breeding program. It is a fact. You cannot answer questions about Tasracing. That is what you said, you said you cannot. You can but you choose not to. That is fine.

We know that the Attorney-General left the lower House immediately after question time. The rivalry between Ms Archer and Ms Hickey is well known. The pair had a run in at a private event at the Taste of Tasmania 2009. But had Ms Hickey -

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR** - Order, Mr Bacon. That is not relevant to this.

**Mr BACON** - That is right. Desperate not to talk about the ongoing stoush that has been going since 2009. We know the Government is ducking and trying to cover up when it comes to this issue, and none more so than the Attorney-General.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR** - Order, Mr Bacon. It is the fourth time I have asked you to come to the dot point. Please come to the dot point.

**Mr BACON** - We have a minister who is not happy to talk about the Budget. On page 228 of the Budget, we have details around a harness breeding program that the minister refused to talk about in Estimates. This is a harness breeding program that is supposed to get the industry back on its feet when it comes to breeding and we have a minister who is either unwilling to talk about these things, or is so far out of her depth, she cannot talk about an initiative that is highlighted in the Budget. It has become -



**Ms O'Byrne** - Too busy maintaining a feud with the Speaker.

**Mr BACON** - or too busy maintaining a feud. Whatever it is, the minister now has an opportunity when she gets up to sum up on the Estimates to tell us exactly some detail around this breeding program. Explain why she could not talk about it in a budget Estimates hearing into an initiative in the Budget. It has come to farcical levels.

We know this Government does not take the racing industry seriously. We have seen a revolving door when it comes to ministers for racing. Since they came to government in 2014 we have seen Mr Rockliff have two goes, we had Mr Brooks, we had Ms Courtenay, we now have Ms Archer, but we have no-one who has taken the racing industry seriously. If you read the transcript of the Estimates hearing, you can see it as plain as the nose on your face.

This is a minister who has no interest in the racing industry, will not stand up for the industry and could not answer any questions about it.

**Time expired.**

[4.17 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** (Bass) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want to touch on the minister's performance in Estimates. I was there for half an hour on Arts and half an hour on Racing and I want to touch on the point Mr Bacon has raised.

The fact that the minister was not able to answer questions in these areas is a significant issue. Madam Deputy Chair, you sat on an Estimates committee and you must have been as frustrated as all of us when we repeatedly asked questions of ministers and ministers repeatedly were unable to answer to them. I am very much looking forward to our discussion about Mrs Petrusma's piece of work.

**Ms Archer** - Like the MONA question, that was not relevant to the portfolio.

**Mr Bacon** - Why did you talk about it in your opening statement?

**Ms O'BYRNE** - It matters because the press release that Mr Bacon is referring to is clearly showing that this minister's mind is on other jobs. This minister's mind is on undermining the Speaker and her old enmity there. As the article talks about, when Ms Hickey lodged a police report alleging Ms Archer had grabbed her elbow, Ms Archer denied those claims but the Liberal Party State Director Sam McQuestin acknowledged there had been an altercation.

This altercation is playing out every day in the inability of this minister to get across the other areas of her portfolio and that is why it matters. That is why it comes back to the matters before us today.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR** - Your point, please.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - My point is that we regularly asked questions of this minister and other ministers, but this minister in particular, that she could not answer. Clearly it is because her mind is on other stuff.

Her mind is on, and I quote -

The troubled relationship between the pair was again highlighted when Ms Hickey seized the speakership last year - a role once held by Ms Archer. Ms Hickey's sensational coup against her colleague saw Ms Archer forced to deny calling the Clark MP 'a treacherous or treasonous bitch',

though she did acknowledge using strong language, noting emotions were running high.

The emotions run so high that she is not able to her job. Do you know what one of her jobs was? One of her jobs was in the Arts portfolio. That is the situation. When MONA was seeking support, your Government suggested it approach the federal Labor and Liberal parties for support. Let us talk about why it does matter. Your Government encouraged them to do it and then actively undermined that funding option in the north. You may not have played much down here, pretending to like MONA, as you said, 'I go to a lot of events'. I wonder how welcome you are now given you have undermined the reputation of MONA in the north of the state. You, Ms Archer, by failing to call out your colleague's behaviour, have undermined what is one of our premier art institutions.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR** - Ms O'Byrne, through the Chair, please.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Through the Chair, allow me to say that by failing to call out her colleague's behaviour, this minister undermined a significant art investment in this state. This damages everything else within the Arts portfolio. Art does not happen in silos. The investment in MONA has made a significant difference to the cultural development of our community in the south and in the whole of the state. When your colleague put out posters and media and stood beside your federal mates saying that being on MONA is a terrible thing to do, she undermined the community's confidence in investment in the arts.

For this Minister for the Arts to be a party to that in silence is unacceptable. From events today, we know this minister is not silent. I do not believe for a minute she was not aware that was the play and she chose to make no public comment because she later chose to intervene to stop a housing resolution at Cabinet. Why did she not intervene to support MONA? MONA is at the bottom of the page, and I am reflecting on that. The debate during Estimates was about this minister's failure to call out her colleagues. Ms White said, 'I am asking if you spoke to David Walsh about what his development now looks like.' Ms Archer said, 'I am saying, in my capacity' -

**Mr SHELTON** - Point of order.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - I am quoting from the Estimates *Hansard*.

**Mr SHELTON** - I am looking through the dot points and I cannot see anything there about MONA.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - It is odd because if you go to the bottom of Arts, underneath 'festival' and above 'local content', you will find the word MONA. You do not have a television and you missed what happened in the election, but maybe you could read the document we are debating in the House, Mr Shelton.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR** - Order, Ms O'Byrne, please be respectful.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Ms Archer said, 'I am saying, in my capacity as Arts minister that I haven't needed to as MONA does not come within my responsibility'.

**Members** interjecting.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR** - Order.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - I support MONA. It is in my electorate and I regularly visit it. I am not sure what it is you are asking. What we are asking of this minister is to stand up for the arts in Tasmania. What we saw from this minister was someone who did not stand up for the arts in Tasmania because, when it comes to choosing between supporting the arts or base political outcomes, this minister stands along with most of her colleagues in picking the politics every time. Doing the right thing by the arts was not your job and, as was clear from the Racing portfolio, you are not really across that either.

It is okay to say that this is a matter for Tasracing and there are GBEs. However, you cannot have a commitment for funding for the breeding program in your opening statement and in the budget paper and then claim to be wholly unaware of anything that happens in the breeding program. It is your job but what worried me the most was that you were saying you will be briefed tomorrow. Why would you not arrange a briefing before Estimates? I have been a minister and I know what happens before Estimates; you are briefed very well. There is no way that departments will let you go in to Estimates without knowing what you need to answer. The only reason you would not have been briefed is because you did not want to know. Why did the minister not want to know about the breeding program? I am assuming, because the minister did say she was briefed last week, that she will be able to say, unfortunately, I was unable to answer these questions about breeding program in Estimates because I did not have a briefing but now, having had the briefing, let me tell you what is happening with the harness breeding program. The minister said she has now been briefed and it is a matter that is mentioned in the Budget, it was mentioned in her opening statement and the minister should be able to answer any questions effectively and honestly in her summing up today; I believe she has 20 minutes.

**Mr SHELTON** - Point of order, Madam Deputy Chair. The member indicated that she had been a minister in the past and should also know that, through the Estimates process, the Office of Racing Integrity was there and not TasRacing. She knows that those questions should be addressed to TasRacing during the GBE hearings.

**Madam DEPUTY CHAIR** - Order. That is not a point of order.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Thank you for that ruling. The Estimates process allows you to address line items in the budget, matters that are raised in the budget. One of the line items in the budget was the giving of funding to racing for the harness breeding program. It is in the Budget, so you should be able to answer these questions. This minister bleats on whatever petty little thing she chooses to and getting angry is what she does the best. Ask Ms Hickey what she does when she gets angry. Check the police report.

Despite the protestations and the cover attempted by Mr Shelton, who was chair in the committee - between he and Mr Tucker they were running a fair bit of protection, managing to put in a number of Dorothy's in half an hour - the issue is that it is a line item in the Budget that the minister could not answer on the day. The minister did say, 'I'm going to be briefed by TasRacing tomorrow', so I now expect the minister to explain what she can now tell us about the harness breeding program in her summing up because she has had the briefing and it is a line item in the Budget.

If Mr Shelton is worried I can probably take us directly to that quote. On page 122, the item of breeding programs is listed in the report document. I go to the Estimates *Hansard*, which says, 'I am saying to you is that is the subject of TasRacing which I happen to have a meeting tomorrow on' - deliberately not having one before Estimates, putting that to one side - 'I can certainly erase some of those matters at that point because I have regular meetings and updates with them'. You say you have regular meetings and updates? They cannot be that regular if you do not know what they were going to spend the money on or how the program is going. Now that you have had your meeting, I fully expect you to update us because you said you were going to ask them. Minister, did you ask them and can you update the House?

**Time expired.**

[4.28 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Madam Deputy Chair, I have a whole new line of commentary to make about the Estimates that showed, in another form, how much this minister refused to answer some significant questions within her responsibility as the Minister for the Environment; the minister responsible, sadly, for protecting the 700 threatened and endangered species on this island and responsible for undertaking all the duties to do with this important portfolio. That is, the natural world, which sustains every agricultural system we have, every flowing water system, the quality of the air that we breathe, which supports parts of the tourism industry in Tasmania. This Government is intent on corrupting the processes we have in place to protect the natural environment to support the very industry they would like to grow.

This is the minister who refused to provide answers to repeated questions that I asked of her about which parts of Forestry Tasmania's - the so-called Sustainable Timber Tasmania's portfolio of lands - would be excluded from the Forest Practices Authority and included under a PAMA agreement between Sustainable Timber Tasmania and her portfolio area.

She refused to answer some basic questions about the lands that would be exempt, that would be included within a PAMA, and the location of those lands and importantly, why some hectares were to be chosen and others were not. This showed a total disregard for openness and fair dealings and the transparency and accountability of the work that she does supposedly in acting to protect species such as the swift parrot that would be the subject of a PAMA, which apparently is near completion. The PAMA is the statutory agreement which the minister, under her powers of jurisdiction under the Threatened Species Act 1995, would enable the secretary to sign-off a PAMA between DPIPWE and Sustainable Timber Tasmania. That would provide an exclusion from production, we understand, of some 9300 hectares from being managed and protected under the Forest Practices Authority and that would instead be managed under a Public Authority Management Agreement, or the PAMA.

This is a totally opaque process. It is clear from the evidence of Sustainable Timber Tasmania on their website and their high conservation values assessment and management plan, which was produced April this year as part of their attempt to get forest stewardship certification, they are seeking this PAMA over some lands within their portfolio. What we simply wanted to know was, where are these hectares that are to be excluded? Show us the map - because it is the map that provides the actual information about which forests and which areas - so we can have some openness about why some areas have been chosen and others have not been chosen.

It is clearly the case that DPIPWE has decided, it appears, in making a PAMA with Sustainable Timber Tasmania, it will be cutting out some swift parrot habitats on the permanent timber

production zone and placing it under a PAMA for protection. It will leave others languishing under the Forest Practices Authority approvals process. The creation of a PAMA suggests to the ordinary person that there is some different standard of protection that will be being provided to swift parrots in the harvesting process of Forestry Tasmania.

That is really what the Greens were spending such a large number of questions trying to extract from the minister and she simply would not answer. She would not provide a map of the area of permanent timber production zone that was seeking to be exempt and covered under a PAMA. She would not provide an answer to why some areas were going to be afforded a particularly higher level of protection than other areas.

Clearly, the scientific evidence is that swift parrots have a diminishing amount of habitat and they have a range of foraging and nesting requirements that mean they move around the state on a seasonal basis, and are not neatly packaged into certain areas. It is our view that there is no argument for harvesting any trees that are habitat for the swift parrot. We would like to understand - and I am appalled at the minister, who is not sitting in the Chamber at the moment - at her lack of transparency and openness about such a significant endangered bird as the swift parrot in terms of what is going to be protected and why. Why are some areas chosen and others have not been?

I also cannot leave a discussion of Estimates and this minister responsible for taking action on the most serious issue threatening Tasmania and that is the climate emergency. I asked the minister why she does not support the science that has been presented by the United Nations and the recommendation of scientists: the new and changed language of scientists to recognise that we are in a climate emergency. What we find from Liberal governments is that it is easy to slip into quibbling about words - climate emergency, climate urgency, climate crisis. The point is we should be taking the leadership of the scientists who have done the research and who are telling us the way things are. There is no point arguing about not using the word 'emergency'. It is an emergency. The reason the scientists have chosen to use those words that the minister refuses to understand is because we must change business as usual.

It is pathetic and woeful that the minister falls back onto a Climate 21 plan that finishes in two years and has nothing beyond it. It is pathetic and dispiriting for people to understand that there is no intention, well nothing in the words that I can hear from the minister, to look at sector wide targets. I asked the minister repeatedly whether the Government was planning to set sector wide targets instead of whole-of-state targets on carbon emission reduction. The minister refused to go to that point. She made some incredibly patronising comments about the process that must be gone through in order to bring the state climate change bill back for the overdue review, which it is in. That is because there is a process it has to go through. The process should involve talking to the stakeholders about sector wide targets. I have no inclination and no understanding that that is happening from this minister or this Government.

**Time expired.**

[4.39 p.m.]

**Ms STANDEN** - Madam Deputy Chair, as shadow minister for climate change and for the environment in this instance, I rise to make some observations following the Estimates committee process examining the area of environment, which as we know, for the Government includes the area of climate change.

Climate change is where I will start. I began the process by simply asking the minister about her approach to leadership. The point has been made that this is the last generation with the opportunity to act, the first generation to feel the effects of climate change, but the last generation with the opportunity to act. The window for opportunity to act is the next decade. Given that the area of climate change is a whole-of-government issue, and that the Climate Action 21 document espouses to be whole-of-government in its approach, I was keen to explore with the minister, in a non-confrontational way, what it is that she is doing to display leadership. Manifestly the local government sector, the youth sector in particular have been crying out for leadership in this area of climate change and are looking for what else this Government will be doing to step up in the area of climate change.

I asked her what briefings she had taken from climate scientists. I think she was particularly concerned about naming individuals. I would not like the point to be lost here that the creditability of the Government and of the minister rests upon the advice that she receives. Tasmania as a state has an enormous body of credible climate scientists and we are blessed with that resource. The bold issue is that the Climate Change Council was abolished by this Government. This minister will not indicate from where she gets advice. Within the Estimates process, unfortunately, she was keen to point to the advice that her climate change policy unit within Department of Premier and Cabinet receives advice from climate scientists. I think the sector is keen to know who is directly in her ear. If not the council then who and how?

I know that the minister has not been in this portfolio particularly long. I know that she has many other demands on her time but she must turn her attention to this as a matter of importance in order to establish the credibility of the Government, to restore confidence to the people of Tasmania who are so very concerned to see that we do more.

I know that Tasmania is a small player on the national and the world stage and yet we stake so much on our reputation for innovation. We were, I believe, the first jurisdiction to ban plastic bags. Why can we not continue to be leaders in this space? Why can we not build on that reputation for innovation? Even build new industries off the back of that reputation.

The minister talked about the climate change (state action) act, initially saying that the bill will be brought before the House this term and she eventually said this year. That is reassuring to hear. Like Dr Woodruff, I would be keen to see sector-specific targets within that bill. The minister said that there will be targets. We went on to have an interesting discussion about agriculture and transport in particular, sectors where emissions are particularly significant. There are a number of initiatives underway and I am not for a second undermining the good quality of work undertaken by the Climate Change Office within DPAC. I do not doubt the integrity and the professionalism of that office. I would like to see as an early indication from the minister how this Government intends to step up, given that the climate change action only takes us to 2021. We need to see urgency and acceleration of effort. To rest on our laurels in relation to zero-net emissions by 2050, which we have already achieved is not good enough. I do not think that that meets the pub test within the general population.

It was good to hear about the container refund scheme, but it is significant to note some of the criticism that has followed. It will not be operational until 2022. It has no immediate funding attached, so how it would be implemented is still in rather a void. The minister promised to deliver a draft waste action plan, I think it was at the end of this month. I suppose we await to see that tomorrow perhaps, with a final plan due by the end of the year. It would be good to see an over-

arching strategy in this area for the container refund scheme and for single-use plastics. We had a good conversation about that.

The minister has some concerns about councils getting out of step. It is no surprise really, given that it has been some two years this draft waste action plan has been awaited, called for by the local government sector in particular.

There are significant concerns that Tasmania is falling behind particularly in the area of recycling and plastics; that we are out of step; that other jurisdictions have received funding through state governments to councils and businesses. The risk is significant, even so far as to say that recycling may become unaffordable for local government sectors. We have wonderful businesses like Environex in the north of the state, which is doing wonderful work, recycling aquaculture by-products and such. It would be good to see us continue to build rather than stifle investment in this space.

I do not share the minister's concerns about the consultation with small business when I met with the Hobart City Council. They had robust evidence of something like 2500 people who had responded to their feedback survey on the single-use plastics initiative. I was surprised but pleased to see that it included the retail and hospitality sector within the city, who were not concerned. They showed good data that consumers are willing to absorb a modest increase in prices potentially off the back of an initiative like this. Let's not stifle investment and innovation in this space. Let's build upon these prospects.

The minister committed to look at a recommendation from the Tasmanian Youth Climate Leaders to establish a council. It would be good to hear in the minister's summing up where she considers we will go with that. We had a good discussion about coastal erosion but it is a significant area of exposure in this state. It would be good to hear her thoughts on where we go next in relation to that.

It was good too, to hear some reassurance around bunker fuel; I think international targets have been set. They are due for implementation and introduced worldwide on 1 January 2020. Given the ambitious targets for visitation including for cruise ships, I would like to know how the Government will be assured of meeting targets in that area.

On storm water, we had discussion about the EPA's role in partnering with the Derwent Estuary Program, local government and TasWater in relation to Blackmans Bay and an ongoing issue there that has been running since April 2017. For more than two years this has been an ongoing concern with water quality tests failing at the end of March, 10 out of 18 sites. We must do more.

### **Time expired.**

[4.48 p.m.]

**Ms WHITE** - Madam Deputy Chair, I rise to report on the Arts output, which was the area I sat across the table from the minister to discuss. We talked about some areas in detail. Others we were not able to get into much detail at all on because we only had half an hour. It was quite a brief exchange across the table.

**Ms Archer** - That was not our fault. It was the allocation of timing that was agreed.

**Ms WHITE** - I am not blaming you. I am making a statement of fact that there was only half an hour. I wanted to talk about some of the discussion we had which was about the campaign that was waged against the MONA commitment that was made by the federal Labor Party.

**Mr Shelton** - It wasn't negotiated. Half an hour is what you agreed to.

**Ms WHITE** - Apparently, everybody is very talkative now. You did not want to get up before and defend the minister or defend your Housing colleague about his failures in his portfolio. On Arts, you have a lot of chirp in you. What is going on? Had a bit of a turn of events at lunch time or perked yourself up? A bit of red wine maybe? Everyone has had a bit of a rush of blood to the head.

**Mr Shelton** - As long as you're fair about it; when you say we only had half an hour, it was negotiated.

**Ms WHITE** - What happened at lunch time? Everybody has had a bit of a rush of blood to the head.

**Dr Woodruff** - Something has happened.

**Ms WHITE** - They have all woken up over there and suddenly they want to talk. They did not want to talk to defend their ministers earlier, but they have all come alive. What on earth has happened? Maybe the arts are good for the Liberal Party after all, but they did not support MONA, which was the point I was trying to make before I was rudely interrupted.

**Ms Archer** - The funding does not come within the Arts portfolio.

**Ms WHITE** - The minister has interjected again and said the funding does not come within the Arts portfolio. I was asking questions in relation to the campaign waged by the Liberal Party at the last federal election, telling untruths in the north of the state about AFL being a Hobart-based team and also claiming that the people from northern Tasmania should not vote for the Labor Party's commitment to support the MONA development. MONA is an iconic institution and it has helped to revitalise the cultural and arts scene in Tasmania, which were the points I was making to the minister. She went so far as to say that Walshy was not within the Arts portfolio but that same evening she was off to open Dark MOFO. In what capacity? Probably as the Arts minister, I presume.

**Ms Archer** - I didn't say that at all.

**Ms WHITE** - You did say you were off to open Dark MOFO, which proves that MONA does have something to do with the Arts portfolio.

No, the minister would not talk about the campaign waged by the Liberal Party dividing the state, north and south, and that her own Treasurer had written to MONA encouraging them to apply for funding from the Liberal and Labor parties in the lead-up to the federal election. They then proceeded to take the advice from the Treasurer, supported by the Premier, sought some funding and secured that commitment from the Labor Party and the Liberal Party campaigned against them. I thought that was incredibly duplicitous of the Liberal Party, exposed for all it was last week. I simply asked the minister whether she had been made aware that campaign was going to be waged against MONA and whether she had an opinion about that as the Arts minister, given the important



role MONA plays in Tasmania's cultural society. There is funding in this Budget for activities MONA runs, like MONA FOMA. It is relevant to the Minister for the Arts but apparently nothing is funded out of the Arts portfolio. It is all funded out of events along with a number of other programs that are funded out of events that have nothing to do with her and which she clearly has no interest in.

I asked the question of the minister in relation to what is happening with local content and who has been a recipient of funding from the \$2 million Screen Innovation Fund. Of the \$2 million made available, \$1 million of it went to *The Gloaming*. That is a very large amount of money to be provided to one project when there are many smaller Tasmanian producers who are very interested in securing support for the screen products they are trying to bring to the market. I am not saying it is a bad thing, but it seems like a disproportionate amount when many, many Tasmanian screen operators are left to seek funding from a remaining pool of only \$300 000.

I also asked some questions in relation to what is happening at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. The minister explained they do not need any more money despite visitor numbers going up year on year and exceeding what they expect each year. I will be interested to speak with the people involved with running TMAG to see if that correlates to their understanding of affairs. It is, again, an important institution that holds some of the state's most important historic art collections. We need to ensure it continues to operate sustainably. It is very important because it also provides access for many school students who visit TMAG to gain exposure to the arts and understand our cultural history. It is important to ensure that level of visitation can be sustained and that they are provided with adequate resourcing to ensure they are sustainable into the future.

The other member of the committee who asked a lot of questions was Dr Woodruff, who raised some interesting matters. You may have already spoken about those, Dr Woodruff. The conversation took place over half an hour. I do not think Mr Tucker expressed an interest in the Arts portfolio. No Dorothy Dixers in that half an hour, which is quite refreshing because I sat in on a number of others allowing only half an hour for examination and up to two Dorothy Dixers were asked by Mr Tucker, which took up an awful amount of time.

I express again our keen interest in ensuring that local Tasmanian artists are able to be supported by the programs the Government runs, ensuring that dispersal occurs across the state, and our deep concern that the Minister for the Arts has no opinion about the campaign waged against MONA. It was not directly related to the Budget in this matter, but it does go to the values of the minister and her party and whether they are going to stand up for organisations like MONA that are, on the one hand, encouraged to make a bid for funding and actively campaigned against them on the other. I would have hoped to see more leadership from the Minister for the Arts to ensure MONA was supported throughout that process and not made a target by the Liberal Party. It was shameful. The question I asked the minister was whether she was aware of the impact that campaign had on MONA's proposal to continue with the development they had planned. Mr David Walsh has expressed concern that he might not be able to proceed with it the way he previously hoped. The simple question I asked was whether the minister had a conversation with him about that because it is such an important cultural institution. The minister did not touch on it and did not go anywhere near it. The minister said it was a matter for Events Tasmania and that she liked to visit MONA. As Minister for the Arts, I would have hoped for a lot more than to learn from the minister that she visits MONA and that is a demonstration of her support for them.

**Time expired.**

[4.58 p.m.]

**Ms ARCHER** - Madam Chair, the Leader of the Opposition cannot even fill 10 minutes and has to read from the *Hansard*. They are hypocrites in relation to the Arts; there is no shadow minister for the arts. They have simply forgotten to appoint a shadow minister for the arts.

**Ms White** - Are you reading from a speech? Can't you fill 20 minutes without reading something? I don't know if you have noticed but we had our shadow minister appointed to the president's role.

**Ms ARCHER** - How many weeks ago was that? It was early last month and you have forgotten, as an opposition, to reappoint a shadow minister for the arts. Pardon my cynicism, for this faux, all of a sudden interest today in the Arts when you could not even remember to reappoint a shadow minister for the arts. I only have 20 minutes. I am not going to waste any further time on the filibustering that has occurred this afternoon and the baiting and attacks from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Mr Bacon, the member for Clark, because there were members who made some valuable contributions on the day, last week, and in the House today.

Touching on Justice, access to justice is an absolute priority for myself and the Government. It is pleasing that the state Budget supports a number of major aspects of this. I was pleased to inform both committees during Estimates, our committee in our House and also in the other place, that a register of providers will be established to receive referrals and deliver counselling for Tasmania's eligible applicants to the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. Our decision as a Government to deliver counselling services at an estimated cost of \$8 million during the life of the scheme, is a key recommendation of the royal commission's Redress Civil Litigation Report. It was preferred over the alternative option for jurisdictions provided by the Australian Government in establishing the National Redress Scheme, which was a one-off payment for counselling, linked to the assessed impact of the abuse.

The register of providers will identify practitioners as having the appropriate capabilities to provide counselling linked to the assessed impact of the abuse and having the appropriate capabilities to provide counselling and psychological care to people affected by child sexual abuse. The register is not intended to limit survivor choice, and I know members welcomed that, because some survivors will already have a counsellor of their choice, so it will provide flexibility through the identification of a range of counsellors who can provide care.

Our Government recognises, and I have stated numerous times in this House and publicly, that nothing can undo the suffering and damage caused by institutional child sexual abuse. However, we will continue to do what we can to provide practical and meaningful assistance for Tasmanians to deal with the trauma associated with sexual abuse.

The Budget also continues the additional funding for the legal assistance sector, namely the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania and community legal centres. Members know that this is to make up the shortfall in funding under the final year of the current national partnership agreement.

I was also pleased to see that in the recent Commonwealth budget, the issue of ongoing funding to this sector will be the subject of further discussion between the Commonwealth, the states and territories, as the next agreement is negotiated. We have provided \$1.264 million in the 2019-20 Budget and I am hopeful that those discussions will prove fruitful.

The Budget also includes funding for the additional full-time, having gone from 0.8 FTE magistrate in the north-west, as well as the new magistrate, that we have announced as part of this Budget, to be based in Hobart. It also provides funding to continue three acting judges for the Supreme Court, and also provides funding to both Legal Aid and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to help ensure that they are appropriately resourced to meet the extra demand associated with those judicial resources. The Supreme Court will also receive funding for the appointment of a seventh judge at the expiry of the appointment of the three current acting judges.

Madam Deputy Chair, \$10.5 million has been set aside for these initiatives in the Budget which are critical to address increasing criminal case backlogs in the Supreme and Magistrates courts, together with significant legislative procedural reform that is being undertaken in both courts. I will not go into it in detail because it was examined thoroughly - certainly from my perspective - at a committee in terms of the legislative framework that we are working around to address backlogs.

We also have a very heavy legislative agenda across Justice with a lot of important work underway, with a lot of priorities on priorities - all of them are priorities of mine. I am having to work through matters such as our one-punch laws, our further reforms in relation to persistent family violence offenders, our dangerous criminal declaration reform, our electoral reform, and as I just mentioned, the legislative framework to help address backlogs, as well as to modernise and streamline the processes in both the Supreme and Magistrates courts and reforming our bail laws.

That list is by no means exhaustive. My actual list runs over quite a few pages. A further \$24.5 million has been provided from the Digital Transformation Priority Expenditure Fund over the next four years to enable the Department of Justice to finalise detailed requirements and proceed to the award of a tender for Justice Connect, which is a courts and corrections solution, by early 2020. Justice Connect is a capital program; it will make a significant difference across agencies, modernising and streamlining, creating efficiencies in our justice system.

The \$15 million allocation to upgrade the Burnie Magistrates and Supreme court complex will improve safety and amenity generally as well as improve disability access and ensure the building is fit for purpose. It is aged infrastructure. We also want it to be able to keep operating through the period that it undergoes this transformation, so extensive planning is underway in that regard.

A further funding of \$2.5 million per annum has been provided to meet the increasing costs of victims of crime compensation claims made under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976. We have no control over those claims, nor should we, and as those claims increase we provide that additional funding.

Finally, the Office of the Ombudsman also received additional funding of \$245 000 per annum for two additional staff members to review Right to Information matters referred to the office. This funding will enable the office to undertake reviews of RTI decisions made by the public. The Ombudsman appeared in the other place and said that was a very welcome injection of funds for their purposes.

As the Minister for Corrections I am pleased that the 2019-20 Budget continues our Government's commitment to strengthening the corrections system and implementing a broad program of cultural change. The Budget includes a broad range of funding commitments to respond to the changing and increasing demand on the corrections system. Rather than just provide funding to address some of the existing issues, our Government has a plan for the future strategic prison infrastructure investment that is needed in Tasmania, and indeed across Tasmania.

The funding in this year's Budget builds on recently commissioned projects such as the establishment of the mother and baby unit named after the late Dr Vanessa Goodwin at our Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison. I am sure Dr Goodwin would have been very proud of this lasting legacy honouring her name. I was pleased to update the House that as of 3 June the prison service was anticipating a nine-month old baby boy and an 18-month old baby boy arriving into the unit in the following week. We currently have two pregnant prisoners in custody, one of whom will give birth before her release from prison so that baby will join mother in that unit. The funding initiatives in the Budget will allow the corrections - and I should add that it is important of course family attachment to someone's rehabilitation and reintegration prospects - if there is close family attachment particularly between mother and baby.

The funding initiatives in the Budget in addition to these things will allow the corrections system to respond more flexibly to the change in demand and will further support the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders.

I was very pleased to announce the additional \$150 000 to continue to deliver the pilot program from last year, Chatter Matters, Just Time. That program's work has shown that it is never too late to bring language, literacy relationship and the dignity and empowerment of hope to those who do not have them. Research into desistance from crime and crime prevention shows that hope and connection to family, community and culture are the pillars which support individuals to make self-directed choices for positive prosocial change.

On the additional funding, Rosie Martin who operates the Chatters Matter program, has said and I quote:

The Chatter Matters teams and I are very grateful. We consider the past several months of delivery of Just Time to have been enormously successful. We have seen a consistently high quality of engagement, interpersonal connection, new learnings, reflection and gratitude from participants.

An independent evaluation is underway and there will be much more to report when that has been completed at the end of this year. This is really good work. We could not be happier that it is re-funded.

The focus is on reintegration and education. I was pleased to announce that this would be further supported by the introduction of a new TasTAFE campus at the Risdon Prison complex as part of a three-year memorandum of understanding between TasTAFE and the Department of Justice, and the Deputy Premier is right behind me. I was pleased to report to the committee that the minister for Education and I collaborated closely on this and wanted to increase the education available for our prisoners in our prison system. We know that if they participate in better learning pathways the chance of reducing recidivism is very good indeed as is, of course, the prospect of obtaining employment both while in prison and on release. The transitions to these new arrangements will start next month with the full transition planned for early 2020. There is not much delay there. We are looking forward to some good results.

It was my pleasure as Racing minister to update the Estimates committee on how our Government's strong plan for the sustainable growth is delivering for our industry. This year's Budget invests in Tasmania's racing industry, meaning that investment has increased by more than \$2 million since we came to government. It is allowing the industry to grow while also providing

enhanced integrity services, an increased focus on animal welfare and major improvements to racing infrastructure.

**Ms O'Connor** - Update us on the Brighton horse death.

**Ms ARCHER** - Yes, I will, Ms O'Connor.

I mentioned the two new steward cadetship positions. We had committed funding of \$550 000 over four years in last year's Budget for the Office of Racing Integrity to create those two new positions. One of the cadets had used her training to successfully obtain a full-time stewarding position and so now we have a vacant cadet position. That is a good news story; someone with no previous stewarding experience but with the significant interest in the industry has now obtained full-time employment.

Ms O'Connor referred to the issue she raised while I had the Director of the Office of Racing Integrity with me. I can update the House. I reiterate that under the Australian rules of racing there are reporting requirements in place in relation to the death of horses that are part of the racing industry. The Office of Racing Integrity is currently investigating an allegation made in relation to the non-reporting of a death within the required time frame. I can advise the ongoing investigation by ORI staff has confirmed the carcass was buried and not fed to lions as was alleged by the Leader of the Greens at Estimates.

**Ms O'Connor** - Has ORI actually seen the carcass?

**Ms ARCHER** - That is my advice: they have confirmed it was buried. Additionally, I can advise that no animal welfare issues have been identified in relation to the animal's death. As the ORI investigation into reporting time frames is continuing, it would not be appropriate for me to continue with any further comment. I will seek updates as and when the investigation runs its course.

I wanted to turn to the environment because it is important. I only get 20 minutes. I want to mention the Container Refund Scheme - CRS - because it was a big announcement last week. It was part of our commitment to protect our state's unique natural environment, to provide opportunities to community groups and local businesses and help to maintain our Tasmanian brand and our way of life. The scheme will encourage positive, incentivised recycling and re-use behaviours that will help reach our target of becoming the tidiest state by 2023. The announcement has been widely welcomed. Chairman and Clarence Mayor, Doug Chipman on behalf of Local Government Association of Tasmania - LGAT - said -

It is pleasing to see the state government announcing a container refund scheme for Tasmania.

The establishment of an expert reference group to support the CRS project is an important first step in the process and LGAT looks forward to working closely with the Government as they scope, design and implement the CRS.

The Tasmanian Small Business Council, through its CEO Robert Mallett, said-

The policy for Tasmania to implement a container refund scheme as part of its commitment to protect Tasmania's unique natural environment, provide

opportunity to community and local businesses and help maintain the Tasmanian brand has been welcomed by the Tasmanian Small Business Council.

Work will now commence on a detailed model and draft legislation including consultation with community, businesses and industry. Specialist advice from a number of departments as well as the establishment of an expert reference group will be critical to the scheme's success, which we expect to roll out by 2022.

The reason for implementation of two years is based on other states' experiences. New South Wales set a rather ambitious target of 12 months. We have had discussions with them. They said if they had their time over, they certainly would not set the target of 12 months and that two years is a more realistic prospect for putting in the infrastructure, the framework, all of the groups involved and the framework provider.

We have done our research to date. We will continue to do the required modelling and draft legislation first and foremost to ensure we have a successful scheme. We have the beauty of being able to look to other jurisdictions in that regard. I know many Tasmanians look forward to this scheme. I have also been in contact with industry and businesses. It has been broadly welcomed. They see what is occurring in recycling and waste currently around the world, namely the China National Sword policy, and that it is really important we take these steps.

It is also important to note that we will be releasing a draft Tasmanian waste action plan this month. We have been working closely with local government, industry and other stakeholders and will continue to do so. Certainly the CRS is a crucial component of that. It is developed to be consistent with the National Waste Policy, as it is essential to be compatible across jurisdictions in our nation.

We will soon rollout our new litter bill, which will help with the reporting of litter hotspots and implement the use of offenders under community correction orders to help clean up rubbish on public land. I have also tabled amendments to the Litter Act 2007 to include new categories for the illegal dumping of waste and to increase the penalties for anyone convicted of illegally dumping rubbish.

Our Government recognises that climate change is a serious and urgent challenge. I am committed to the whole-of-government activities and approach outlined under Climate Action 21. Interestingly, the only time Labor appears to mention climate change is when they attempt to criticise the Premier for not mentioning it in his State-of-the-State Address, yet they do not seem to have any plans of their own to deal with the issue. I note the Greens alternative budget does -

**Ms O'Connor** - I would have to agree with that.

**Ms Standen** - That is a load of rot and you know it.

**Ms ARCHER** - The Leader of the Opposition is clearly bereft of ideas. She has come into the Chamber. They are all fired up now.

What is really important is that through Climate Action 21 we will deliver a range of initiatives including rolling out electric vehicle charging station networks, working with farmers to improve their fertiliser and irrigation practices, and supporting Tasmanian businesses and households to improve energy efficiencies and reduce costs.

As I stated at budget Estimates last week, towards the end of that plan we will progress the next phase and go through the usual budget process as in all previous budgets of all governments.

**Estimates of the Attorney-General, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Environment, Minister for the Arts and Minister for Racing agreed to.**

**DIVISIONS 5, 8 AND 9 -**

(Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Minister for Health and Minister for Science and Technology)

**Ms WHITE** - I rise to provide the report back on the Minister for Health's outputs in this examination. As I have for most of my contributions in reports back I note again that, disappointingly, no answers to the questions placed on notice have been provided in time for us to use them in responding to how the Budget went during budget Estimates.

**Ms O'Connor** - Ms White, where is the Minister for Health?

**Ms WHITE** - Where is the Minister for Health? He is not present. I am sure he will not be far away. His office is just across the hall there. It is a hop, skip and a jump. He will be here in a moment and if he is not, we will have to wonder why.

There were a number of issues we examined, as you would appreciate, in the Health portfolio. We examined a number of issues in the budget for Health for next year, which is only \$11 million more than what has been allocated this financial year, at a time when we know there is unprecedented pressure on the health system. They are struggling to provide appropriate care to patients and the minister has only been able to weasel a measly \$11 million more out of the Treasurer - the same Treasurer who expects Health budget cuts will be part of the required \$450 million in savings.

The AMA has made a very clear statement around this, stating they have calculated that the Health budget's share of the cut would be \$14 million. Given that budget only increases by \$11 million next year, a \$14 million cut means that the Health budget goes backward next year. That is alarming and that is one of the reasons we were very sorry to hear the Premier has quarantined the Tourism budget and the Deputy Premier has quarantined the Roads budget but the Health budget has to come up with its share of the \$450 million in savings, despite the fact that people are dying in emergency departments. There has been a 60 per cent increase in adverse events as reported by the Auditor-General, but the Health department and the Health Service have to find savings because the Treasurer has completely blown the budget, squandered the good times and plunged us into \$1.1 billion in debt.

I said before that I would be lenient because I knew the minister was busy. He is a hop, skip and jump across the hall. He is still not in the Chamber and I would have thought he would have a little more decency, given he is only required to be here for a maximum of two hours. Like his colleague before him, the Minister for Housing, who was also absent yesterday when we were examining his output, the Minister for Health is absent today. Anyone would think the Government is in crisis. It sounds as if all they are doing these days is having crisis meetings in the hallways, trying to work out how they are going to avoid losing a minister on the floor of the House. My colleague interjects and says, 'it's either that or they don't care'.

Here he comes, the Minister for Health. Welcome. I was talking about the fact that you have only been able to manage an \$11 million for Health in next year's budget but you do have to find your share of the \$450 million in savings, which are cuts the Treasurer has required because of his train wreck of a budget that plunges the state into \$1.1 billion in debt. This is shameful at a time when we have the Auditor-General reporting an increase in adverse events and increases in ramping. We know what that means for patients who are waiting extraordinarily long lengths of time before they receive adequate care; up to seven days and even longer for patients suffering from mental ill-health.

We spoke with the minister about the cuts. We asked him where they were going to come from, had he explored which services might be impacted and whether staff would be impacted. He says that work has not yet been done but it will need to be done very soon because the Government has required that agencies report back very soon about where those savings will be found.

We were asked by the AMA to raise a number of questions with the minister, which demonstrates again the breakdown in the relationship he has with key stakeholders, the AMA being one and the ANMF being another. Had they a better relationship with the Minister for Health, they could have obtained those answers themselves. Despite the minister being aware of that, and despite those questions being provided in advance of going into Estimates, some of those questions were still required to be put on notice. We still do not have answers to those questions because those answers have not been provided in a timely enough manner for us to consider before coming into this place to examine this output. I remind the House again, that convention is that those answers are supposed to be provided by the last Friday of the Estimates week, which was last week. It is now Wednesday and we still have no information from the Minister for Health in spite of the fact that he had advance notice of those questions.

We spoke about the child and adolescent mental health units and we examined this further in parliament this week. At the time we were asking specific questions and this is where it was exposed that they are not dedicated adolescent mental health units, despite the minister stating in a press release on 30 May -

To be clear - the K Block facility is designed and built as a dedicated Adolescent Mental Health Unit, and the Ward 4K Redevelopment will provide a new 36-bed contemporary facility, which will include Tasmania's first dedicated Adolescent Mental Health Unit.

What we learnt from our conversation, particularly from the input of Dr Aaron Groves, is that two beds will be for children and adolescents with mental ill health; two beds in both the Royal Hobart Hospital and two beds at the Launceston General Hospital, not the entire ward, which is what the minister has led families and children to believe. It may be more or fewer; the minister could not elaborate. He also could not elaborate on when they would be open, despite also saying in the press release on 30 May that -

The construction works on these new facilities will be completed this year, with timing around opening to be determined in consultation with clinicians and local hospital management.

When the minister was asked to provide clarity as to when they would be opened he could only give a financial year, a 12-month window of time in which these beds may be open. That seems extraordinarily unclear when this statement says they are to be completed, 'this year, with timing



around opening to be determined in consultation'. A year is a big window in time. You would think the minister would be able to narrow it down to a quarter of the year but he was unable to do so. He was unable to say how many beds in this unit would be dedicated for young people suffering mental ill-health or when they would open. That was a revelation. He was asked how we can have any faith in anything he says when he cannot provide detail in respect of an issue like that when he has made clear statements in the past about those matters.

We also talked about the overtime occurring at the hospital. It was alarming to learn of the amount of overtime that has been undertaken by nurses and health professionals at all of the state's hospitals. It is not surprising, given we know how stretched they are and the stories we hear from the ANMF in particular on behalf of their members who are those at the front line. It paints a picture of staff who are fatigued every day and, in some cases, working 24 hours straight. That story was shared with us by the ANMF about what is happening in the health system right now. It was a cardiac theatre nurse who was forced to work 24 hours straight to complete emergency cardiac surgery. Emergency cardiac surgery is not a simple procedure and a nurse was working 24 hours straight in order to provide the staffing needed for that procedure to happen. Staff in some specialty areas are reporting working one in two weeks on call and some members of staff are rostered to as many as 150 hours on call per fortnight.

We heard about the increase in the number of people who have made workers compensation claims and that is indicative of the pressure workers in the health system are under. That this Government cannot see that not filling the roster properly is costing them more is beyond belief. The minister recently made a statement that he had learned that, instead of engaging agency nurses, he should engage permanent employees and that would save money for the budget. Give me a break, Chair. We have been suggesting that he look at that as a measure to save money and to support the workforce to provide permanent jobs for people so they can have security of employment and to improve the culture of the health system, which was something the Auditor-General's report identified as being a problem. It is only now that the minister has recognised he can do something about that. This is why we struggle to be convinced that this minister is the right person for the job.

We talked about the number of reviews currently underway in the Health Service, the number of reports that have been commissioned by this minister or the Government to look at what is happening in the Health Service and what they do with that information once they receive it. It has not helped to inform them to provide more funding for health. The RDME consulting report that was handed down in 2017, on the minister's desk, shows there is a \$100 million blackhole in health. That has not been fixed in this Budget. The increase in allocation for health next year is a measly \$11 million. That is not enough to deal with the structural problems that exist across Tasmania's health system.

We see elective surgery waiting lists blowing out by over 3000 people in the last year to more than 9000 people now waiting for elective surgery. There are 31 000 people waiting to see a specialist. They cannot even get in to see a specialist to find out whether they need surgery. This is alarming. Things have become worse since the minister has been in that portfolio and we know that the claim the minister has made that it is a capacity constraint that he is dealing with will not be resolved any time soon because the Royal Hobart Hospital has been further delayed.

This is a minister who delayed the project by a year when he first took on the job. He then revealed in Estimates that it would be delayed further to at least September, possibly the end of the year, and that no patients would be able to transfer into the new building until February and that no

new additional beds would be open until at least the middle of next year. It is 12 months away. It is 12 months before there are any new beds provided in the Royal Hobart Hospital. This is despite the minister saying repeatedly that the Royal Hobart Hospital was due to be completed on time and on budget which meant August this year. This is after the December 2018 time frame he previously claimed had been pushed back and now we have further slippage. What does this mean? Why does this matter?

It means that patients suffer. It means that staff suffer. It has an impact on morale. It has an impact on workers' health. It has an impact on the way that they are able to care for the patients who present.

We talked about ambulance ramping and the pressure that this is placing on ambulance paramedics who do an extraordinary job, and the fact that on too many occasions now you can find nearly all of the ambulances in southern Tasmania ramped at the Royal Hobart Hospital, or stuck at the Launceston General Hospital. This means that communities are without coverage. It means people in regional communities are left in a vulnerable position. I raised this with the minister and he said it would be all right because if there was a triple zero call the ambulance could be released from the ramp to respond. That is not all right because if the ambulance was normally stationed in Nubeena but is sitting on the ramp in Hobart they are not going to be able to respond in a very timely manner. Those communities are vulnerable. They do not have adequate coverage because the ambulances are ramped at the hospital. There has been a 500 per cent increase in ambulances ramped at the Royal Hobart Hospital in three years.

The minister said there is \$5 million to support health demand for Ambulance Tasmania. This does not actually do an awful lot. It has been provided to support existing staff. The minister could not answer whether it would buy a single new truck. He had to take that on notice.

He was not able to confirm whether they would actually get any additional equipment whatsoever. I would have thought that if the minister is committed to delivering on the promise he took to the people of Tasmania to employ more ambulance paramedics that they would actually need vehicles to drive. It makes very little difference if they are employed to sit in a station if they cannot get out of the station to respond to somebody when they call triple zero. He could not answer a simple question around whether he had funded any more trucks in this Budget. That is a question that had to be taken on notice and, as I have said already, we do not have the answers to those questions. We still do not know whether there will be any more trucks purchased by the Government to fund Ambulance Tasmania's response and ensure that communities, particularly regional communities, are not left in a very vulnerable position.

My colleague, Michelle O'Byrne, raised the ongoing problem with respect to women in Tasmania being able to access affordable terminations in the public health system. This is a matter that is unresolved. It remains a problem for women in Tasmania who are not able to access a legal health service in the Tasmanian public hospital system. Again, the minister was unable to give a good explanation as to why that is. I raise that, and I expect my colleague will make a further comment in regard to that.

I wanted to state on the record, my deep concern that the minister has been unable to, not only keep his commitment to provide a service to women by October last year, as he promised to do, but the fact remains that they still cannot access the service in the public hospital system when they should be allowed to. It is a legal health procedure like any other legal health procedure.

We spoke about preventative health measures. Now, the minister has made a very strong and bold statement that the Government spends \$70 million on preventative health each and every year. I asked a question from the community services sector, as to whether the minister could provide a breakdown of how that money is actually spent. He had to take that on notice as well. He could not detail how that \$70 million was spent across government. He confirmed it was not from the health budget alone; it was across a number of agencies, delivering a number of services. He could not provide any detail about what those services are, but he is happy to stand up and say that the Government spends \$70 million a year on preventative health. He just cannot tell anybody what it actually does. Another question on notice that we have no answer to.

We spoke about the affordable establishment positions. This is something that is very alarming and the minister did not seem to be quite across the detail on this one. He is not across the detail on a number of things because he could not provide answers at the time, but this one is alarming. Potentially, it is a movement by stealth of the Government to cut people's jobs. There has been a lot of work done already by his agency; whether he is aware of it or not, I do not know. We have seen correspondence that requires different units within hospitals to look at who is performing what job and whether they need to be performing that job, and how they might consolidate positions or remove positions in order to come in on budget. This is work, I believe, that was underway before the Treasurer informed everybody that the Government had to find \$450 million in cuts across agencies because he has blown the budget.

The affordable establishment position is a very important one for us to keep an eye on, because that means people's jobs. This is a minister who could not clearly define what a frontline worker is, or what a backline worker is. He said that if we check the front line, but he cannot define the front line, and you tell me whether a cleaner is a frontline worker because I would argue they are, particularly in a hospital. They are fundamentally important to the operation of a clean and hygienic hospital. Are they front line or back line, or do you mean people who sit in an office? Maybe that is somebody who is managing the wait list for patients. When there are 9000 people on the elective surgery list, or 31 000 people waiting to see a specialist, maybe those people are not important. That is a backline job, they are not frontline people; I do not know, the minister could not provide a definition, but they are essential and the work that they do is fundamentally important not just for the patients who are waiting, who need to be able to pick the phone up and speak to somebody, but to make sure that the hospital operates efficiently and effectively.

I am alarmed at the way this minister managed Estimates. Again, he was belligerent, he was condescending, he was sanctimonious, but it is what we have come to expect of him. He did not provide clear answers; he did not address direct questions. He would not allow us to put some matters on notice. He offered to come back at the end of the committee stage and provide some of that information. Some of that information was not provided. He avoids scrutiny and it is a shame.

**Time expired.**

[5.39 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Mr Chairman, I will take up from exactly where the Leader of the Opposition was in terms of the way the minister approached Estimates.

The minister does like to ensure that we cannot get answers directly from anyone in the department. It is very difficult to get that process, but he was very quick to simply refuse to answer questions. I do not know how many times we had to ask for this year's operating budgets for the

hospital before the minister finally agreed that he would get that information. Anyone going to *Hansard* would see that we asked time and again for that.

It should not be an unexpected question because it was one of the questions provided by the Australian Medical Association. Stakeholders talk to the Government and the Opposition before Estimates and say these are the kind of things we are interested in you having a look at, but it was a bizarre and unprecedented decision by the AMA to publicly provide a letter of the sorts of questions they needed answers to. The minister had those questions from Saturday. He talked about them in the media in the intervening time. By the time we sat down in Estimates, the minister could not answer any of those questions.

The first question was: tell us what the Budget is? I have been the Minister for Health and I know that budgets can be a moveable feast. The minister knew that question was coming but it took us quite some pages and questions before the minister said that he would get that information for us and quite some time later in the minister's performance that the information was provided. That smacks of a level of arrogance. Perhaps he was offended by the AMA listing the sorts of things they have been unable to get from him and asking us publicly to pursue them. The minister responded in his normal way saying, 'I'm simply not going to reward that kind of behaviour with answers'. It took a substantial amount of questioning for us to get to the point of the minister saying that he would give us the detail on the amounts of money that hospitals were funded.

The reason that it matters is because we know from the multitude of reports that have been done, that the hospital system is chronically under-funded. There is a clear concern when the funding you allocate for future years is less than the operating budget of the year before because no one thinks Health gets cheaper.

Putting aside health inflation, there is an increase in demand. I will point out that the minister cloaks himself that there are too many people coming and that it is all about demand. It is not all about demand; it is also about the way you manage it. The minister could not remember when he got the Auditor-General's report. He had to find that out for us as well. That is a reasonably damning analysis of the minister's performance. From the report it was clear that demand is increasing in Health, internationally and nationally. Demand in Tasmania has not grown far greater than any other jurisdiction and yet our ability to respond has been less than other jurisdictions.

One of the reasons that demand is growing is we have an ageing population. That is hardly a surprise. We have been talking about the ageing population in Tasmania for quite some time. One of the Government's jobs is not to wait and see who turns up on the day in a hospital system. It is to plan for the future. Part of the rebuild of the Royal Hobart Hospital when it was initially designed, recognised that we would have to plan for the future. The minister has not planned enough to be able to deal with the demand that we are currently receiving.

It is not only about deals. It is about the decisions that we make. This minister makes a virtue of the fact that the Auditor-General's report identified - and the Auditor-General's report is a line item - that the minister had changed the THS management structure. He had to. The reason he had to is because the original plan that set it up was flawed. The minister says on one hand, 'Here I was being rewarded by the Auditor-General for my clever decision to change the management structure', yet he conveniently overlooks the fact that it is exactly the structure that he set up. He set up a system that removed local management. He set up a system that removed our CEOs, the directors of nursing, the directors of surgery, and the chief physicians. These are the things that this minister did that have fundamentally contributed to the current situation. One of the great strengths of the

local management role was to be able to respond on a day-by-day basis to the matters that the hospital was dealing with. We have the failure to do the longer-term planning and the failure to provide the capacity to deal with the immediate work that needed to be done. That was really concerning. Even having got the AMA letter, this minister did not prepare for those answers and it took quite some time for us to get there.

I will touch very quickly on the issue of pregnancy terminations. This minister said in his Estimates that it is all fine because low-cost abortions are happening in Tasmania. The reason that we do not have a clinic operating at the moment is because this minister, for his own reasons, does not want to have to pay for the service itself. He constructed a model that would mean that he could facilitate somebody flying in, but he and the state would not support the cost of terminations. He created a model that had to exist outside the hospital system and had to exist somewhere else.

This parliament required that he make some response. We were all here and we all voted. We were all part of the motion where the minister said he would have a service in place. A contract with Hampton Park was entered into. The contract with Hampton Park was supposed to be taking referrals and, in fact, we were told was taking referrals from late last year. Hampton Park is not in operation at St Helens because of minor works that the minister has seen fit not to pursue to ensure that they are done. We are now about to head into July and no services are being offered by Hampton Park, despite this minister entering into an arrangement with them. This minister created a construct where he could say hand on heart, 'I am not paying for abortions in Tasmania'. That is why we are here. This minister does not want those words to be on his conscience. This is fundamentally about the minister's personal views.

If the minister genuinely wanted women to access services, particularly regional women, he would make them accessible in the public system, even as a failsafe for those people for whom getting to Hobart and paying almost \$500 is simply too much. Do you know what happens now? If you find yourself with an unwanted pregnancy and you go to the website, the statement on the Government website says, 'Ring this 1800 number and that will connect you with the service that will provide your termination'. That is not true. You do not need a referral; you just need to dial the 1800 number and everything will be fine. I have dialled the 1800 number. When you dial the 1800 number you get a recorded message sending you off to get a referral. The final line is, 'You will need \$475.'

Chair, you and I both represent areas where there are regional communities. In order to access a medical termination, you have a very short time period. One of the realities is that the bulk of women seeking terminations are not teenagers who have made errors, as everyone would believe. The bulk of women accessing them are women towards the later part of life who have found that they are pregnant and did not know for a whole host of reasons because of changes within their bodies. Those women have to go to their local GP. That may or may not be the appropriate mechanism in a small town. It can be sometimes. Most of the women in regional communities need to access a surgical termination. Then they have to find \$475 to go to Hobart to do it. The minister said that is fine because they can access travel assistance.

In order to access that travel assistance, you have to tell somebody that is what you are doing. In a society where this minister, and people like him, shame people who have terminations, they do not always say that this is why they need a termination. Even if they do say that, the payment is not provided upfront. Because of the timing issue, the women still need to find the money. When this minister sat in Estimates and said, 'It is fine, low-cost terminations are being provided in hospitals in Tasmania,' he was not telling the truth.

The other really important issue that I wished to go to was affordable establishment positions where he plans to sack heaps of Tasmanians.

**Time expired.**

[5.49 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Chair, I will reflect on some of the enlightening conversations I had with the minister in his capacity as the Minister for Health. We have touched on so many of these over the last few days but I cannot walk away from continuing the conversation that started in parliament two weeks ago when the Budget was delivered and continued last week in my questions to the minister about the child and adolescent mental health unit, so-called dedicated unit, and which we have continued conversations about in parliament this week.

What I managed to establish in my questions to the minister and through the minister to Dr Aaron Groves, the Chief Psychiatrist, is that what has been called a dedicated child and adolescent mental health unit by the minister in parliament appears in the budget papers as a 'child and adolescent ward'. It was apparent from the responses of Dr Groves, when reading into the comments he made, that a lot of loose language is being used about that ward. When I asked whether a ward for children and adolescents with mental health issues would always be staffed by medical health clinical specialists at every time of the day or night, every day of the week, Dr Grove's response was -

My understanding is that is the model of care that the Government and I would like to see in place. At the moment, the current model of care was forwarded to me last week and I provided some information to them about the model of care. There are areas where they need to improve on that. However, to give you as much information as I can in answer to the question, the 16-bed adolescent unit is an adolescent inpatient unit. It will include both people who have mental health issues or emotional disturbance and adolescents who do not. Not all 16 beds are for mental health.

Can we finish there, Chair? Dr Aaron Groves is a man who has spent a lot of time working very hard in the area of mental health and should not, in any way, professionally or otherwise, be dragged into what has become a political stunt conducted by the minister in pretending that the 16 beds are dedicated, full-time and available 24-hours a day, seven days a week with clinical specialists at the site as required for children and adolescents in acute mental health distress, period; no-one else.

I am not the person with expertise to say there should be 16 beds for that service. I am saying what the sector, the parents of children in mental health distress, what Coroner McTaggart put forward in her coronial inquest recommendations in 2015, are saying, which is that this needs to be a dedicated unit that does not have other people coming and going, who might be having an appendix out and happen to be under the age of 18, or who might have broken their leg and who happen to be under the age of 18, or who might have had a car crash and be under the age of 18. Those people need support and they need acute care but they should not be in the same place as a child or an adolescent in acute mental health distress. The evidence shows that the best way of supporting those children and adolescents in that situation is to have multi-disciplinary teams in an environment specifically created to be different and does not provide the kind of sterile environment appropriate and required for infections or other issues of young patients who may need a hospital bed.

There are so many reasons why it needs to be dedicated; specifically and exclusively focused on that issue. Since last week's Estimates, the minister is continuing to perpetuate falsehood after falsehood about this ward. It is a ridiculous situation. We need to understand that regardless of whether it is 16 beds or eight beds, the minister continues to perpetuate untruths by saying it will be a dedicated facility for that purpose. It is clearly not true and is an indication of a failure to be honest about basic stuff, which leaks into other areas of management.

I will move to the issue of smoke that people were so afflicted by in the Huon Valley, central Tasmania and the north-west as a result of the bushfires. Poor air quality measurements made for the Huon Valley region, particularly Cygnet, were some of the highest ever recorded in Tasmania and some of the highest in the world. It took a long time for the Health department to come on board and make active public health announcements as opposed to general public health announcements for those residents. My question for the minister was whether a review of the timeliness and appropriateness of communication with residents would be undertaken. There is much discussion about whether people should be encouraged to leave, or what response they should take to protect themselves. It is clear that some review is necessary and should be broader than the internal review. Through the minister, Dr Veitch made no commitment to a review and that is a huge missed opportunity because there is so much learning to be undertaken with residents, Huon Valley Council, the SES and TFS, who were all involved, about how we can do things better next time. I will continue to pursue this issue. People are very concerned about it.

I thank the minister for his responses to my questions during Estimates. They did appear. The department provided those responses and they have been tabled. It is gratifying to see the numbers of SES and TFS volunteers seem to have been going up over the last three years, across all age groups across Tasmania, so that is good news.

In the Police portfolio, in terms of crimes the police are required to administer I would like to draw the minister's attention to his October 2017 press release in which he made a commitment to reviewing the current offence of begging and the imposition in the Police Offences Act 1935. He committed to reporting back to parliament in the first half of 2019. That would be tomorrow, so we look forward to the minister's response to the crime of begging because the Government voted against the Greens begging bill last year. I look forward to it.

**Time expired.**

[5.59 p.m.]

**Dr BROAD** - Mr Chair, I rise to talk about Estimates, especially in the areas of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. I only have 10 minutes so I would like to talk about insurance because insurance is a big issue for firefighters, both career and volunteer, their wages and equipment funding. Hopefully I will have time to talk about police and upgrades to their IT systems and other matters.

In the fire space in Estimates we heard from the minister and members of the fire commission about the cost of firefighters being insured by the Tasmanian Risk Management Fund as opposed to Allianz. Allianz is the private insurer of only fire service people, both professional career firefighters but also volunteer firefighters. The cost of that currently with Allianz was around \$300 000 per year but they pay more than \$300 000 so it is hard to determine how much they are going to be paying because it depends on the number of claims. With each claim comes a ratcheting up effect of that \$300 000.

Interestingly, the TFS, through the minister, informed me that the cost of all the firefighters being covered by the Tasmanian Risk Management Fund was \$1.5 million. So, \$1.5 million in the context of the scale of the Budget and even in the scale of the firefighters' wages bill, is a minuscule amount to ensure that firefighters are appropriately covered by insurance. When firefighters are running into a burning building or fighting a bushfire they should not have to worry about whether they are going to have a corporate player like Allianz treating them in a way that demeans them and makes their life a living hell, as we have seen with Rob Boost. I have spoken about Rob Boost a number of times. The cost of \$1.5 million for them to be covered by the Tasmanian Risk Management Fund is a small price to pay because they would be more appropriately protected and more appropriately treated by the Tasmanian Risk Management Fund than we have seen from their treatment by Allianz.

I raise the issue that firefighters are the only public servants covered by a private provider in Allianz. No-one else is and for that small cost of \$1.5 million, I believe strongly that they should be part of the Tasmanian Risk Management Fund and not covered by Allianz Insurance. Allianz has treated firefighters, like Rob Boost, appallingly and they should be let go and that should happen as soon as possible. It is not just about the career firefighters. It is also about volunteers.

Another issue that I raised was a direct budget line, looking at the employment costs in the Budget for career firefighters. I asked a series of questions about their remuneration. I have here, hot off the press, some of the questions I put on notice. One of the issues was that between 2019-20 and 2020-21 the increase in their employment costs only goes up by \$4000: this is the difference between their wages bill for all the career firefighters between 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years.

In the explanation I have before me that was taken on notice, the difference between the 2018-19 and 2019-20 years, is a movement from \$47 700 000 approximately to about \$50 200 000. That is explained as being a transfer of costs from the fire commission to the department, which is about \$6 million and also employee benefits shifting to supplies and consumables, as this is a more accurate reflection on the expenditure as a so-called fee for service by the department rather than direct employment costs. That is fair enough. You can understand the movement of \$47 700 000 million to \$50 200 000 between those two different years. They have made a good explanation of that.

Their explanation for the movement from 2020-21 to 2021-22, where it moves from \$50 200 013 to \$50 200 017, which is a movement of about \$4 million reflects the wage indexation of 2 per cent. If you get the calculator out and work it out it is close to 2 per cent. That makes sense. However, the difference between the wages bill of \$50 209 000 to \$50 213 000 which is only \$4000 with the year in question, that is not a 2 per cent indexation. Yet the explanation given on notice is that the movement between the 2019-20 and 2020-21 years of \$4000 primarily reflects indexation of 2 per cent. A \$4000 increase in a wages bill of \$50 million is not 2 per cent. In fact, it is 0.008 per cent. I do not understand this answer. It does not make sense.

A \$4000 increase on a \$50 million wages bill is not 2 per cent. It is a minuscule amount. That is change down the back of the couch. This answer, and hopefully the minister is taking note here, does not explain \$4000 on a \$50 million wages bill - it is not 2 per cent, so what does that mean? Are there firefighters in the gun? How are they going to make up those wages? Are they going to be retiring older firefighters to put on new ones as a way of saving money on the wages bill? That is simply not an explanation and I would like an answer on that.



The questions I was putting were based on the numbers in the Budget. Did you hear that, minister - that explanation about the questions on notice? No, not taking any notice, minister. No. I do not get any answers unfortunately, but \$4000 on a \$50 million wages bill is definitely not 2 per cent.

One thing that was confirmed during Estimates was that firefighter trainers were not actually being paid award wages. That was an anomaly or an oversight and now there is a process put in place so that trainers in the firefighting space are actually paid. They are working towards paying them award wages. However, there was no extra money in the Budget for training to cover that shortfall, so that is a bit of an oversight too. Basically, if trainers are going to be paid appropriately and there is no extra money in the Budget, then there is only one thing that can happen and that is either the trainers book fewer hours than they are actually doing, or there is less training. I do not think I get a satisfactory answer on that either.

In the Police space I asked a series of questions about the IT systems. There is funding in the Budget for the first phase, which is called Project Unify. Basically, the police have a whole bunch of databases and systems that they use. Some of them are old green screen systems and they are very difficult to use, and they do not communicate with each other. In fact, the police are still relying on receipt books. In other words, these carbon paper-based systems where if you lose property in Hobart then the only way to track it down is to actually get someone to go look at the receipt book.

The first phase of Project Unify is budgeted, but phases 2 and 3 which take this to the next step and combine the systems and bring it all into line have not been funded in the Budget. There is no commitment in the Budget in the forward Estimates. It seems like that will have to be based on some sort of bid later on down the track.

Largely, this is what was happening in the Police, Fire and Emergency Services space. I do not think I received a number of satisfactory answers, especially in the Police, Fire and Emergency Services space. The police are doing a fantastic job, as are our firefighters. We did hear from the Commissioner of Police when I raised the issue of police, who were under investigation for the internal investigation branch, being taken out of mental health institutions, taken to the police station, interviewed, charged for an offence, taken to court and bailed and then presented again to the mental health facility. I asked questions about that. The Police Commissioner was very definite and answered that that would never happen and had not happened. I have not seen a clarification about that issue. However, there was at least one instance where that did happen.

### **Time expired.**

[6.09 p.m.]

**Ms HADDAD** - I rise to just add a few short comments and thoughts that I have had in the Health output in the Estimates committee, particularly around the \$450 million savings target that the Government has set for itself across the public sector. In Estimates, all ministers were asked how their part of the public sector would contribute to those \$450 million savings. We heard time and time again that they would find those savings internally as best they could, through advertising, consultancies and through natural attrition.

It is not as simple as that. No agency is going to go to zero in the outputs of advertising, consultancies and travel. Natural attrition, sure. People leave the public sector but not every one of them can't be replaced. There are many jobs across the public sector that are essential jobs.

Somebody retires or leave that job through natural attrition, but not every position that becomes vacated through natural attrition can stay vacant. We asked again, what is a frontline worker and which parts of your department are quarantined from cuts. We got the same answer from every single minister, 'I can't comment on that, the agencies will come up with those answers themselves. We will take that on notice, we can't define what is front line and what is back line'. When it comes to Health, it is vital to know what is front line and what is back line because it is the part of our public sector that the public relies on the most in our critical hours of need.

Ultimately, the agencies are not going to be able to find those savings in advertising, travel and consultancies alone. It is going to mean job cuts. That is exactly what it is going to mean. It is what we saw in 2014-15 when there was a \$750 million savings target. That is what we are going to see again this time with a \$450 million savings target. Mark my words, there will be job cuts.

What interested me reading over the Estimates in the Health output, is that new language is creeping in when it comes to talking about how jobs are defined in the public sector. People would be familiar with the idea of an establishment. If you are not, briefly, an establishment list when you are working in the public sector is a list of all the jobs in your unit, in your team, in your department, across the whole public sector that are funded. If you are a manager of a unit of 10 people, as I once was, I had FTE positions funded in that unit and I could fill those positions if someone left because it was a funded position on the establishment list. Budgets are based on funded positions. These budget papers are based on funded positions. That is what an establishment is when you are working in the public sector.

What is creeping in now is new terminology called 'affordable establishment'. What is that? I had not heard of that before, so I asked my colleagues. We talked about it and we asked the minister in Estimates what that term meant. In my view, they are weasel words. 'Affordable establishment' is a coded way of talking about job cuts.

Here is one example. The LGH food services team has been told they need to 'consolidate' nine positions. What does that mean? Sounds like job cuts to me. There are nine FTEs. There are actually 13 people because there are some part-timers. Some of them have been there between three and 13 years. They have positions now, nine FTEs, 13 people who are called the 'unaffordable establishment'. That is not a thing. That is new terminology that is creeping into government-speak right now as a way of disguising what we know this \$450 million savings target is. It is jobs cut across the public sector, in Health, Corrections, Police, Education and in essential services.

Another example, again at the LGH. There are 13 full-time equivalents across the allied health team which need to be 'consolidated'. So, they are not job cuts. No, they are 'consolidated'. That means 'gone' - that is what that means. Consolidated positions are job cuts. Affordable establishment versus unaffordable establishment are job cuts. They are weasel words. It is mealy-mouthed to use the words that the Minister for Health likes to use when describing members of the Opposition.

A savings target across this Budget across Government of \$450 million means just one thing: job cuts.

[6.14 p.m.]

**Mrs RYLAH** - Mr Chairman, I rise to briefly discuss the Estimates hearings undertaken by the Minister for Health, Minister for Police and Fire Emergency Services and Minister for Science and Technology, Mr Ferguson.

As Chair of Estimates Committee B, I thank the minister, staff and other members for appearing. I congratulate the Minister for Health for his outstanding contribution over the many hours invested in this important process over the multiple portfolios, each with a commanding significant responsibility for him in Estimates. It was over nine hours and it was an outstanding presentation.

I turn to the Health portfolio where I commend Mr Ferguson on his leadership and action in tackling head-on the many challenges driven by increasing demand to Tasmania's health system, with yesterday's hospitals and infrastructure. Under Mr Ferguson's watch, we are delivering for Tasmanians in need. We are delivering major catch-up in staffing, infrastructure, in management and in policy

Our Liberal Government is investing heavily into the health system in Tasmania. We have a strong track record. This is evidenced by a significantly greater share of the state Budget invested into the improvement in our statewide health system. The majority Hodgman Liberal Government, through the 2019-20 Budget, is delivering a record spend of \$8.1 billion into the Health Services sector over the next four years. This is a significant increase of \$544 million from last year's Budget, and a staggering \$2.3 billion more than the last Labor-Greens budget. This figure represents nearly 32 per cent of the entire state Budget and equates to the second highest proportion of a state budget of any state in Australia.

During the Estimates hearings, Mr Ferguson outlined how our Government has opened more than 130 new beds in our hospitals this past year and delivered more than 1000 full-time equivalent staff to our health system over the last five years; an incredible track record. These increases and capacity in our health system are complemented by the investments in projects, such as the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, which is the largest health infrastructure project ever undertaken in this state. This project has not been without its challenges but I am pleased that stage 1 of the development is well underway and nearing the final stages of completion. At the same time, in the north of the state, our Budget includes \$15 million for eight new beds at Ward 4K at the Launceston General Hospital, with additional staff employed, an expenditure of \$87 million for this hospital's redevelopment.

In my own electorate of Braddon, I am delighted that more than \$20 million will be spent to staff eight new beds in the North West Regional Hospital and \$2 million to complete the construction of the new ante-natal clinic. Furthermore, nearly \$32 million will be spent to complete the upgrades at the Mersey Community Hospital, which will then receive a further \$4 million for new services and an additional 12 beds as to further flex capacity during the coming winter. The continuation of the Community Rapid Response Service will rollout in the north-west, hoping to take pressure off hospital beds.

In response to the significant demand pressures faced by our ambulance service, we have allocated an extra \$20 million over four years to help meet this demand. The overall ambulance service budget will now double to \$438 million over the next four years, which is over \$200 million more than the 2013-14 Budget, or an 87 per cent increase in just half a decade. I am pleased that an additional funding in this area will see an increase in ambulance coverage in regional areas and will help to continue the downward-trend response-time figures. Only last month, within the Braddon electorate, we saw the north-west achieving the best-ever daily response time of 7.6 minutes, compared to the state average of 12.8 minutes.

In terms of Police, Fire and Emergency Management portfolios, Mr Ferguson advised the Estimates hearing that all sectors continue to provide valuable policing and emergency management services to the wider community through Tasmania Police, Tasmania Fire Service and State Emergency and Forensic Science Service Tasmania. Tasmania Police provide the state with exceptional levels of service. We commend them on their hard work in protecting and serving communities throughout Tasmania.

The Hodgman Liberal Government is continuing to deliver on our commitment to boost frontline police numbers by 125 personnel to help keep Tasmanian communities safe. In our last term, we managed to increase numbers by 113 in the face of devastating cuts imposed by the Labor-Greens government. Owing to this, we were forced to restructure the entire organisation; however, due to our management, we are now pleased to have 1254 FTE police officers, who are serving our state with distinction.

Our Government is committed to investment in the Tasmanian Fire Service. Mr Ferguson advised that we will provide more than \$13 million for aerial appliances, additional medium fire tankers, heavy pumpers and more than \$3 million for the replacement and refurbishment of fire stations.

Acknowledging the devastating bushfires earlier this year, which are estimated to have cost \$64 million in damages, this Government is proud to allocate \$9 million per year to continue our nation-leading strategic fuel reduction program. Prior to the fuel reduction program and the introduction of this initiative by the Liberal Government, statewide relative risk hovered between 87 per cent and 91 per cent. Recently completed bushfire risk analysis shows that statewide relative risk was 82.3 per cent, which is the lowest it has been in 15 years. This analysis shows that without fuel reduction programs the statewide relative risk can quickly re-establish into the 90 per cent range.

The protracted period of bushfires was unfortunate and the Government is eternally grateful to the firefighters and emergency services personnel, volunteers and community organisations who did such an incredible job protecting and supporting communities during this period. I acknowledge the outstanding degree of support given by volunteers to our career emergency services personnel. These personnel are again recognised in the 2019-20 Budget with a \$1.5 million provision over three years to continue the volunteer Tasmanian fire services brigade and state emergency services units to apply for non-essential equipment.

I am proud of the dedication and hard work of Mr Ferguson and of the significant investment the Government is making into the portfolios he has responsibility over. Tasmanians can be assured the Government is investing in our essential services, in particular in the Health portfolio with 32 per cent of our entire budget. We are also investing in our police, fire and emergency services, science, technology and infrastructure our growing state needs to ensure we all benefit from a thriving economy and continuing to enjoy Tasmania's unique way of life. We are delivering and keeping the momentum flowing by delivering surpluses across the forward Estimates while employing more, building more, creating a stronger Tasmania and a better future for all Tasmanians.

[6.22 p.m.]

**Ms BUTLER** - Mr Chairman, I rise to make a contribution to this Estimates output. I will begin by saying that, in August 2018, I put 39 questions on notice to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management and parliament was prorogued in February 2019. I resubmitted those questions on notice, minister, and they have never been answered. We are coming up to nearly

12 months. They were questions on spending within Police, Fire and Emergency Management and they were put forward in the spending scrutiny committee.

There were 39 questions and they were all very important questions that needed to be answered. If the minister is listening, it would be great if you could accept the protocols and the way we do things in government and, when a local member asks another local member who is responsible for a certain portfolio, to answer questions on notice, the polite thing to do is to answer them. I will keep asking for you to participate in being polite and doing what we are meant to do as local members.

I would also like to speak about permanent policing in New Norfolk and the complete disdain shown by the minister toward the people of the valley in his response during the Estimates process. The Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management noted and pledged the following during the 2018 state election campaign, 'A new station is needed to provide a higher-level permanent police presence. If we are re-elected we will deliver it.'. I asked the new police minister whether the Government would deliver that election commitment and the response made it very clear that there is no intention of the Government to deliver that commitment. The minister did try to spin his response. This is what he stated -

We intend to honour all of our commitments. We do not want a police officer stuck behind a desk in the middle of the night to tick the box 'there is a police presence'. The way to do this to ensure the resource is appropriately utilised and provide a cover to the community. The police station upgrade should not be seen as wasteful of police time keeping it open, for example, in the midnight hours when nobody wants to visit there.

The minister has not consulted with the community at all in relation to this broken pledge. The local mayor has confirmed they have not partaken in consultation in relation to a permanent police presence with the minister, the former minister or Tasmania Police. If the minister has consulted the community, he would be aware that a permanent police presence is a presence, a belonging, an awareness and understanding of that community. A high-speed drive from Bridgewater down the local highway to service the whole of the Derwent Valley does not provide permanent presence.

The community has never expected a police officer to sit in a police station at all hours. All they have asked for is a permanent police presence, a style of policing that works in communities like the Derwent Valley. They are local police officers who are connected to the community, who know where the hotspots are, understand the background of even some of the family violence incidents, and can concentrate on preventative strategies, who will pursue the increase in break-ins and antisocial behaviour that has seen local businesses close and older residents fearful to be in their homes at night time. You knew all of this. This is what we took to the election. You copied our policy and then you failed to pursue your commitment.

You have let the community down. I am disappointed that this promise was made and then discarded without any concern. It is very hard to be treated seriously as a local member when other local members like Mr Ferguson, the minister, makes empty promises. No wonder people find it hard to trust politicians. If you pledge to provide an important service to a community, you need to deliver it. It is that simple. It is manners and your word should be your word. Regardless of the minister's backpedal on this election commitment, the people of the valley have not backflipped on their commitment and we will support the community by pursuing permanent policing in the valley.

[6.27 p.m.]

**Ms STANDEN** - Mr Chairman, I rise to make a contribution in relation to feedback on the Minister for Health. I sat at the table for some hours listening to the debate. The matter I wish to raise relates to emergency department admissions, ED presentations, and ambulance services. It is regarding an issue that has emerged that the minister should be well aware of in relation to Risdon Vale, a community within my electorate; the immediate threat of the closure of the Risdon Vale Medical Centre.

I regret to stand in this place to outline the litany of disasters that have happened under this minister's watch. I have noted in this place that former member for Franklin, Lara Giddings' office raised this matter with the minister in October, November and December of 2017. I took up the matter when I was elected to this place. I wrote to the minister on 27 September last year and I followed that up with a petition in this House with 177 signatures, to which I did not receive a response. It was urging the House to encourage the Health minister to work with the service provider of the Risdon Vale Medical Centre to increase the number of GPs available to treat local patients as well as extending the opening hours of the medical centre. This minister knows. He finally responded to me some two months after my letter to say it was a matter for the private sector to work out. The state offers attractive lease agreements, apparently, but, 'ultimately, the ongoing viability will be based on a business decision made by the owners', casting aside the significant health concerns of that community. I move forward to some months into this year when the matter was again brought to my attention when IPN, the private provider of the medical service at Risdon Vale Medical Centre, alerted the community to the fact that they were going to be closing the doors. Together with my colleagues, local members David O'Byrne and Sarah Lovell MLC, we wrote on 2 May outlining our dismay that this had come to pass, highlighting if the centre were to close it would have dire consequences for the health and wellbeing of the community. It would place additional demand on hospital and ambulance services and threaten the viability of other services, including those provided by the Risdon Vale Pharmacy.

We invited the minister to come along to talk with the community. I did not receive a response to that letter of 2 May. We then convened a local community meeting on 28 May, which we invited the minister to attend. He failed to RSVP, let alone turn up. Members of the community expressed their anger and disappointment that he failed to attend the meeting and did not have the courtesy to RSVP. There were a number of questions recorded at the meeting and I outlined them again with members David O'Byrne and Sarah Lovell.

**Mr CHAIRMAN** - Did you raise it within the Estimates committee? Is it a dot point?

**Ms STANDEN** - No, it comes within the emergency department and hospital services. I am coming to that point right now, Mr Chair, because this service is slated for closure at the end of June, as this minister well knows. He has not responded. He did not turn up to that forum. He did not respond to my correspondence of 28 May. Had he turned up he would have heard this from a local service provider regarding ambulance and health services within the community, and I quote:

The closure of the medical centre presents significant issues for our community. We already know that accessing health services for Risdon Vale residents can be challenging. Closure of the medical centre will create even greater difficulties and ultimately lead to poorer health outcomes. We at this service do not believe this is acceptable and continue to work on ways this can be avoided. Regardless of the end result, we will continue to support the community. There are rumours that we have been closing ...

And so she goes on.

They talk about the risk to that particular service and finally say if they end up closing the medical centre they want to know what they can do to continue to support the community but are amazed that the situation has come to pass. I know this service provider has also written to the minister and that this service provider has not received a response either. Please, minister, will you now, in your summing up, explain to the House, to the residents of the Risdon Vale community how it is that this situation has come to pass. If your expressions of interest process has culminated in any interest, what have you done? What will you do to resolve this situation because patients at that centre have already transferred their records to other places -

**Mr CHAIRMAN** - I have to raise it again, Ms Standen. The original idea behind the dot points is to give members something to talk about. It is not a free-ranging debate.

**Ms STANDEN** - Emergency department presentations and community health outcomes will suffer as a result of the minister's outcome -

**Mr CHAIRMAN** - If it was not important enough to raise at the Estimates committee then you should be sticking to the dot points.

**Ms STANDEN** - I am sticking to the dot points. If you like, I will leave it at that but I maintain that this is a serious retrograde step for the people of the Risdon Vale community who do not have the financial means or the transport to readily see their GP. What will they do? They will sit at home, suffer in silence without seeing a primary health care provider.

**Mr CHAIRMAN** - I understand that, Ms Standen, but if you cannot stick to the dot points then your issue could be raised as an important issue. The issue you raise is not linked to a dot point and therefore it can be raised on the adjournment or at any other time that is appropriate. As Chair I have to make sure that the comments that are made are somewhat related to the dot points. This debate is not a free ranging; it is a review of what happened in Estimates.

**Ms STANDEN** - And emergency department presentations is one of those dot points. I will finish on that point, that this will have serious implications for ambulance services and emergency department presentations. This minister ought to be accountable to the people of Risdon Vale to explain what it is he has done.

[6.35 p.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** - Mr Chairman, I would like to say a few things and really it is with a sense of gratitude for the people who have contributed to the Estimates Committee process.

It gets very political; sometimes it gets quite hot. I have to reflect having been part of nine, it could be 10, Estimates processes either in government or in opposition, I would seek to discourage the personal attacks that I am seeing occurring, not only in my portfolios but which I have been listening to earlier today. It does not serve the purpose of what the Estimates process is actually engineered and designed to achieve. It is a real shame.

I feel concern for the direction that party politics is travelling in this House and in Tasmania where it is becoming far away from fact based and policy discussions and even policy comparisons

but down to personal vitriol. It is a real shame and I have been hearing a bit of that through the day, not only through my period now, but earlier.

I invite Tasmanians to have a good look at this Labor Party. They seem determined to not publish policies of their own. They seem determined to not be prepared to stand by election policies they took to the people and they seem unwilling or unable to actually stand by the things that they said they would do and they have a preparedness to say things that are not true and make stuff up. Unfortunately, for example, way too many false assertions have been made and there are too many in the short time we have been looking at the Committee's report on my Estimates, far too many false assertions to respond to. I could if there was time.

I went to significant lengths to answer questions, and I stand by that. There was a range of questions taken on notice. I also went to special efforts to make commitments to answer questions on the same day, which I honoured and where I was not able to do that, I have taken them on notice and I have answered those questions on notice.

To those people who claim otherwise, I encourage you to check in with your committee secretary. It is a shame these things get said. I went to significant efforts to honestly and factually respond to fact-based questions. Questions that were seeking a fact-based response have been answered.

There were obviously questions on policy but if people are fair-dinkum about the integrity of this process and they might have some concerns about some of the things that have been said, particularly by members of the Labor Party. I invite them to check out *Hansard* on the parliament's website and have a good gander at the questions the Labor Party opened up with. Very political, very personal and very far away from the Budget.

I also say that the Opposition was very poorly prepared. The Greens are the real opposition as far as I am concerned and are the only ones who actually bothered to do an alternative budget and turn up to budget Estimates with any kind of preparation of their own. That is not an attempt to flatter the Greens, but it is worth saying that the official opposition is not serving the people of Tasmania particularly well at all.

I cannot speak for other ministers, only for myself, but in terms of the output groups, I have always maintained it is entirely for the committee to decide how to progress through the various output groups in the time provided.

I was with the Estimates committee for nine-and-half hours. That was predetermined by this House and within that time, it is entirely up to the committee to decide how long we spend on overview, when we go to outputs and in what order, and how quickly we progress through those outputs. I placed myself in the hands of the committee, as I do every year.

The only qualifier to that is, if you want expert advice and the subject experts and specialists, I maintain a view that we do that during the relevant output and that is to respect the process. If the Labor Party is not able to respect the process, then it again shows their lack of preparedness.

I will say a big thank you to the departmental officials from the departments of Health; Police, Fire and Emergency Management; and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, which supported me throughout the Estimates day. They put in an enormous amount of work, sit at the table and I saw the undignified conduct of some members who chose to try to directly scrutinise the public



servants, which is not what this is about. I am grateful to them for truthfully and factually answering questions including the questions that members opposite have claimed today were not answered or were avoided.

**Ms Butler** - I am waiting for 39.

**Mr FERGUSON** - The member who interjects is wide of the mark because she is not even talking about Estimates questions.

**CHAIR** - Order. Ms Butler, I can ask you to leave. You cannot interject at any time, particularly when you are not in your own chair.

**Mr FERGUSON** - The Budget is delivering on our commitment. I will address some points in Police, Fire and Emergency Management. The Budget is delivering on our commitment to boost frontline police numbers to help keep Tasmanian communities safer. During this term of Government, we have committed to recruit a further 125 police officers. This process has already begun, which is great, with graduations in December last year and April this year, increasing police numbers by a further 21 officers to 1254 full-time equivalents. This year's Budget maintains that momentum with ongoing funding for more police recruitment and that is great.

The Government also recognises the importance of flood mitigation and community fire safety, which is why we are funding upgrades for equipment, infrastructure and strategic fuel reduction burns. Throughout the summer, our firefighters, emergency service personnel, volunteers and community organisations did an outstanding job protecting and supporting communities in the face of the largest fire event in our state since 1967. Our nation-leading, strategic risk-based fuel reduction program is all about lowering the risk before we get to future fire seasons. It is a whole-of-Government approach and we will maintain the current momentum with funding of \$9 million per year, which has been widely applauded internally and externally. Our state is a great place to live and that is why we need to continue the effort.

The Budget is also investing for growth with \$10 million for the construction of police stations at New Norfolk and Longford, which is really important and the Government is honouring our commitments here, by the letter of what we said as well as the spirit of that. The Government looks to police command to make the right strategic decisions about where to place commissioned officers. That is how the system works and if members would like to get to the bottom of that I invite them to take another look at the commitments the Government has been making. When I saw Ms Butler as a new member here, she openly questioned in this House whether some of that money might have been wasted on that new facility at New Norfolk, which I found rather breathtaking, but we are progressing that and I was able to share some of those updates with the Estimates committee.

The \$12 million investment in a new emergency services hub at Sorell will start this year with the planning phase and acquisition of land for this hub. There is a further \$6 million to continue upgrade of police housing statewide. Since the election, we have been working to ensure Tasmania Police have the tools and laws they need to crack down on crime. We have had a hell of a frustration from the Labor Party, who frustrated all of our initiatives to deal with outlaw motorcycle gangs. However, we managed to pass legislation regarding colours and consorting as well as supporting legislation, which did receive the support of the Labor Party, for the roll-out of body worn cameras to frontline officers. I can advise that over 260 body worn cameras have now been deployed to officers with more to come as it progressively continues. We are keeping our police safer and

adding to the evidence base and the initial feedback is that it is reducing complaints against police and it is a nice curb on bad behaviour.

The Hodgman Liberal Government will be making no apology for being tough on crime and for backing our police as they protect our communities and keep our state safe. The Government is investing in the budget for further growth with \$13 million for new medium tankers, heavy pumpers and aerial appliances as part of the replacement program and a total of \$3.3 million for the replacement and refurbishment of fire stations. Our local government authorities we talked about in the committee will be receiving emergency management planning and education support with \$1.5 million to allow the State Emergency Service to employ regional emergency management planning and development officers. This is all about improving that interface between our state authorities and local government, who are at the grass roots.

In recognition of our amazing volunteers, an injection of \$2 million over four years began last budget and has continued. That has been provided to the volunteer Tasmania Fire Service brigades and SES units to apply for non-essential equipment, training, recruitment and community engagement activities we feel they are best-placed to tell us they need and we are supporting that.

Tasmania is well served by a strong emergency service contingent that is well trained in preparedness, response and recovery, and our Government is proud to acknowledge and support both our career and volunteer emergency responders through our support in the 2018-19 Budget. I took a question on notice in the Estimates committee around our volunteer workforce for fire and -

**Dr Woodruff** - I mentioned that. I said it is encouraging and gratifying to see they are trending in the right direction.

**Mr FERGUSON** - I agree, it is, and that is something that should bring confidence and heart to us as politicians to know that the endorsement and the encouragement of our volunteers, the engagement with the local communities is working. More people are volunteering at different age groups and if you look at the age profile we would be quite encouraged to see nice strong cohorts of younger and older people. It is a really good story and we want to continue that.

**Dr Woodruff** - It is why the Government should have taken a leaf out of the Greens' alternative budget and put serious investment into SES and TFS volunteers into the future part of the forward Estimates. You have discontinued that money in the fourth year and that is a shame.

**Mr FERGUSON** - We have created, for the first time ever, a new fund and it is a \$2 million fund. Far from being discontinued, it is being retained for that purpose.

I would like to turn to the begging review. I have previously given a commitment to update the House and I wish to do that now. The Government does not want a Tasmania where people need to beg in the first place. I will not reflect on the previous debate but, to state the obvious, we did have a debate on a bill regarding this issue. While we were not opposed to the good intentions of the bill, we made it clear in the debate that we respect advice from Tasmania Police that, while rarely used, the current offence is broader than begging and includes imposition, which are instances that involve harassment or unwelcome demands, even following people. This is considered an important provision that allows police to move people on when they feel there is a need to do so, including for public safety.

On that basis, I tasked the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management to undertake a review of the current offence of begging currently contained within the Police Offences Act 1935. The advice from the department is nearing completion and I expect this work to be complete by 30 June, noting that parliament will not be in session at that time. To further demonstrate our bona fides, I will be writing to Ms O'Connor and any other member who asks me to provide that report out of session so the transparency and intention are demonstrated.

**Dr Woodruff** - Will you bring on an amendment to the legislation in the spring session?

**Mr FERGUSON** - I will outline that when I write to you.

The Budget is delivering on our commitment in science and technology. Time will not permit me to go into significant detail but I appreciated the engagement with the committee on that. It was a pretty friendly part of my day. There is a lot of support for our efforts around that, including the support we are directly providing for a broader scope of activities in STEMM and in the portfolio with the \$360 000 I outlined. That is all about building enhanced STEMM engagement, career paths and capability, building our science and technology profile and brand, increasing knowledge awareness and foresight of future industry trends and addressing critical science and technology infrastructure investment priorities. There is more to say on that as it unfolds but it is great to see that allocation, including at a time where the budget is quite tight because of the decline in revenues.

In the Health portfolio we have a lot of political talk around this from members opposite, but this year sees the strongest investment in Health that we have ever seen, \$8.1 billion over the next four years. From my memory that is about \$2.3 billion more over those four years than the last Labor-Greens budget. A huge increase. That does not mean that we are not struggling to meet demand, particularly through emergency departments. We are being very clear that Health remains a top priority for the Government. That increased Health spending is there, but we need to be very mindful, and I am, about ensuring that we use that funding to get the best possible outcomes.

We are getting on with building the facilities that we need to expand our capacity in each of our regions. Critically, this means redeveloping the Royal Hobart Hospital and getting stage 1 finished. It has been talked about for far too long, but this Government inherited a basket-case situation where the redevelopment stage 1 could not have gone ahead. We did put it on pause and we did that to save the project. We laid the first brick and we will lay the last brick.

You might be surprised when I pose this question: how many questions did Labor ask me about the Royal redevelopment? I will tell you the answer; zero, not even one. That is interesting and it says an awful lot. There has never been less interest by the Labor Party in the six hours allocated. It was not a priority for them.

Importantly, as well our record of extra funding does stand in stark contrast with Labor's years of cuts. We are going to continue to rebuild and improve our service capability. I take this chance to point out that in the past five years the Government has employed an additional 1000 FTEs in Health. We have increased funding by the \$2.3 billion over the four-year cycle, opened more than 130 new beds and a lot more to come as we open that physical fabric of buildings that allows us to open more beds. None of us can wait for that to happen. We are all earnest and keen for that to occur. Those who suggest that there are other simple solutions are obviously dreaming. The task in Health is actually a challenging and complex one. It involves strong relationships, commitment to the task and a focus on patients not the politics. That is what we will continue to always do.

The fact is demand is increasing. If anybody would like to look over the border you will see that New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia are all struggling. Some of the themes are very similar. It is because of increasing demand. In our state, the biggest obstacle that we hit is that physical capacity constraint that we are coming to a conclusion of as we build better and larger facilities in each region.

Over the next five years we will finish the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment stage 1 and stage 2, the LGH and the Mersey redevelopments. We will open nearly 300 more hospital beds, recruit significantly more staff to operate those beds and we will open new acute mental health facilities for adolescents. I am proud of what the Government is doing here.

To any Tasmanian family who has heard any false claim by the Labor Party or others that the Government has reneged on that commitment, I want to assure them to not believe those lies. It is not true. The Government is honouring that. The only question that remains unanswered is what is the exact bed mix and what is the exact model of care, which is advice that the Government is currently seeking from the Chief Psychiatrist.

I can assure members here, who are all pretty keen on getting the best outcomes for our teenagers, our adolescents, I provide those members with this assurance: you will be proud of what the Government delivers here. It will be consulted, it will be fully staffed and it will be about delivering on the needs for adolescents for their mental health, for their physical health and for their surgical health needs. We will continue to do that hard work. I look forward to being able to provide further answers when that clinical work has been done.

I appreciate that people would like it done now. We are just going through the best possible way to get the right advice to make the right decisions, knowing in the first place at least that the funding is in the Budget regardless of what the bed mix and the models of care will be.

**Dr Woodruff** - Be assured that we will follow every step, every heartbeat of that process.

**Mr FERGUSON** - I have no doubt and I would expect that, but I will not stand by and allow false claims to be perpetuated. I have been contacted by families in some distress asking, 'What happened to that mental health unit? I am hearing that it is not happening'. We have had to provide them with those same reassurances.

We will continue to work hard to improve our health system. We will never stop listening to what our frontline staff and health stakeholders are telling us. We are getting on with the job.

**Time expired.**

**Estimates of the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Minister for Health and Minister for Science and Technology agreed to.**

**DIVISIONS 3 AND 11 -**

(Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries and Minister for Infrastructure)

[6.56 p.m.]

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Mr Chairman, I rise to provide a response on behalf of my shadow portfolio areas with the minister in terms of infrastructure.

It was a most frustrating session trying to get answers and an understanding of the strategy that the Government is implementing in infrastructure. It was a key narrative point when this Budget was announced; that this was the infrastructure Budget. This was the justification for pushing Tasmania into over \$1 billion of net debt. We gave multiple times to respond yet the minister could not identify one new infrastructure project, one project that was not already announced or funded or contemplated in previous budgets to justify moving into over \$1 billion of net debt.

Twelve months ago, we were heading into 'a golden age'. There were surpluses and we were net debt free as far as the eye could see. Well, that was what we were told. Yet 12 months later with no new major infrastructure projects announced or funded beyond what had already been contemplated, it is the infrastructure Budget that has driven us into \$1 billion of net debt.

It is not surprising that the minister could not identify any new projects because the much-lauded 30-year infrastructure strategy of this Government, which has been long promised again failed to appear. This is a strategy that was committed to be released prior to Christmas of last year. That deadline was not met. It was then pushed out to the end of the first quarter of this year, the end of March, a couple of months ago. Again, that deadline was not met and there was some loose language about 'It's coming. It is on the way.'

We expected it to be announced as a key part of the state Budget. Again we had a failure by this Government to deliver on a 30-year infrastructure strategy and we understand it will be later in the year. I think it is a Mr Snuffleupagus - you wait until you see it to make sure it exists.

It is not surprising. You could not identify any new infrastructure projects. A lot of the projects have been in train for a number of years prior to this Government coming into power in 2014. Essentially, it is business as usual. A couple of projects bob up on the fringes. When you are fortunate enough to get some federal government funding for some of those projects, they slot into the forward construction program, particularly around road and rail infrastructure.

It is no surprise that there is a lack of a 30-year infrastructure strategy because one of the first acts of the incoming Government in 2014 was to abolish the Infrastructure Advisory Council. This was an industry-led Infrastructure Advisory Council that we established that had all the key people around the table. The key industry groups, the key utilities in Hydro, in TasNetworks, in TasWater, and TasIrrigation were all at the table talking about what the pipeline of work looks like for the state. The body of work that would have come out of that would have been the 30-year infrastructure strategy. The work that group was doing was fantastic, placing the Government at a juncture point where they could see the lay of the land in infrastructure required not only by various communities - capital city, rural and regional - but also those entities such as Hydro, TasNetworks and Tasmanian Irrigation.

It would have provided a platform to really nail that 30-year infrastructure strategy, but politics was played. These people around the table were apolitical, they were representing their organisations and doing important work. Then we saw the politics of this Government come into play that anything to do with the previous government had to be wiped off the face of the earth.

You had good people - and I still talk to them about the letter they received from the incoming minister, Rene Hidding, basically saying 'thanks for your work, ta-ta, down the road'. No acknowledgement of the significant work. The chair of that group, an eminent Australian, Philip Clark AM, a senior partner at JP Morgan and appointed by governments of both colour in federal roles and infrastructure, was not even given the dignity of receiving a phone call. Essentially, he

got a letter basically saying it has all gone. All the work that group was doing, the important planning and pipeline work, was essentially junked by this Government.

So, it is no surprise that five years, heading into six years later, they cannot produce a 30-year infrastructure strategy. They replaced an industry-led, capable group that was resourced, had all the key players around the table, with a bureaucrat in Mr Garcia with a couple of staff members. No wonder they cannot get the work out the door and produce on the commitments of the Government. You are not taking it seriously and politics won out over what was in the best interests of the state.

Those people around the table were not Labor-aligned, they were not necessarily attached to our government. They were people representing their industries and their entities and it is important that you have that joined-up conversation about the need.

The defence of this government around the 30-year infrastructure strategy is that it is complex. Surprise? It is complex work and that is why we established an Infrastructure Advisory Council. That is why five years, nearly six years down the track, despite promise after promise, we see nothing. We see a pipeline of work which essentially is a check-list of all the stuff that is out in the public domain. That is not a strategy. That is just listing projects that have been announced by either government entities, GBEs or the private sector. That is not a strategy. It is a list of projects you are trying to take credit for.

One of those projects was MONA, something that you trashed during the federal election. You threw MONA under the bus, yet you are claiming it as a big part of your pipeline project - appalling stuff by this Government, valuing politics over the best interests of the state.

Working through our debate, it was very clear that on a whole range of projects, we raised some concerns, including the ferries. I made a bit of a dad joke but I said that this Government has no 'ferry' idea because every time you look at ferries, there is a problem. I am not sure what this Government has against ferries. The TT-Line, a big investment, close to \$700 million, the biggest infrastructure investment in the state's history is working off the good work of the Bacon/Lennon government and our investment in the two *Spirits* in the early 2000s. This was groundbreaking Labor policy and in government we were working with the TT-Line on the replacement of the two vessels. The Government has announced it with the good work and the good leadership of the TT-Line and the Spirit of Tasmania company, a little under \$700 million investment. A major investment and an increased capacity, not only for tourism but for freight, particularly time-sensitive freight.

As an island state, to have the ability, 365 days and nights of the year, to have something where you can pick it or get it off the production line in the morning, get it up to Devonport in the afternoon and the next morning you are in the Melbourne hub market - one of the biggest hub markets in the Southern Hemisphere - where you can tranship your time-sensitive freight to the markets either by air, rail, road or by sea, dependent on the product. It is an amazing service. This investment, this increase in capacity is crucially important. It is what the freight industry and the tourism industry have been calling for for many years. We support the investment.

In February we found there were some concerns, not from the minister, not from TT-Line themselves; we heard there was a real issue with the shipyard, FSG. We heard there were major issues in the financing and resources behind that shipyard which led to a significant delay for Irish Ferries. We raised that back in February and we were accused by this Government of being

relentlessly negative and scaremongering. We did not hear about it from you. You did not give us the opportunity to be briefed at the time. We heard of it via the media. On behalf of the Tasmanian people, it is not good enough.

This is close to a \$700 million investment of the state's money. People need to be briefed. If they find out about it by surprise they have every right to be grumpy with it. We were grumpy that we found this out via the media, not via the minister or TT-Line. We were accused and we were assured everything was okay. No money has exchanged hands, although the resources deployed by TT-Line to work with that shipyard to get that design and get those vessels in order will be significant so we know there is money at risk.

A week before Estimates we find out via European media that there is more trouble at the shipyard. Senior engineers are leaving the shipyard and again there are delays to the build that they had committed to for other countries, other companies and other freight and ferry routes in the Northern Hemisphere, particularly around Europe. We did not hear this from the minister. We did not hear this from TT-Line themselves. We heard it through the media.

We have every right to feel grumpy about this, to say, 'minister, we warned you last time in February, that this was a serious concern' but no, it is just the Opposition causing trouble. We are reading the media reports out of Europe. Then in the days after Estimates, conveniently for the Government, we find out that the head of the team and the committee designed to deliver the project of the two new vessels has resigned. We did not find this out from the minister. We did not find this out from the Spirit of Tasmania. We found it out through scuttlebutt and leaks and the media. It is outrageous. We deserve to be treated with some respect, as do the people of Tasmania. This is not just a run-of-the-mill investment. This is the state's biggest investment in infrastructure and it is a key component of the freight and tourism strategy.

Then we find out on the weekend that there is a problem, and again the response from the Government at Estimates is, 'Stop causing trouble; enough of the relentless negativity; there is nothing to see here'. We have received no formal briefing that there is a problem. That indicates they may have had some informal briefings.

Then we found out during the Estimates with Treasurer, Mr Gutwein, that he acknowledges that the TT-Line is working through the issues. Yet the Infrastructure minister says no, we have not been formally briefed there is a problem. We fully expect them to be delivered on time in 2021, which is an election commitment. You went to the election on it. Then we find out when you look at the budget papers, the dividend policy you have lumbered the TT-Line with; for the first time in the state's history you have changed the dividend policy from the one-off grabs that you were pretending to say, we are trying to protect that money so we make our Government books look good. We are aligning TT-Line with other GBEs. It is not just about funding the new vessels. Now you get your blood out of a stone from the TT-Line, which could potentially undermine its ability to deliver on both the tourism and freight issues we have been working on.

We know the boats are to be delivered in 2021 yet when you look at the budget papers the \$157 million which you will be dragging out of it is scheduled to be paid back to the TT-Line in 2022-23, up to two years after the vessels are allegedly supposed to be delivered. It does not add up.

Then we find out on the weekend where the Treasurer in a doorstep accuses us again of scaremongering and relentless negativity, is that TT-Line have a mercy dash to Europe to meet with

the shipyard, FSG, to see what is going on. Again, we do not find that out in a Government announcement. We find that out because we put out a press release saying the Government needs to tell people.

I heard the recording of it. The Treasurer said we have received no formal advice, there is nothing I can add, although I do know that TT-Line executives are going to Europe to meet with the shipyard. It is disgraceful. It is appalling. In February, we asked what was going on and the Government's answer was that there was nothing to see. The same answer was given during Estimates when it was apparent there were more problems. When the head of the committee left, now there is a mercy dash. You have to do better, minister. You cannot rely on media leaks and people raising issues for you to come clean with the Tasmanian community. If there is a delay, tell us. We know there are delays with major projects but we expect you to inform the House.

Moving on to the cross-Derwent ferry; this is a remarkable turn of events. All we see in the Budget is \$2 million, \$500 000 a year over the forward Estimates. You have tasked Metro with coming up with a seven-day regular service, day-in day-out, so the Metro bus service has employed a Queensland consultant to tell them that, on the budget that you have allocated, they might as well put your money into buses. Goodness me, what an absolute waste of money that is. Then the minister says, 'No, we are really committed to this. It will be the subject of a further budget bid'. The Budget is already heading toward \$1 billion in debt. All of a sudden, the minister sits at the table and says, 'No, no, I am committed to this, we are going to do it, we are going to fund it'. The Budget is deteriorating, minister, it is not improving. You say that you are committed to this service but you do not fund it, you do not have a strategy to deliver it and you have the bus company giving money to a Queensland consultant to recommend more buses. It is embarrassing. If you are going to do something like that, do it properly.

You could not answer questions of infrastructure at Kangaroo Point. You could not answer questions about infrastructure on this side of the river. Again, you are ignoring recommendations from people who run ferries such as Mr Robert Clifford, a very well-regarded businessman in Tasmania who made his money -

**Ms O'Connor** - How do you know the minister is ignoring those recommendations?

**Mr O'BYRNE** - He said he is committed to a Bellerive to Hobart service, whereas Mr Clifford has said that will not work. We will ignore that.

Then we move to the Bruny Island ferry. What a fiasco that has turned out to be. I raised the issue about the request for a proposal in Estimates. You miscalculated the distance. You underestimated the distance between Kettering and Roberts Point, something as basic as that. I do not necessarily blame SeaLink. They have been awarded the tender on the tender they put forward. I blame the Government for awarding them the tender because they have undercooked it. There will be less capacity. You have undercooked the Bruny Island ferry. You will reduce capacity. You will make it harder for people to go to the island. You have impacted businesses already. I asked you, minister, if you had any businesses telling you they had lost money. On the weekend, Rob Pennicott said, 'I've lost money because of the management of the ferry'. When the new ferries come on-line they will reduce capacity regardless of how quick they are because it is a peak service. You need to have capacity at those peak times.

We also spoke about the West Coast Wilderness Railway. We support the \$16 million investment but last year, we asked why you haven't you put anything in the forward Estimates for



the West Coast Wilderness Railway. We allocated virtually the amount of money you have allocated over the forward Estimates. The answer from the minister last year was that you thought it was fine. Here we are, surprise, surprise, having to put more money in. We do not knock it back but we told you that is what you had to do last time.

There are several issues regarding the capacity of the Government to deal with Hobart congestion, a lack of support for public transport and the range of strategies in the public domain and well-led by the RACT. The RACT vision is leading you and they are very disappointed with the lack of investment. The City Deal was a shocker, with no real money to deal with the challenges of Hobart road congestion. There is no strategy to resolve the issues in the short-term. All we are hearing are reports and vague promises around infrastructure with no detail whatsoever. We think that is very much under-done, including the fifth lane on the Southern Outlet. The Hobart City Deal with the money for the rail but we do not know how that \$25 million is supposed to be spent: it would be good to hear the minister respond to that.

Regarding the Bridgewater bridge, you have moved no further since we left government. When we were in government we had allocated money and we had procured the land for the bridge on the Bridgewater and the western shore. Since that time, since we purchased and allocated the land for the project, all that has been done is a business case. It took five years to do a business case and the federal government at the time was ahead of you before you finalised that business case and funded the plan. The federal government pulled you out of a massive hole but no work has been done since 2014.

### **Time expired.**

[7.16 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Mr Deputy Chairman, I rise to make a range of comments for this Estimates committee. I asked some questions on behalf of Ms O'Connor who holds our shadow portfolio in education, skills and training, as well as questions on defence industries and advanced manufacturing, and some issues relating to infrastructure.

It is surprising not to have heard from the Labor Opposition member with responsibility for education. To have had 10 minutes of talking only about infrastructure seems a little disappointing and lopsided given the gravity of issues facing education and its pre-eminence in Tasmania and where we are tracking for the future and where we are investing in the children of the future. I spent a deal of time talking to the minister about the abiding concern the Greens have that this Government, in its hell-bent desire to push all high schools to offer years 7 to 12, is ignoring the real risk of losing the outstanding quality of education provided in the eight colleges in Tasmania.

There is a truly outstanding range of depth and rich variety of courses young adults can choose from in years 11 and 12. That can only be sustained with the same and increasing level of resources currently going to those colleges. There is a finite pool of resources in the education budget. With the suck of resourcing going into moving high schools to years 11 and 12, there is the real likelihood that it will damage the quality of education provided at some of our best and most amazing publicly-funded colleges, which would be to the detriment of the students there. The continuing issue we have with this minister and this Government is the defence of the idea they continue to perpetrate, that there is not a one size fits all approach to how this is being rolled out. It is not true. I pressed the minister on a number of questions to speak specifically to the case of Taroona High School, which is a fantastic example of where it is appropriate not to force a once size fits all model onto a school that is already massively over capacity. It has massively outgrown its footprint and

is right next to two extraordinary colleges - Elizabeth College and Hobart College - that are literally almost up the hill or in the next suburb.

I can see no credible argument to forcing a school which is over-capacity, bursting at the seams in buildings, to add yet more buildings, yet more teachers and yet more students to that site when there are two brilliant sites elsewhere. The minister refuses to grapple with this issue. Clearly there is a very important and real argument to take many regional schools to year 12. Clearly that is reaping some benefits to some schools in some areas, but to have a blinkered, one-size-fits-all approach is to do a grave injustice, not just to the children who will be missing out on the quality education they could look forward to, but also to us as a state. Why would we want to jeopardise that when we are doing so well, just to smear so thinly a pool of resources which should increase but instead under this Liberal Government is doing anything but increasing.

I ask the minister as we ask in most budgets: Where is this efficiency dividend coming from that the Treasurer will be exacting? Where are the teachers? Where is the backroom staff? Where are the not-frontline people in the Education department where the 0.75 per cent dividend cuts are going to come from? Where are those people? I cannot really imagine; I have not seen one in the Education department. I just have not seen one. Where are those people? Where is the so-called flab - the efficiency? The Treasurer is demanding his pound of flesh from every department in government as the way of trimming the Budget. It is a poor way to balance the books.

I mention the questions I asked around the Kangaroo Bay hotel. Evidence has come to light and has been confirmed that TasTAFE will not be considering or undertaking hospitality training at that site. It will not undertake hospitality training for the development by the Chinese petrochemical company that is still planned for that site. It is utterly controversial in the community and deeply conflicted because of its secrecy in promoting that development because of opacity of the Office of Coordinator-General, who made a number of secretive trips to China. He did not reveal to Tasmanian taxpayers who he was meeting, what the substance of those meetings were, nor exactly for what reason we are trying to court a Chinese petrochemical company to come and take some of the best foreshore land on the eastern shore -

**Ms O'Connor** - Public land.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Yes, public land. That is right. Thanks, Ms O'Connor. Why are we trying to do that? Why did we put \$200 000 into last year's TasTAFE budget just, as I found out through questioning, for them to determine that they could not provide a masters level course and therefore they are not going to be involved. An amount of \$200 000 of taxpayers' money was given to TasTAFE to work out something they should have been able to do just by reading their list of the sorts of courses they provide. It is pretty clear it was just spin from the Premier's media unit from 2014 onwards, continual spin coming out in press releases, every six months or so, to garner the support for Shandong Chambroad to come to Tasmania to take some of this prime foreshore. That is a scam, and that money should be returned to TAFE and recouped from the developer.

The rollercoaster of responses from this minister was very interesting. It was very gratifying to hear about the Grove straight, the candid recognition from Mr Gregory, who admitted that there was an error and they were looking at options to resolve the road narrowing that occurred as a result of the work with Willie Smith's Apple Cider turning lane and the high risk created for bike riders now that the road has changed. We welcome that candid response. We look forward to the error, which has created a risk, being rectified. That work has been committed to be undertaken within the next month, and we look forward to that.

Finally, given the time I have, I have to say one of the most concerning issues for parents in the education system is the brainwashing their children have been subjected to in a number of places around the state by faith-based organisations that have not declared themselves properly to parents. Teen Challenge has gone into schools and provided courses that students are obliged to sit in on. Their parents have been told that Teen Challenge is there, but they have not, it seems, from the questions I asked, been properly advised that it is a faith-based organisation and another option will be provided to their children if they do not wish to be involved.

**Time expired.**

[7.26 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Mr Deputy Chair, I am more than happy to pick up the Teen Challenge issue before I go to the other matters because the department has said it now tells parents which organisations are coming into schools. However, it is not clear from its name what type of organisation Teen Challenge is. I sat in on my high school's parents and friends meeting, which is the only reason I knew Teen Challenge was coming in. At that meeting we all raised concerns with the school and they brought in someone who actually - I don't know - had training in skills and qualifications in that area.

The minister has given us a letter that says Teen Challenge is fine. He has written to me saying they are fine. Minister, quite seriously this group proselytises in schools and that is not okay. We have previously raised this issue, but when they go onto their biblical prophets website and say a particular program of weightlifting at a Launceston school has 'yielded fruit for the church', your response is to say, 'We are going to make sure they don't say that any more'. Minister, it is not that I do not want them to say that any more - what I want is that they do not go into schools to proselytise and recruit. I do not want vulnerable children being treated in this way.

I commend you for your work with the Respectful Relationships Program, but that is undermined by this decision to allow these organisations in schools. You need to do a proper audit and provide a proper level of advice to schools saying, 'These are groups that are going to come to your schools - these ones are fantastic, we have completely researched them and they are credible, trained, and without any kind of reflection, we think they are great; these ones here we think are okay, but these ones simply do not make the grade.' It is not okay to say it is a school's decision because schools are under the pump. If someone comes in and says, 'We can run a course' and they have a letter from you saying they are okay, that is your responsibility, minister.

We touched on the Respectful Relationships Program. It is hit-and-miss in schools as to how much of it is being run. It is a good program and one you should be proud of. It is a good piece of well-researched work, but if it is not rolled out comprehensively in schools, its value is undermined. It is a good program but if they are not doing it, there is no point in having it, or if they are doing elements of it, it undermines the value of all of it. It is a good program and it should be committed to.

Hobart inner city high school: we had to put a question on notice about how much the Government spent, but it allocated \$300 000 for a study on the need for a Hobart inner city high school. The study showed - and I want *Hansard* to record that I am not being surprised - that a number of issues impact on parents' decisions, that lots of people go to Taroona and there are two single sex schools in the middle of Hobart. These are all things we knew, and the Government should not have had to spend \$300 000 proving that without coming up with an outcome.

This is symptomatic of the way the department has been operating. It has spent \$300 000 determining there is an issue with high schools on the city-side, on the western shore of Hobart, because there are single sex schools and a lot of people go to Taroona. We knew that before the Government spent \$300 000. That was a waste of money. It is symptomatic of the money that we wasted on CUDA. That was a great plan, wasn't it, minister?. How many millions did we spend on CUDA? They just went ta-ta down the road and did not provided any value for the children other than the data collection we know they did. While the children's information is protected while they are part of the education system, when they are not part of the education system, that data is open for anyone to purchase and that was a reprehensible thing.

We do not know how much it costs, but the Hobart High School is complex. Well done, you. Brighton High School: the minister has written to the community and the school farm saying it is fine, we are not going to build there. That is great. The minister says that is okay because I will be able to sort something else out. Well the council does not want to go anywhere else, minister, so you are in another piece of trouble. There is not an identified other piece of land and you made that very clear. There is not an identified other site for the Brighton High School. We have a reasonably new high school at Jordan River and a decision to build a school somewhere else, but we are really not sure. I am concerned because I have heard some very disturbing reports of the land the council might be offering.

The Government clearly has not factored into the build of the school, the cost of purchasing the site for that school. The Government's plan was predicated on being able to use the farm site which is now not going to be possible. That is yet another thing the Government has managed to get wrong over the last five years.

What was really odd, and this is the first time we have not been able to get this so I will put on record my concern that we do not have answers yet, as I understand, from the minister. He may have forwarded them through but we have not received any answers yet. I am looking for a nod in case there have been some sent that we have not seen.

**Mr Rockliff** - I do not believe they are there yet. Infrastructure is.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - One of the reasons that we do this report back week is, (a) to talk about the things that we learned; and (b) to interrogate those things that we learned through the answers from ministers. If the ministers are making a decision - and it looks like that because there have been very few answers come through and they are only after Estimates have been considered by this place - to not answer those questions in time, then perhaps it would be more appropriate to schedule a week in between the Estimates report back.

If it is so difficult to take the information that may or not have been in the minister's briefs and give it to us, then we really do need a bit of a delay. That is something the Government should take into consideration. One of the things that we talk about is those answers but if we do not have them, then this becomes quite farcical.

It concerned me because for the first time in all of the Estimates, you have been able to provide the infrastructure list, every single time. You had to take it on notice this time and that was quite telling. Under the infrastructure list, we already know that when you went into the last election, everyone who was category 1 got pushed out to category 2 so that you could meet your election commitments and all of those decisions were made willy-nilly. Some of them were made and not honoured. Ulverstone Primary School was one of those that is going to be of significant concern

because they thought they were going to get funded, but not so lucky. They were only funded before the election, not after the election.

It makes me wonder how many other schools have been pushed down the list that you did not provide the priority listing because this is the first time you have not been able to go 'here it is'. That is quite concerning.

Since you changed it, TASC has been an unmitigated - disaster is probably too soon. It certainly has not been what you wanted it to be. I know what the motivations were for the change but what you have created is a body that has a very poor relationship with schools and each time in the last two exam processes, there have been significant problems.

The first time it was the scheduling of the exams. We had internet national physics bodies asking what on earth have you done. You scheduled things like maths methods and physics on the same day, which is something that no other state did, because of the damage that it would do to those students. There are a whole lot of concerns around marking and the people who are able to mark. Things did not get better last year and they are also concerning. We had many families and students concerned about the way that exams were conducted and the way that markers were appointed. I had one person who was off on a school trip that you had obviously signed-off on, who got her letter saying 'we are really pleased you will be marking', even though she had not applied to be marking because she was leading a school trip so she would not be around. That was not an isolated occurrence. TASC is not doing the job awfully well and that is really concerning.

More concerning, minister, is that I have sat in the room and been given advice from the head of TASC that turned out to be not true. I sat there with your senior adviser and we were both told things that were not true. That is something that you need to deal with and you need to deal with it soon. We do ask, minister, that you actually engage in TASC this year, that you are aware of what is happening before the exams take place so that we do not do this again. It is a terrible thing to do to our grade 12 students to put them through that process. You need to get this right.

Let us talk about TAFE. Minister, you have dropped the ball on TAFE. We are advised the ASCO audit went quite well. There was a lot of grooming. It would be very interesting, I think we do have an RTI out for you, minister, on all of the information that was provided to those staff who were allowed to speak to the ASCO auditors. That is going to be quite telling.

One of the good things about audits is it allows you to identify where you might not be doing things wrong. If you are so scared that you are going to lose accreditation then you do not do it that way and you do what you did, which is to find ways to get out of trouble. So that will be interesting to see. I am concerned about nursing, particularly the 700 hours of marking that had not been done. Until we raised it those staff did not know if they were going to be paid.

**Time expired.**

[7.36 p.m.]

**Ms DOW** - Mr Deputy Chair, it is my pleasure tonight to reflect on our Estimate hearings last week and to look back to the education, skills and training hearing that I attended and also the advanced manufacturing.

I wanted to start by looking at around at infrastructure and in particular school infrastructure, and to state my concern with the lack of funding in the state Budget for upgrades to Montello

Primary School, Ulverstone Primary School, the delay in the upgrades at Hellyer College, their science labs, and a number of the other school projects that missed out.

Regarding Montello Primary School, I have been doing some work with their Parents and Friends on the need for infrastructure upgrades at the school. There are a number of students working out of demountable classrooms and it is a very old school. The access is very poor in some sections of the school, particularly around disability access. There is a real need for some attention at that school and some investment in the school campus to bring it up to contemporary standards. As we know, and we hear so very often about the importance of contemporary learning spaces for our students, disability access should be paramount, not only for the students at the school, but also those visiting and participating in school life. We know it is so important to have family members engaged in their children's learning and the big difference that can make, not only to individuals but to communities.

We talked a lot about capital investment and we also talked about the fact that the Government's year 11 and 12 extension programs could be compromising further investment in our primary schools and also our colleges. The provision of the extension of year 11 and 12 and upgrades to various facilities does add competing pressure to the Budget and it makes priorities change. It is important that a number of those schools that missed out - Montello, for example - have been priority one for the last three years. I do not think the school community will give up on trying to get some funding for their school and I will continue to work with them and advocate on their behalf for that need.

I wanted also to talk about skills and training. We were joined by members from Skills Tasmania. One of the questions that I asked was around the provision of a skills hub, which was a commitment during the federal election. Angela Conway from Skills Tasmania made a remark, which is important to read again into *Hansard*. That was to say that:

We know there will be one in Burnie -

This is in reference to a Skills Hub:

... and we are very keen to talk with our federal colleagues about this and how it is all going to fit together. It is great. There are lots of skills-related activity in the north-west, but it is going to be important that we coordinate it all and maximise the benefit for the north-west region.

I could not agree more with Ms Conway's comments. Providing funding is one thing, but targeting that funding to areas of need, growth sectors of the economy, our growing industries, is paramount, as is ensuring the funding is dispersed across the region and not provided out of the major centres.

That has been a focus and one of the priorities of the years 11 and 12 extension programs, which are primarily about making sure that you have access to completing years 11 and 12 no matter where you are. It is important that the same philosophy is applied to skills and training because what happens after a student completes years 11 and 12 is also important; their pathway to employment skills and training, which we do not seem to be coordinating as well as we could be. That is no more evident than in the provision of TAFE in regional Tasmania and how that might align to years 11 and 12 extension programs.

We talked also about the University of Tasmania, which is another entry to gaining skills and training, albeit a different focus for the University, being around the provision of associate degrees. Nonetheless, this will also be funding and activity aligned to skills and training across the regions. I want to understand what impact that will have on institutions such as TAFE.

I made mention of the agricultural centre of excellence mooted for the north-west coast. I put on notice some questions about the numbers of students currently attending the agricultural and horticultural classes at TAFE in Burnie and those that are enrolled in the years 11 and 12 extension program at Yolla to understand the need and the participation levels in those courses currently. It will be interesting to see what the demand is for that, to understand better how the Government plans to work with all the existing offerings across the coast and how that will complement the investment at Freer Farm.

I will take a moment to touch on Advanced Manufacturing and Defence. It was great to hear an overview from the Defence Advocate during Estimates hearings. I thank the minister for following up on a briefing on current activities and some of the work of Retired Rear Admiral Steve Gilmore AM. We look forward to having that briefing in future. It was disappointing that a breakdown and cost of the itineraries of the trade missions that have been undertaken was not provided on the day. Whilst the defence strategy provides numerous opportunities for different sectors, particularly advanced manufacturing, it would be great to have an action plan to sit alongside that overarching strategy and that broke down the funding across key priority areas and gave us some very clear guidelines and time frames for implementation that will enable us to understand better what the activities will be and what the Government hopes to achieve through setting targets aligned to that strategy. I note that in the Trade Estimates hearing, we spoke about the action plan that accompanied that strategy. Perhaps that would be a good way to approach the defence strategy.

It is good to see that the Advanced Manufacturing Strategy is being reviewed this year and that a number of the initiatives under that, including those that support business and also the voucher systems and the like, are having good take-up and that there are good results for business in employment numbers as well in the advanced manufacturing sector as part of that. I thank the minister for that update and it is good to see that is still progressing. It is very important for that sector to have its own individual strategy outside of the defence strategy.

We learned that 30 Primes have visited Tasmania over the last 12 months but time did not allow for us to understand the businesses that had been engaged or had benefited from exposure to those visits from the Primes. We are looking forward to meeting with the Defence Advocate and learning more about what he has been up to over the last 12 months, gaining a good understanding of his work and how that aligns to the Advanced Manufacturing Strategy and the Defence Strategy.

[7.45 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Mr Deputy Chair, I rise to make a brief contribution on the transport and infrastructure and defence industries, as well as Trade sections of this minister's portfolio. As I was having the soul-crushing experience of sitting at the Estimates table across from the Treasurer, I did not have the pleasure of scrutinising the Education minister's budget. What I will say, having gone back through the *Hansard*, I appreciate that this minister, who has been in parliament for a long time, makes a genuine effort to answer questions truthfully, to not fob off questions and seems to genuinely enjoy - as much as any sane person can - the Estimates experience.

I wanted to talk about an issue raised at the table that is of enormous concern to the people of Clark, Franklin and southern Tasmania in Lyons, which is the growing congestion problem we have in and around Hobart. The real concern, and it is manifest in this Budget, is that there continues to be a really negligent underspend of public transport and congestion solutions while the Treasurer wins the day in Cabinet; 'I can allocate \$1.6 billion towards the construction of new roads', which we know will do nothing to ease congestion for the people who live in and around Hobart and it will do nothing to lift productivity, which is the impact of congestion on the economy.

We have \$1 million in the Budget for feasibility studies into busting congestion. Well, big deal. We know what the problem is. We have lived it. We are living it and \$1 million for feasibility studies is the Government's way of saying they are not going to do anything about congestion at the moment, we are going to do another study into the previous studies and we will come back to you later when we finish the study into the previous studies.

Unfortunately, so little funding has been allocated toward pedestrian, cycling, ferry and other public transport that the only conclusion to draw is that it has been deprioritised by this Government. In the Budget, \$2 million is allocated as part of a grant-matching program for southern councils to build cycling infrastructure but, again, that is a small allocation. It is a little over double what the Government has spent taking legal cases to the High Court or spending money trying to reopen tracks in the Tarkine, which are through priceless Aboriginal heritage. We have \$2 million for southern councils to bid into a cycling infrastructure fund that is a bit over double what the Government has already spent on futile political legal bids. It is a real concern. A fifth lane coming on the Southern Outlet is a bit like saying to a person who has a weight problem that I will tell you how to deal with this weight problem; we will give you a bigger belt because the person with the weight problem does not do anything to deal with the nub of the issue. If you build an extra lane on the Southern Outlet you will have, as the minister knows, are more cars on the Southern Outlet when what we need to be doing is engaging in mode shift.

This work has been done by the RACT. It is really profound work; the Greater Hobart Mobility Vision. They looked at four different scenarios with which you would turn Hobart into a genuinely liveable 21st century city, where passenger, active transport and liveability are prioritised. The blueprint or the greenprint, whichever way you want to look at it, has been provided by the RACT. I pay tribute to Harvey Lennon, the former CEO of RACT and who has now left RACT. He took it upon himself to recognise that the RACT has a social responsibility to contribute to public policy development in Tasmania. As an organisation that has as its core objective safer roads for cars, that is a big departure from the RACT's history and previous work but they delivered this mobility vision. It paints the picture of a really exciting possible future for Hobart, which is unarguably the most beautiful capital city in the country and it should have contemporary 21st century transport.

We strongly encourage this minister, with three years until the next election, to engage with the Treasurer and your Cabinet colleagues on whoever the expenditure review committee of Cabinet is and make sure you secure some of that \$1.6 billion dedicated to roads and bridges into 21st century infrastructure cycleways, pedestrian ways and the Battery Point walkway. Get the work started on light rail. Put more money into Metro and get the ferries on the river. I know that this minister believes in those ferries. I know that. Before he leaves this job, he wants to have delivered a passenger ferry service on the Derwent. That is what this great river and this beautiful city needs. We wish him all the best but he needs to throw his weight around in the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet which, I presume, given he is the transport and infrastructure minister, he is on.



We also asked questions about defence spending. It is the same basic theme that I took to the table last year, which is, why are we developing industries where the product of that industry is sold to a country that kills people or is engaged in wars in the region that are killing innocent civilians? We produce materials and products that go to Saudi Arabia, that are part of a defence industry which is trading with an oppressive regime in the Middle East. When women, who are totally second class citizens and oppressed in Saudi Arabia, try to flee the country, the Saudi government comes after them by tracking their cell phone data. The same Saudi government now has an 18-year old child on death row for criticising the regime when they were 13.

We need to think very carefully about the kind of industries we are investing in for the future; the kind of industries that we are training our bright young people up to go into. There has to be an ethical foundation for industries that government supports. If Government is putting significant resources into developing defence industries that fuel the war machine and contribute to the death of civilians, then we do not have an ethical leg to stand on.

**Mr Rockliff** - It is not about weaponry. It is more about protecting armed forces.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Only Australian armed forces?

**Mr Rockliff** - That is my understanding.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - You are defence minister. You should know in detail.

**Mr Rockliff** - For example, our Maritime College and the partnership we have developed with South Australia is important.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - I understand that and I think it was a mistake of party politics that we have to compete with the facility in South Australia because the Australian Maritime College has a longstanding reputation, as you know, minister, over decades of training some of the best seamen and women in the world. It should never have come to that where the defence minister's home state is the beneficiary of what is pork barrelling at the expense of Tasmania's excellent maritime college.

I also asked the minister a question, and this has come up in conversations with the minister about the plans for Devonport Airport. We had the Coordinator-General at the table, Chair, as you would be aware because I think you were at the table too but I can't be certain because you did hop around a bit, by necessity. The issue had been raised with us by people who work inside the aviation industry, who had seen officials from a Chinese airline at TasPort's property in Devonport Airport had raised it with us, and we respectfully raised it with the minister to find out what was going on because it is public property.

It is TasPort's facility and we should know if there are negotiations between an agent of the Government of Tasmania, which unfortunately the Coordinator-General is, and an agent of the Chinese government, which China Southern is. Because of the intelligence laws that were passed by the Chinese government in 2017, which require every Chinese company to comply with the intelligence laws of the Chinese government and if the Chinese government asks that Chinese company to take a certain action or to provide a certain amount of information then there is a requirement on that company to provide that information. There needs to be a lot more transparency about this potential deal at Devonport Airport because, as we know, the Chinese government is an oppressive totalitarian regime which is locking up its own people in the millions.

**Time expired.**

[7.54 p.m.]

**Dr BROAD** - I rise this evening to talk in response to the time I spent listening to Mr Rockliff in relation to his infrastructure portfolio. In particular, one issue which is that of the Leith roundabout. I will go through an interaction I had with Mr Rockliff and the General Manager of State Roads, Mr Gregory. The question I asked is:

Why isn't the Leith overpass mentioned in the budget, considering in 2017 the Premier, in a press release, said that the overpass at Leith was to address safety concerns on the Bass Highway and planning would immediately commence on design work for the \$10 million overpass and it would be delivered within two years?

This is back in 2017. Why is it not mentioned in this Budget? The forward Estimates up to 2022-23 make no mention of the Leith overpass.

Mr Rockliff forwarded that question on to Mr Gregory and Mr Gregory said:

We have done a lot of work into the crash statistics at those two intersections and the majority of the crashes appear to be related to decision-making and choosing of gaps to enter traffic.

There had been number of accidents there, there is no doubt.

We have been working towards a solution that removes that risk. Various ideas have been put forward. Roundabouts, speed limit reductions and we have looked at all of these in terms of whether they are suitable for the location. A roundabout is not because of the type of road and the grades.

I would agree with that as I have discussed in this place in the past. You only have to have a look at the roundabout at Heybridge and look at the skid-marks on top of it and the number of accidents that occur on that section of highway to know that a roundabout at Leith is not a good idea. Mr Gregory goes on to say:

Speed limit reduction as a blanket reduction is unlikely to be effective given the very high standard of the road.

Indeed, that would be a backward step. It should be a good place.

There is an interim measure in place, warning lights to provide advice to motorists on the Bass Highway when someone is entering. That low cost option is proving very effective to date.

We have not yet been able to establish a concept that meets everybody's expectations and technical requirements. We are looking at other opportunities including a new development in New Zealand that may be suitable which introduces a variable speed limit triggered by vehicles.

He goes on to say:

That is where we are at. That planning continues and we will continue to look at what is the best option. The interim measures have proven effective to date.

I queried that and said, 'Minister, no commitment for the overpass over the forward Estimates period?' Mr Rockliff said, 'We are recognising the intersection'. I corrected him 'intersections'. 'Yes, intersections', Mr Rockliff said. 'We remain committed to an overpass and look forward to the design work'. I said, 'With no money over the forward Estimates, is it a least five years away?' Mr Rockliff said, 'Once we have a full understanding of the product design, then we will have a better idea of investment that is required'. Mr Gregory went on to say, 'We need to work through the planning and come up with a solution that works for all stakeholders. Once we have that costed, it is really the first step'.

The Premier put out a release saying it will cost \$10 million to address safety concerns and then it moved on to Ms O'Connor.

The reason I am raising this is because I raised this question. There was a rock-solid commitment from the Premier to deliver a Leith overpass and it should have been done in two years from 2017 - which is this year - and there is no commitment in the Budget.

I queried that with the media. Mr Rockliff, in his response in *The Advocate* the next day, stated that when I queried that there was no commitment - and I have gone through the entire interaction there that demonstrates that there was no commitment made - Mr Rockliff said that I was wrong. He said there was a \$2 million commitment in the Budget and that work was expected to commence in 2021. Where it is, who knows? It will also be reliant on \$8 million from the federal government. Where that \$8 million from the federal government is coming from is not accounted for either.

The situation changed over the period of some 24 hours where the minister made no commitment to that promise that was made in 2017. It is obvious from that interaction that there was no commitment, yet only a day later it is a rock-solid commitment again and it is going to start in 2021 and there is money in the Budget.

I would like the minister to point out where that money is in the budget. Where is that \$2 million of state Government money and where is the \$8 million from the federal government? It is not accounted for. You do not want to be misleading parliament by stating things that are obviously false in this place; however maybe in the media it is a little bit less restrictive. I would like the minister to put forward a reason why there is this inconsistency. In that interaction there was no commitment and yet the next day in the paper, it was rock-solid and I was wrong. I went on the evidence the minister and his advisers gave and there was no evidence from that interaction.

Other things we talked about included a question I am really interested in, and it was put on notice. The question was: how many lanes of the current Midland Highway redevelopment are going to be only two lanes? Driving up and down the highway we see that some of these areas are now being opened up. It is a good lane short of the four lanes promised back in 2010. In fact the Premier had his nice billboard saying, 'I will deliver a four lane Midland Highway.'. Well, he is delivering three lanes at best and large sections of the highway now appear to be only two lanes. Examples include Antill Ponds, which has recently been opened. As you drive from Antill Ponds into St Peters Pass, there is a great big long section of two lanes. I know that particular section was a worry. There were a number of accidents in that particular section, so having the wire rope between those two lanes is definitely a good idea, but there is no pinch point there. Why is it two

lanes for length? I do not understand. When the Government promised a four-lane Midland Highway, we are getting three, and then in sections like that, we are only getting two.

The other section is at Epping Forest where the new road also has a substantial section of two lanes with a wire rope between them. We did not really have any clarification on that so I am looking to get that question on notice. Hopefully when the minister gets around to responding to questions on notice, I will get an answer to that.

I think two lanes is definitely short of four, and three lanes is definitely short of the four that were promised. There are some inconsistencies on what was promised, but I think that is probably the Government's Infrastructure budget all the way. When we talk about things like an underground Hobart bus mall and a fifth lane on the Southern Outlet and, indeed, the Bridgewater bridge, I think we will be waiting a fair time to see any of those sorts of infrastructure investments. We will see them pushed off continually into the distance as we have seen with the Bridgewater bridge. I hope the minister will address some of the concerns I have raised.

[8.02 p.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Madam Deputy Chair, I thank members for their contributions to the debate so far. We often finish on this but sometimes we run out of time so I would like to start by acknowledging the enormous of preparation undertaken by departmental officials, staff and MPs as well to prepare for Estimates scrutiny, and this year has been no different. I also thank you, Chair, for the work you did in your role, as difficult as it is at times. I particularly thank Tim Bullard and Kim Evans and their respective teams in the departments of Education and State Growth as well as Alan Garcia from Infrastructure Tasmania; Jenny Dodd from TasTAFE; Lia Morris from Marine and Safety Tasmania; Retired Admiral Steve Gilmour, Tasmania's Defence Advocate; Katrina Beams from the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification; and all the other officials who supported the Estimates process by making themselves available, preparing and collating information, and responding quickly to additional requests.

Chair, this was my sixth Education Estimates and another opportunity to advise and explain to the committee how the Government is progressing its very strong plan for education, including, of course, the employment of 250 more teachers, a new disability needs-based funding model that is nation-leading in its approach, and our ongoing focus on student wellbeing and continuing to extend all high schools to year 12.

This was an interesting discussion. I had actually thought we had moved beyond the negativity from those opposite when it comes to the year 11 and 12 extensions. They have been embraced -

**Ms O'Connor** - To be honest, from the Greens' point of view we are a bit worried about the colleges because they are so excellent.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We had quite a bit of discussion with Dr Woodruff on this. I could not really get through to Dr Woodruff, unfortunately, that it is not a one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to this because evidently and clearly around the state very different models are developing in terms of people's access to years 11 and 12. I have mentioned the teggana Collective around Rosny College quite often. More recently the Hellyer Regional Collective is also something that is very positive. Also individual high schools and secondary colleges- such as the Ulverstone Secondary College - are extending, so there are different models.

The important thing to remember is that the 10 per cent increase in Tasmanian Certificate of Education attainments over the last five years is terrific. Communities have also embraced this opportunity and they want the opportunity. The Ulverstone Secondary College, which was not in the original list of 21 rural and regional high schools to be progressed in the first term of government, has put its hand up and said, 'We want to part of this.' Communities want to be part of this. It is not about pitting colleges against high schools. Our colleges play a very important role when it comes to working with our students and alongside our colleges. It is not them against us - it is very much about our collective responsibility to provide our students with the best possible education.

This Government is committed to increasing access and providing educational equity to all. That is what drives me as minister and, indeed, this Government. We have committed around \$15.5 million over four years from 2019-20 to begin construction of six new child and family learning centres. I was very pleased to announce that the first three will be built at Sorell School, East Tamar Primary School and Waratah-Wynyard, which is great news for those communities.

We have also committed \$8 million in the 2019-20 Budget to support the continued implementation of the Working Together for Three-Year-Olds initiative to provide quality early learning experiences for vulnerable children in partnership with the early childhood education and care sector. That has been very constructively and collaboratively worked through now. This is a free preschool program for young children and children most in need. It is supported by TasCOSS. I really encourage those opposite to embrace this policy. It is a collaborative approach to ensure there are more opportunities for young people to access quality early learning. This is not a case of a them and us policy either - this is a student first policy, which is our Government's approach.

We have prioritised providing high-quality inclusive education for students with disability as well. We are implementing a nation-leading needs-based funding model for students with disability next year, which will result in an extra \$8 million for students with disability in 2020, increasing to \$11 million by 2022. This is on top of the \$93.3 million already being invested this year for students with disability - the biggest investment in disability education of any Tasmanian government.

I am proud to talk about this, because implementing a needs-based funding model will make a huge difference for our students, our schools and our families by providing resources for what an individual student actually needs to support their learning rather than being obliged to conform to a disability diagnosis. I was disappointed in some of the lines of questioning from the Opposition that tried again to create a them and us mentality or winners and losers as a result of this policy. It will not be about that. It will be about truly providing the resources. These could be human resources for a child, depending on need and disability, or it could be a product, a learning device, that can support that child's learning as well. I wanted to make that particular point because all students should win out of this if it is a truly needs-based funding model.

We know that a strong sense of wellbeing is fundamental to helping students to engage with and succeed in learning at school and throughout their lives. Estimates provided an opportunity to talk about the significant work being done in this space, including establishment of a child and student wellbeing unit, the newly released Mental Wellbeing Action Plan and the 65 additional professional support staff we have hired since 2014.

In addition, our 2019-20 investment provides an additional \$2.7 million to provide a school nurse in every government senior secondary college by 2021. I hope that is an indication of our commitment to colleges and the students within our college environment.

I am surprised in Estimates that we did not hear a line of questioning around teacher pay rises, pay negotiations, wages or relief teachers. I stand to be corrected, but I do not believe there was discussion about those points. Unless I misheard, but I thought it was interesting that they were included in the areas of discussion for this part of the parliamentary process.

When it comes to Skills and Trade, the Government continues to invest in skills for our current and future work force. We have a commitment of over \$100 million in this Budget for training and work force development. We are investing in training in industries where we know the demand for a skilled Tasmanian workforce is, including health, community, social service sectors, tourism and hospitality and building and construction, which collectively account for around 40 per cent of our training investment last year.

Despite the Opposition's negativity, Tasmania continues to outperform other states and territories in apprenticeship and traineeship outcomes. In Tasmania, the total number of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements increased by 1.1 per cent, which in real terms means 4910 new commencements in the 12 months to December 2018. Nationally, total commencements have decreased by 3.7 per cent. In the 12 months to December 2018, trades and apprenticeship commencements in Tasmania grew by 12.5 per cent while the national figure decreased by 0.1 per cent. We continue to have the highest completion rates in Australia at 58.1 per cent, almost 5.5 per cent higher than the national average.

Our Government remains the strongest supporter of skills development and TasTAFE and we will not tolerate the constant attempts by those opposite to undermine the TAFE system. They are a lot of very hard working and proud people within our TAFE organisations, some 800 employees, and I commend each and every one of them. TAFE is such an essential public vocation, education and training provider for Tasmania and we support it. This year's Budget sees an extra \$2.9 million invested in TasTAFE to increase teacher numbers and student places in building and construction and nursing. We have overseen a huge positive change to the Tasmanian economy and we are directing significant investment into skills development for today and for the future.

The 2019-20 state Budget delivers a record \$1.6 billion to build the job-creating transport infrastructure our growing state needs. The total state funding is \$925.7 million - this is for Mr O'Byrne's ears - and the total Australian Government funding is \$690.8 million across the forward Estimates, and not the other way around.

**Mr O'Byrne** - No, it is \$1.6 billion, there is \$900 million of federal funds.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We are funding major job-creating infrastructure programs and a number of smaller, very important local projects to maintain a momentum in our economy, which was confirmed last week as the strongest growing in the nation. We have a strong pipeline of projects funded in the Budget and a number of new works will be underway in this financial year.

I was pleased to provide an update on our \$500 million Midland Highway 10-Year Action Plan, despite the criticism by those opposite; 14 upgrade projects along the highway have been delivered and five more are currently under construction, including the biggest single road project in the north in decades, the \$92.3 million Perth Link Roads. By August this year, we expect that 91 kilometres, or 62 per cent, of the action plan works will either be completed or under construction and we have taken action to provide a safer, more efficient highway with protected overtaking lanes and central median barriers.

I am disappointed in the member for Braddon, Dr Broad, for attacking these upgrades, which will greatly reduce a risk of a catastrophic, high-speed head-on and run-off road crashes on the section of highway with a tragic history of trauma. I am at a loss for words as to why Dr Broad is so opposed to this investment that saves lives. I was staggered, but at least I have you listening. I am pleased about that.

This Government takes road safety very seriously and we are continuing to make inroads on our Towards Zero - Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy. It is great to see that councils are taking advantage of our Vulnerable Road Users Program to seek state funding toward important safety improvements. More than \$500 000 has been allocated to 14 projects, including Sorell Council for pedestrian refuges, kerb ramps on Western Hill Road, to the Launceston City Council for a bike lane on Howick Street between Charles and Wellington Streets, and Devonport City Council for a crossing on Middle Road for School of Special Education students and carers.

The last year has seen a record investment in our capital works program. We have delivered some \$280 million, including maintenance in the road and bridges program for 2018-19 and this is significantly higher than in previous years. Funding for individual projects like the Leith Overpass is represented in the budget papers at a program management level. In this case it is under state roads upgrades, north-west and west coast regions in budget paper 2, volume 1, table 11.8, page 287, thank you, Dr Broad.

Labor's constant negativity and exaggeration during Estimates was a bit embarrassing for them. I felt embarrassed for you. I felt it was another attempt to show that they have no plan for infrastructure, which is clearly evident.

**Mr O'Byrne** - You borrowed our plan for the Midland Highway and you claimed it was yours. You said it was five years in and you have only been in Government for four years.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I haven't time to talk about your contribution but I might find another opportunity, which you have provided, which is about taking credit for everything we are doing. I find it quite extraordinary because you haven't been a minister for five years.

**Mr O'Byrne** - Which bit, your failure on Bruny Island, your failure on TT-Line or your failure on the ferries?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Sometimes I admire that confidence. I do not know where it could possibly come from. The feedback about SeaLink's Bruny Island Ferry Service has been largely positive. The Government is confident that the company will continue to provide a service that meets the requirements of all users. Vehicles carried increased significantly to 53 367 vehicles in the March 2019 quarter. There has been no reduction in capacity, despite claims from the honourable member. There has been an increase and it is a good story that we are investing in our local advanced manufacturing sector; the two new ferries in Tasmania at Richardson Devine Marine. We are looking forward to the first vessel being delivered by the end of the year.

I am passionate, Ms O'Connor, about the establishment of the Derwent River Ferry and it will be a wonderful piece of infrastructure but it does need to be comprehensive and does need to be a seven-day a week public service ferry. It is expected that a working group will make recommendations on the most suitable operating model and I am not going to pre-empt this work. The Government's focus is on delivering a comprehensive service, which Tasmanians can be proud of, during this term of Government.

I am also delighted in the \$16 million investment we are making in the West Coast Wilderness Railway. It is an iconic Tasmanian tourism experience that underpins tourism visitation to the entire west coast region. It did allow me to recall a famous public meeting the honourable member and I attended a few years ago, which we were pleased we could recall in a sensible way.

Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries is a great opportunity for us in Tasmania. I thank the member, Ms Dow, for her constructive engagement in that process. I know Ms Dow knows a lot about this subject, particularly advanced manufacturing, because we spend a lot of time together on the Caterpillar Transition Taskforce. We went to Thailand, to Rayong, and visited that centralised facility, which we were both disappointed we had to be there, I think. It was interesting to see that perspective.

Through our Advanced Manufacturing Action Plan and Defence Industry Strategy, including the support of our defence advocate, we continue to work with our manufacturers to take advantage of marketing opportunities on a global stage. The results speak for themselves with our manufacturing sector growing by 6.5 per cent in the last financial year. Recently, I did pen a letter to Wayne Bould for his contribution to TMEC, thanking him for his service and we look forward to the engagement of Wayne as well.

MAST continues to do an excellent job on our waters, keeping both Tasmanians and visitors to our state safe as well as running extensive education campaigns from school children to public events. The life jacket replacement program, and I will conclude on this, in which old life jackets are encouraged to be given up in exchange for a \$20 voucher to help towards the purchase of a new one continues to have good support from the boating public. By the end of April, 3154 vouchers had been redeemed. I encourage people to avail themselves of that voucher system. Water safety is important and these new life jackets are essential to ensure that they have the safest equipment on our waters.

I thank the committee for the opportunity to demonstrate how the Hodgman Liberal Government is maintaining the momentum and investing for growth.

**Estimates of the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries and Minister for Infrastructure agreed to.**

#### **DIVISION 6 AND 11 -**

(Minister for Building and Construction and Minister for Resources)

[8.23 p.m.]

**Dr BROAD** - I rise to discuss the portfolios of resources, both mining and forestry. I note that the minister is not in the room. I am not sure what is going on there but it would be nice for the minister to be in the room.

We had a number of discussions over the time period allocated. We talked about support for the mining industry. We are big supporters of the mining industry and we would like to see some mines reopened, in particularly Copper Mines of Tasmania in Queenstown and also the Avebury Mine, just outside of Zeehan.

One of the queries that I put to Ms Courtney was about support for the \$25 million that was promised for Copper Mines of Tasmania.



## **Quorum formed.**

**Dr BROAD** - Now the minister is present, I will talk about some of the questions I asked and some of the non-responses I got during the Estimates process.

One of those questions was about the \$25 million support package for Copper Mines of Tasmania in Queenstown. We are very keen to see Copper Mines of Tasmania reopen in Queenstown as it is a significant employer in the region and a significant exporter of copper. That \$25 million is not in the Budget. The minister assures me that \$25 million is still available and I hope we get to a point where that \$25 million is needed and that we can have that money handed out and get Copper Mines of Tasmania going.

One of the best things we can do for the environment on the West Coast is to have that mine reopened and for the ore body to be mined out. That will provide an environmental benefit because the acid drainage from the mine from its long history will be much less of a problem if that ore body is mined out.

I asked about the \$3.5 million that was in place for the Dundas Mining to reopen Avebury and the minister assured me that money is available. I hope so; I would like to see Avebury reopen because that mine is a significant employer, outside of Zeehan. It is a magnificent facility that has been kept on care and maintenance. There was close to a billion dollars spent getting that mine and its processing facility opened and it did not run for very long. It would be great to see the Avebury ore body mined again. That \$3.5 million support package is a key part of that.

One thing to note and I did not get a satisfactory answer, was about the decline in mineral exploration. Since 2013, mining exploration has declined. The spend on mining exploration actually halved and that is of significant concern. Mineral exploration is key to continued mining so that existing mines know they have proven-up resources in front of them and also for greenfield mining exploration to try and get new mines started.

The West Coast, because of the Mt Read Volcanics, has a long history of mining. There are projects proposed and we would like to see some of those get up. The Government has put in place the grant scheme for greenfield drilling. That is very welcome. However, it is concerning that mineral exploration has halved over this government's tenure and I would like to see that reversed.

We also see in the Budget declining projections for revenue from mining, from royalties. The Government does tend to be conservative when they put out their royalty projections. We see with a combination of low mineral exploration that there is a concern, that the royalty revenue may decline further. Hopefully things will turn around.

It is interesting that mining exploration has declined over this period because back in 2014 when this government came into power, we had a situation where the mines were operating in very tight global circumstances.

There was a high Australian dollar, which made our mineral exports less competitive, and there were also low mineral prices. We have seen a situation where that has turned around, where the mineral prices are higher and importantly the Australian dollar is much lower. It was about \$1.10 or even at parity compared to US\$1. Now it is down around \$0.70 so that makes our exports far more competitive. It would be good to see the mineral exploration actually increase so we can see

greater investments in mining, we can have more proven resources and we can see much more investment in mining on the west coast. That is where the majority of the mining is.

We raised the Burnie Port during Estimates, which is a key piece of infrastructure for mining and forestry. There have been discussions about capacity constraints at the Burnie Port. My fellow member for Braddon, Ms Dow, and I asked questions about capacity constraints at the port. We asked this before and after a tea break so the minister had some time to consider it. I will go through the interaction we had. To initiate the conversation, I said -

Capacity constraints at the Burnie Port have been flagged as an issue in terms of the viability of increased volumes through the port. For example, if the Rogetta Project goes up, which is an iron ore mine at Hampshire, from what I understand there is no way the port can handle any additional volumes of that magnitude, so have you had any discussion with TasPorts yourself or are you deferring that to the portfolio minister?

To which, Ms Courtney replied -

I am not going to speculate on any particular project that may or may not get up. As a Government we want to see increased investment and we want to see increased products going off our wharves. If that is the port at Burnie there is a significant increase of volume that will have to be worked through appropriately by the portfolio minister, but I am not going to speculate.

I said, 'The question was in terms of capacity constraints, an important issue raised with you that could potentially impede mining projects getting up.'. Ms Courtney said, 'I am not concerned about the capacity.'. The question I asked was, 'Has it been raised with you?'. Ms Courtney replied, 'At the Port of Burnie, I have regular discussions with a lot of stakeholders around how the Government can better meet their needs.'. I asked, 'Was that a yes or a no?'. The answer was, 'That is a discussion around a range of infrastructure projects.', and the minister said, 'I am not concerned about capacity being constrained.'. I asked again, 'Has it been raised?', to which the response was, 'What I am saying is that stakeholders discuss a number of things with me as minister.'. No commitment there.

We have this key asset in Burnie overseen by a minister who does not seem terribly engaged with the issue of capacity constraints in Burnie but which is a key piece of infrastructure. The Burnie Port is our export window. It is the way we send our products out. If Avebury gets going again its products will be going through the Burnie Port. If Copper Mines of Tasmania recommences operations again, those volumes will go through the Burnie Port. What we are hearing is that there are issues with the Burnie Port in capacity constraints and so on but there still is the potential to significantly reduce export costs if we can bring bigger boats in.

At the moment, the size of boat that comes in for mining is a Handymax boat, which there are not that many of in the world and they are not as big as the next size up. If you can get a Panamax-sized boat, it is a much bigger boat. It is called Panamax because it is the maximum size that can travel through the Panama Canal. The good thing about Panamax is that they significantly reduce the cost per tonne of taking our product to the world market. Also, importantly, there are a lot of them. There are many more of them in the world than Handymax vessels, which is why they create this significant advantage. It is not a small change. It is a significant change and that is why changes to the Burnie Port and the Burnie Port Master Plan are essential for us to secure investment

for. These changes will significantly reduce costs, make old projects more viable if there is a downturn and would greatly improve the economics of new ventures. That is a significant issue. I will move on -

**Ms O'Connor** - It seems like longer.

**Dr BROAD** - That is great, thank you for your support. I will also talk about forestry. The minister stated again that the Government is committed to gaining FSC, although we do not see much evidence of that. Like a lot of things, questions around forestry were deferred to STT -

**Ms O'Connor** - Despite the number of Dorothy Dixers you helpfully bowled up to the minister.

**Dr BROAD** - Insults from the side. Let us talk about your illegal firewood picture collage. You go to Gumtree and look at all the photos of people selling wood and all of a sudden that means it is coming from state forest.

**Ms O'Connor** - No, the question is, where is it all coming from? Just so you know, that came from a submission from a forester to the auditors.

**Dr BROAD** - Let us look at how many people are selling wood on Gumtree and then extrapolate that it is illegal forestry.

The Government needs to be committed to FSC because FSC is essential in the world market. We can have a debate and there has been debate in the past about trying to face off between the different certifications. However, the market is demanding FSC. I believe if Sustainable Timbers Tasmania ever manage to achieve FSC certification it would increase the value of the products coming out of Tasmania's forests. The Government needs to be committed to this.

The Government's own report, which they commissioned Evan Rolley to write, highlighted that the Plenty Link Road would make a significant difference to the export of timber, especially from the Huon Valley to the Derwent Valley. There was no funding in the Budget for that. There is no infrastructure pipeline for the Plenty Link Road and I note that the federal Labor Party committed to the Plenty Link Road in the lead-up to the election but that was not matched by the federal Liberal Government. Considering this was one of the key recommendations from the Rolley report, I would like to see a commitment from Government to update and work through that. Recommendation 13 from the Rolley report stated that -

The state Government should map out a staged commitment to a preferred long-term infrastructure investment plan that essentially makes the best use of existing state-owned infrastructure assets and proves them as described above.

The minister was not committed to delivering on that recommendation. The minister said, 'We are working through all the recommendations in the Rolley report. As I said earlier, we are committed to a number of these with regards to port access and so on'. The Plenty Link Road was one of the key pieces in that puzzle.

The Government has given up on a southern export solution and, instead, all they do is to point out that Gunns sold the Triabunna Woodchip facility to private investors for \$10 million and try to blame Labor for selling something that Gunns sold in the dark of the night. The minister still attempts to allude to that, knowing it is a blatant falsehood. The Government now admits that there

is, 'no commercially suitable sites for a southern export port ...', which is a little different than pre-election in 2014 when the Liberals were running around pretending they had a magic wand they could wave and the southern export solution would simply appear.

They tried to hide that there is no obvious southern export solution, went on a witch hunt and conducted an investigation into the sale of Triabunna. It was a private sale from one private entity to another, which this Government continues to try to blame previous governments. There is no magic wand for a southern export solution but a key part of taking the forest industry forward, especially in the southern forests that are struggling. There are stranded assets in the southern forest.

There are plantations in the southern forests that have no viable export solution but the Plenty Link Road is part of that along with the rail infrastructure that would be required. The minister talked about the Parattah rail siding and the investment made, which is welcome but I believe they were already in train. Let us keep doing that sort of thing but the Plenty Link Road is a key part of it, as is keeping the Hobart Port open.

**Ms O'Connor** - Dump those log piles on our beautiful wharf.

**Dr BROAD** - Why don't you pick on the Chinese when you get up here? That seems to be your modus operandi. Just get up here and talk about a conspiracy around Patriach and Sons and how Chinese investment is a really bad thing and so on. You have your chance.

**Ms O'Connor** - You are misrepresenting me. You are a gumby. You might have Doctor in front of your name but you are not as bright as you think.

**Dr BROAD** - If the member wants to hurl personal insults -

**Ms O'Connor** - You started that.

**Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN** - Through the Chair, Dr Broad please.

**Dr BROAD** - Through the Chair, obviously they have nothing -

**Ms O'Connor** - You have not bothered to read any of the literature out there about the Chinese government so you can say what you like about us but we are telling the truth in here.

**Dr BROAD** - You will get your chance in a minute.

Obviously the forest portfolio is one that involves a lot of passion. At the moment the forest industry is recovering. There is no doubt about that after the situation where we had a number of businesses go broke. We had Forest Enterprises Australia go broke. We had Gunns go broke. This was all due to international forces. There is no doubt about that. We saw Gunns sell all their assets. Everything got shredded. The Government is dampening down a little bit on the criticism and trying to blame Labor for it all.

We see now that the forest industry is regrouping but it is around FSC certification and it is plantation based. We heard from the minister that 73 per cent of exports are from private forests, so private forests and plantations are vitally important to this state. The industry has transitioned. The investments that came through that forest restructure are working.

We see businesses like Forico restarting chip facilities. We see people like the Hermal Group investing in world-leading technology. Forestry is at a good place but it is FSC certified and plantation based, largely. Things have changed in the industry. We are less reliant on native forestry.

**Time expired.**

[8.42 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** - I rise to speak on the Estimates for the Minister for Resources with specific reference to the forestry portfolio because Dr Woodruff was at the table and did a great job scrutinising this minister's maladministration of the minerals part of her portfolio.

It was one of those déjà vu all over experiences again when we had the minister across the table at forestry resources Estimates. I was having another look at the uncorrecteds and the bizarre situation where you have the minister responsible for forestry policy in Tasmania who every time a question about forestry policy was put by the Greens would go, 'No, no, you have to ask that of so-called Sustainable Timber Tasmania in GBE estimates, which the minister knows are not coming before the House until the end of next year. It is April 2020 when this minister will oversee the opening up of 356 000 hectares of high conservation value forests.

I went back to the 2011, 2012 and 2013 budget Estimates just to have a look at forestry Estimates. There were incredibly detailed conversations across the table with the then minister for forests who was also the Deputy Premier, and Mr Gutwein who was the spokesperson for forests and they were full and frank exchanges. They went to the guts of forestry policy. They talked about Forestry Tasmania operations and there was no attempt there, for all his flaws: Mr Green sitting at the Estimates table, did his best to talk about the forestry portfolio in an informed and open way.

What a different world we are in now. We have a minister who sits at this table and every time a question comes up, for example, about the forest stewardship certification audit process and how this Government's forest policy is contaminating STT's pitch for forest stewardship certification the minister goes, 'Oh no, no. You have to ask that in GBE estimates'. Then one of the Labor members would bowl up another Dorothy Dixier and we would have a full answer. 'A very interesting question, Dr Broad. I am glad you asked that; hear, hear; yes, yes; no, no'. It was cute, it was sweet. There was something about that connection, between the Liberal minister and the Labor shadow talking about forests in 2019, it was just so darn romantic, and I want to thank you for allowing me to be a part of that experience. They were just loving each other, talking about your approach to forestry policy.

What we wanted to understand was, how can this minister say she has full confidence in Forestry Tasmania's capacity to achieve FSC certification, which we know it needs in order to survive in the global market, and we got no answer. We do know that the forest stewardship auditors are very interested in that very question. They were in Tasmania on 30 and 31 May this year, and Dr Woodruff and I sat down and spoke with them and they are concerned about forestry policy in Tasmania.

It is important to remember that in 2015, the first FSC audit was handed down and it found that Forestry Tasmania was critically non-compliant in a number of areas, particularly as it related to threatened species management and the continued logging of high conservation value forests. What we know is that under this Government, the logging of high conservation value forests continues.

We have people who live along the Southern Outlet; in and around the Central Highlands, who know that. There are massive trees coming out of the forests and they are trees that are identified by Forestry Tasmania itself - by STT as you so incorrectly call it - they are trees that are identified as being part of a high conservation value forest estate. If you go into Sustainable Timber Tasmania's High Conservation Values Assessment and Management Plan 2019, it talks about a summary of identified high conservation values and this is only the land that has been described under law that Liberals brought in as permanent timber production zone land. Across Tasmania, there are more than 700 listed threatened species and in the PTPZ land, 432 threatened species that have been identified by Sustainable Timber Tasmania. It is almost 9500 hectares of landscape level high conservation forests, 98 000 hectares of old growth forest communities, and on it goes.

What we know, having engaged with forestry policy in Tasmania for many decades, is that Sustainable Timber Tasmania is desperate for the auditors to believe that the 356 000 hectares that was set aside to go into the second tranche of reserves will not be logged.

If Government policy leads to the logging of the 356 000 hectares that were part of the agreement under the Tasmanian Forest Agreement, it will kill forever STT's bid for forest stewardship certification. And rightly so, unfortunately, because we have a minister who is overseeing a forestry GBE that is still logging high conservation value forests; a Government whose forest policy it is to open up to logging 356 000 hectares of some of the most exquisite, intricate forests on the planet. From the southern forest to Bruny Island, to the Tasman Peninsula, the Blue Tier, Great Western Tiers, over to the Tarkine, these forests are of global significance and they were recognised as such by forest scientists, but this Government wants to allow the loggers in there in April next year.

When I asked the minister, 'Has there been any discussions with any companies about going into those reserve forests?'. Not as far as she knows, she said. I said, 'Have there been any discussions with logging companies about going into the rainforest areas that had been set aside in regional reserves and conservation areas?' The minister said, 'Not as far as I know, no'. They are central to the struggle that Sustainable Timbers Tasmania is having achieving FSC certification.

This minister and the Premier know there has been a collision between the politics of forest policy in Tasmania and the necessary objective of the forestry GBE to achieve Forest Stewardship Council certification. It is undermining STT's endeavours, long as they are, to achieve FSC certification, which is a matter of enormous regret. One of the positive things that came out of the Tasmanian Forest Agreement, apart from the moves towards protecting more than half a million hectares of some of the most beautiful forests on the planet, was a pathway forward for Forestry Tasmania to achieve Forest Stewardship Council certification. The pathway was there because there was a high conservation value focus out of the TFA, but the TFA also gave the timber industry and workers in the industry dignity and certainty for the future.

It was a compromised agreement and it was very difficult to be a part of. From a Greens point of view, many of our people want it all saved. From the industry's point of view, many people want to be able to log whatever they can. In life, in order to achieve an outcome, sometimes you have to make a compromise. We do not tell our children they can have it all straight-up. The TFA was a compromise, but it set out the path for the forestry GBE in Tasmania to achieve the certification it needs to be truly competitive on global markets and to hold its head up high as a best practice forestry company. It is a long way from that yet.

I asked the minister questions about whether there was a wood supply agreement between Government Forestry Tasmania - STT, as you like to call it - and Patriarch and Sons. The minister said that is a matter for Sustainable Timber Tasmania - well, no, it is actually a matter of public interest. As far as we know, Patriarch and Sons wants, at least in part, to access some of its resource from public forests, the forests owned by the people of Tasmania. We do not know where that resource is coming from, and it points to a lack of transparency and incompetence in the Forest portfolio.

**Time expired.**

[8.52 p.m.]

**Ms BUTLER** - Mr Deputy Chair, I rise to contribute to this Estimates output of building and construction. I was disappointed during that particular committee that only one hour was provided for building and construction. We could have studied the material and the actual area of building construction and some of the other areas as well, such as consumer affairs. It would have been nice to have had a bit more time. Next year we should argue for a little more time with the minister.

We did not get many answers to many questions, but there were many areas in which we did not get time even to ask questions about. I would have liked to have asked a question about quad bikes and where we are at with that policy, the funding for that policy and where that policy would sit on a level with the rest of Australia and the actions that have been taken by other states. It is something I have a keen interest in. Last year there were 16 fatalities because of quad bikes, the bulk of them from asphyxiation because of quad bikes rolling on people. It is something I hope we can get right as elected members, especially in rural communities where many of the quad bikes are.

Getting back to building and construction, I sought the amount of money that Consumer, Building and Occupational Services spent on consultants. Instead I was provided with the amount Justice spent on consultants, which was over \$1.5 million between July 2018 and 31 March 2019. That is a lot of money. I was then advised that the amount for CBOS consultants was only \$12 000, and that was spent through a Tasmanian company, so that was quite nice to hear, but the Justice consultancy was quite high.

I then asked the number of right to information requests for CBOS and the average time taken to accept or reject those RTIs. I am yet to receive an answer to this, but I am not surprised this information has not been forthcoming.

I will say it again just for the old track record: I placed 39 questions on notice to the minister. It was actually when you were the minister for Primary Industries, which was in August 2018. Parliament was prorogued early this year and since then I have resubmitted those questions. I know you are now not the minister for Primary Industries. However, the questions are still there - 39 questions about spending scrutiny, government spending, use of credit cards and use of funds within different departments. I am going to raise this with each minister because I find it really appalling that there are certain things we can get right, and that is that we do the right thing by each other when it comes to asking questions, local member to another local member, especially to do with spending. Spending scrutiny is important and the public wants to know what the Government spends on things. We have an obligation as an opposition to ask those questions. I am very disappointed we still have not received the answers to those questions. I know I am harping on about it, but they are questions on notice and they are important. I am sure that if you were in

opposition and we were in government and we had not provided those answers to you in over 12 months, you would be making all kinds of announcements about that.

We had a discussion about the pending potential sacking of workers in each area or department of government and whether CBOS will be hit by the reduction, which all departments apparently have been asked to look into. With the workload for CBOS staff doubling to support the booming building industry to ensure compliance with regulations and licensing requirements, it surprised me the minister still could not provide any assurances that those people would not be sacked and their jobs would be secure. These are people whose workload has probably doubled, even though I would not be able to get that answer out of you, I am sure. With that in mind, you are expecting people to do twice the amount of work while there is a risk you may be cutting some of their jobs from CBOS. All departments are apparently going to be scrutinised.

We should name this up instead of using deficiency dividends and spin talk - we should name it up as people getting sacked, people losing their jobs, real people. I am sick of all this spin and new language that is coming into our dialogue here. You hear it all the time.

**Dr Woodruff** - Efficiency dividends.

**Ms BUTLER** - Deficiency dividends, that is the one. Not efficiency; it is deficiency dividends. I am sorry, Chair, we need to stop this spin talk because it is becoming more spin than substance. We need to name things up as what they are because that is what or people in our communities expect from us. When we have a conversation with them, we do not speak to them in spin one to one. We say, 'Yes, there is a good chance they are going to sack people from that department.' That is real talk, real language, and we need to start naming that up instead of using these ridiculous spin terms, which just confuse people. They make us feel better when we are talking bureaucracy, but actually does not translate to real people in Tasmania.

You could not provide assurances that CBOS staff would not be affected by these austerity measures and the Government's 'deficiency' dividend would not be part of the razor gang that would hit CBOS. There has also been a surge in demand on CBOS, yet there has been no increase in staff from what I could see and really not much spent on consultants.

I then asked about the Tasmanian Government Building and Construction Training Policy. I asked many question on that because I assumed that as the Building and Construction minister you have the responsibility in those areas. I was told quite a lot in Estimates that, 'No, that is not me that is the Treasurer' or 'No that is not me, that is State Growth'.

**Ms Courtney** - It's not my fault you don't know your portfolio areas.

**Ms BUTLER** - When you make announcements, a building and construction announcement, 'This is a building and construction grant', you have nothing to do with that. You have absolutely nothing to do with it. It is called window-dressing. 'Let us get this person to announce it', yet you cannot answer any questions on things you announce.

**Ms Courtney** - No it is called a different minister being responsible.

**Ms BUTLER** - You cannot answer any questions on things you announce because 'Oh, no that is not me. That is not my portfolio'. It was very interesting that things I was asking that you had



announced yet they were nothing to do with you. Is that advertising? It is window-dressing and advertising.

**Ms Courtney** - They are in the Treasurer's Budget papers. They are in his portfolio area in the Budget papers. It could not be any more clear.

**Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN** - Order.

**Ms BUTLER** - It made me think, what is this minister responsible for now? Has everything been taken from you? What is this minister responsible for?

I looked into Government-funded capital works and it is defined as building and engineering works that create an asset. This also incorporates constructing or installing facilities and fixtures associated with and forming an integral part of those works. This definition focuses on capital projects where construction activity is required in order to create an asset and applies to Government building and construction works, including maintenance works for not just civil works. The building and construction training policy ensures all Government-funded capital and maintenance works contributes to the maintenance of skills within the building and construction industry. The policy requires that apprentices or trainees under a contract of training undertake a minimum of 20 per cent of the total labour hours worked on any Tasmanian Government funded project equal to or in excess of \$250 000 in value.

Even though the policy relates to building and construction on Government works the minister again stated she does not administer. It is not her and with all due respects I will say it again, why on earth do you take responsibility for these as the Building and Construction minister yet you have no ability to answer questions on them? It is madness.

You could not answer whether this policy is currently adhered to across all capital and maintenance works on any Tasmanian Government funded project or how you are monitoring compliance to this policy. Compliance actually is part of your portfolio, I was led to believe. But we never do quite know because it might be easier just not to answer and say 'Oh no, that is not me'.

**Time expired.**

[9.02 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** - I rise to make some comments on the building and construction industry.

I have to say that I found the minister's agreement with alacrity to provide answers to some questions I asked about the Residential Tenancy Commissioner's activities under the Residential Tenancy Commissioner's obligations under the Residential Tenancy Act refreshing and hopeful. I have not received them yet, I believe. Unless I am mistaken I do not believe I have received them. I would certainly hope that the answers are as fulsome as I was led to expect by her response. I really hope they are because given the situation with the housing crisis in Tasmania and the homelessness crisis, particularly in southern Tasmania but across the state, and winter and the continual discussions we have had, it would be very disappointing if the minister let me down.

I asked some very specific questions about the ability of the Commissioner to undertake enforcement actions around the Commissioner's obligations under the act. I look forward to hearing, for example, the numbers of complaints and requests for resolution from people regarding repairs and maintenance, rent-related matters such as the non-lodgement of bond, and miscellaneous

matters and rent increases that are unreasonable. The sorts of matters that people may take to the Residential Tenancy Commissioner and make a complaint about.

I am hoping to get some quite clear answers about the enforcement actions that were taken, particularly whether there was a warning, a fine or a prosecution. These are matters of action and response that are important to understand how effective the role of the Commissioner is able to be within the Residential Tenancy Act. The Greens will continue to follow this issue closely. The Residential Tenancy Act, as the Government would know, having heard the Leader of the Greens, Cassy O'Connor, speak about numbers of times, is an act which has many parts of it that need to be updated. There are many opportunities for the Government to make substantial improvements to the lives of residential tenants, to their experiences, to the natural justice that they receive in their contractual relationships with landowners. In order to understand how the Residential Tenancy Act needs to be reviewed and the details of that, it does come down to what we are learning from the complaints and the issues that are brought before the Residential Tenancy Commissioner.

I would also like to make some comments about the minister's responsibilities for doing something within her portfolio about the climate emergency. Going back and looking at *Hansard* of the Estimates conversations that were had last week in this portfolio, it gives a lie to the assurances of Ms Archer, the putative minister for climate change when we do not have a ministry of climate change, but the minister responsible for the climate change portfolio. It gives a lie to her words where she gave some indication that with her climate change responsibilities the Government would be bringing some real targets with real teeth into the review of the state climate change act, which must come before us. It is already overdue to come back to parliament to be reviewed.

The Greens, along with people across the sector with concern, experience, understanding of the actions we need to take to make real inroads into reducing our emissions as a state and to increasing our ability to adapt to the changing climate, we understand that there has to be sector specific targets for emission reduction, not a whole Tasmania target. I asked Ms Courtney within her capacity as the Minister for Building and Construction what she was doing with respect to her portfolio activities and particularly understanding how we can best reduce emissions from the building and construction sector, such as in the area of reducing concrete and increasing the potential for a manufacturing industry in Tasmania for cross-laminated timber. This would be an opportunity for the Greens, the Liberal Party and the Labor Party to collectively agree that a plantation-based cross-laminated timber that did not take -

**Mr Jaensch** - It is happening in Wynyard.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - That is great to hear, minister for Housing, by interjection from the side. I did not hear any details of that from the Minister for Building and Construction. That is the sort of detail, not just that it is happening but how much is it happening? Specifically, I asked the minister did she have confidence that the quantum of plantation timber resource was sufficient to stimulate real growth in an industry like that so that we could look at actively replacing concrete used in building construction around Tasmania with island grown cross-laminated timber. Would it not be wonderful to be talking about all these new buildings that are going to be built in Hobart by UTAS and all the other growth that is happening in the building sector. Would it not it be great if it was truly sustainable in terms of emissions reduction. She did not have any information that she could provide in that area. It is disappointing that she flicked this off as a conversation I should be having with the minister for the Environment when it is a core part of her work to understand how we can reduce emissions from one of the most emission-intensive sectors.

I will turn to the minister's responsibility under resourcing. I asked about Venture Minerals' planning permits, which were issued in September 2013 and have ostensibly expired but the Government, through the minister, is giving succour to that company to continue limping on, despite that fact they have made no substantial development at all. The time limit of two years has well and truly expired, even with all the special pleading and everything else, the legal challenges under which they are asking the Government to run cover for them.

The minister is using rubbish words such as that Venture Minerals needs to put the operation into 'care and maintenance'. I wonder what that means? What does it mean in terms of being given a special opportunity to extend your permit when you should start all over again? Why would they not want to start over again? Things have changed incredibly in the Tarkine. There have been bushfires and the Tasmanian Devil facial tumour disease has taken an even greater toll in the number of devils than it had in 2013. Times have changed and it is well and truly time to stop pretending we can have our cake and eat it. There is no such thing as multi-use in the Tarkine except for a national park. A national park and a mine cannot co-exist. End of story. Until the Government understands that preserving priceless Aboriginal heritage and an amazing temperate rainforest such as takayna and wildness of the coast, cannot co-exist with the mine, we will continue to make those points.

### **Time expired.**

[9.12 p.m.]

**Ms COURTNEY** - I am glad to be able to talk on last week's Estimates scrutiny and contributions made this evening. I will reflect briefly on comments made this evening before going to last week. It was disappointing, after the entire budget period we have been through and scrutiny last week, that Dr Broad was still unable to provide us with any insight, scrutiny, vision or even a policy on resources.

### **Quorum formed.**

**Ms COURTNEY** - Thank you, Mr Deputy Chair. It is unfortunate that Dr Broad, when I began talking about his lack of policy, immediately calls a quorum call because he doesn't want any reflection on his lack of insight, scrutiny, vision or policy. It was also unfortunate that all we saw this evening was a re-run of last week, with Dr Broad continuing to misrepresent the level of mining activity and exploration we have seen over the past several years. We explained several times during scrutiny last week and we had the director of mines explaining that to him and representing from the department because he did not seem to believe me, and it is unfortunate. It comes down to people like Dr Broad, through those types of comments, undermining people's confidence in investing in the mining industry in Tasmania.

It is an area that I would hope that the Labor Party and Dr Broad, considering he is a member for Braddon and we understand the majority of mining activity occurs in Tasmania in Braddon, would be supportive and that he would be talking up the industry and he would be welcoming our investment in partnering with industry to do exploration drilling. It is unfortunate because the sovereign risk we have seen in our state, created by a Labor-Greens government, was not deterred in the minds of investors from overseas when they saw Dr Broad's performance last week. Then he proceeded to re-read *Hansard*, in case we had not already.

He raised the Port of Burnie and this Government is very proud of the work we and Mr Rockliff have done in infrastructure investment. It was very pleasing in the recent federal election when the

Coalition Government was successful in Braddon and in Bass, picking up candidates for the Liberal Party. We have an investment within that port in terms of a new mineral loader. I question what Dr Broad was saying about the Port of Burnie; where was his funding in the alternative budget? Where was that in the Leader of the Opposition's speech and response to the Budget? If he wants to start making assertions such as these, he needs to put his money where his mouth is. They need to and put in an alternative budget, otherwise we know it is all talk, like we have seen all this week. I was also quite disappointed to hear Dr Broad question our commitment to FSC in his contribution this evening and that is something I would -

**Dr Broad** - I am sorry I am so disappointing.

**Ms COURTNEY** - The reason I am disappointed is that I would expect that from the Greens, but for Dr Broad to question the Government and STTs commitment to FSC is unfortunate because this is something for our future. It has the potential to help our forestry industry into the future.

**Dr Broad** - Oh dear.

**Ms O'Connor** - You have let her down, Dr Broad.

**Dr Broad** - Oh, I am so upset. Put me in the naughty corner.

**Ms O'Connor** - She thought you two had something special.

**Dr Broad** - Yes, I had potential but now she has judged me harshly.

**Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN** - Order, Dr Broad.

**Ms COURTNEY** - Dr Broad is reflecting once more on the result of the federal election regarding the outcomes of the Rolley report. Considering Dr Broad is interjecting this entire time, he has a glass jaw with regard to what I am saying here. As I talk about the federal election, we are still questioning what Labor's policy was with regard to forestry. It seemed to depend on which federal minister was talking about it and which city they were in. When we called upon a broken Leader of the Opposition and Dr Broad here in parliament, to clearly articulate what the Labor Party policy was with regard to forestry lockups, we got nothing. To misrepresent that an outcome of a Labor Party victory at the federal election was somehow better for forestry in Tasmania is simply delusional.

There was also some strange logic in Dr Broad's argument this evening about my admission that there is no southern port solution. Dr Broad, that was the reason why we commissioned Mr Rolley to do a body of work and that was one of his conclusions. It is not an admission by Government. It was in a report the Government commissioned and released so we could have public scrutiny.

With regard to the last comments in Dr Broad's contribution tonight, to describe what the Labor Party, along with the Greens, did to the forestry industry, as restructure working is a disgrace. He should hang his head in shame for those types of comments. It would be really unfortunate for the native industry, for plantation-based work and the confidence of the industry, should Labor and the Greens be back on this side of the Chamber someday.

A few reflections on Ms O'Connor's contribution this evening, I have to admit I was a bit thrown by having Ms O'Connor start with defence of Bryan Green but, alas, we will let that one slide. I was pleased to hear Ms O'Connor say that she knows that STT needs FSC. With that recognition of the importance of FSC, I question why Ms O'Connor and those of her beliefs are undermining it so actively. This is something that the Government believes in. It is something that STT believes in. This is something that industry believes in. It is a good thing for Tasmania. As I have seen out there, if we work together in the best interests of our industry then it is a good thing.

I completely and absolutely reject her assertion that it is Government policy that is undermining FSC. It is the Greens and the activists who are undermining FSC because I can stand here tonight and say that the Government stands with STT, with our commitment, to continue pursuing FSC.

Ms Butler did somewhat lead with her chin when she complained that there was only one hour of scrutiny, yet when the draft timetable was circulated your side did not ask for any more.

**Ms Butler** - That is true, so next year we will make sure that we give it the appropriate time.

**Ms COURTNEY** - You just admitted it. The start of your contribution this evening was the fact that we did not give you more time and you have admitted you forgot to ask for more time. How it is somehow this side of the Chamber's fault is perplexing. I am glad we have recognised that because it was not the doing of this side. I would have been more than happy to talk about building and construction for many hours because we are leading the nation with regards to our building and construction figures.

To the member's comments on quad bikes, and I do not want to politicise this because it should not be. Quad bike safety is something we should all be united on and it is something that the Government is pleased to be acting upon. I am looking forward to meeting with ministers with regards to a national approach and the ACCC recommendations. I have written recently to other ministers around this issue. Those are the comments I make on that. I can personally say to you it is something I and the Government are committed to ensuring that people who use quad bikes, whether it is on properties or for recreation, regular users or casual users, that Tasmanians are kept safe. I would be more than happy to continue to update you on that, Ms Butler.

Ms Butler did comment on CBOS: double the work and less money. That assertion was made during Estimates and also this evening. It was unfortunate. My recollection was this was addressed as was the fact that the administration of the act is funded on a cost recovery basis through licence fees paid by practitioners and contractors. The licensing revenue increasing is reflecting the strength of the building and construction industry, which is underpinning the functions that happen. It is erroneous to suggest that funding is going down. This was addressed during Estimates last week.

It is also unfortunate to come in here and start a scare campaign about outlining the people we will sack when it was clearly outlined last week that in terms of our efficiency dividend, we will focus on aspects such as consultants, travel, consumables and vacancy control. It is unfortunate for people to make assertions in here that could create fear within a workplace, which is unnecessary. The men and women who work for the people of Tasmania within the Tasmanian public service should not go to work with fear in their mind that is unfounded, that has been put there by you. While I know there may be some confusion, to again talk this evening about lack of clarity around responsibilities, and I understand there is confusion at times, this was outlined clearly last week.

The aspects I was asked on, particularly with regards to the First Home Builders Grant, in the budget papers it is under the Treasurer's portfolio. Yes, I talk about it, but I talk about a lot of the other policies of my Government. I talk about what Mr Ferguson is doing in Health and the fact that he is investing \$8.1 billion over the forward Estimates and has employed 1000 frontline health professionals. I talk about Mr Jaensch's portfolio and the fact that he is spending \$68 million on housing this year having brought forward \$10 million within this Budget.

To somehow suggest that I cannot go outside this Chamber and talk about other people's portfolio areas is preposterous. I am happy to talk about them, but in Estimates my responsibility is talking about the areas within the Budget that I have responsibility for. I just wanted to clarify that. My time is starting to be limited.

I want to reflect on a lot of the positive things that are happening in these sectors. Both the resources industry and the building and construction industry employ thousands of Tasmanians, many of these are in regional areas and many of these are providing opportunities for young people to get into full time work. I know particularly within the resources industry, the statistics show that the people employed tend to be full-time employees. They tend to be able to have secure jobs, which is really important to be able to underpin communities and underpin families, particularly those in regional areas.

In terms of our forestry, mining and mineral processing industry - so the resources industry - these contribute around \$4 billion to our state each year: thousands of jobs, 5600 in the mining and minerals industry, around the same number in the forestry industry, directly and indirectly. Many of these are in regional areas, as I mentioned.

One thing I would like to touch on before I conclude, and I will speak quickly about building and construction before I turn to this. Within the building and construction industry I want to put on the record this evening how pleased we are that additional funding has been provided, \$700 000, for quad bike safety. Additional funding also has been provided for more workplace inspectors.

In terms of safety of Tasmanians, this is something that is very front of mind. We have passed our PTSD legislation, which is very pleasing to see. We are building on reforms with regard to quad bike safety, which I mentioned earlier with Ms Butler. We are also investing to make sure that we have more workplace inspectors, because we want all Tasmanians to go home safely to their families at the end of each day. That is at the very core of workplace safety and it is something we are building on. I am particularly pleased that we are having an increased focus on mental health.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those people who worked on the bushfire response, particularly for the forestry industry in Tasmania and for those members who were in the south, as well as those Lyons members. This had a huge impact on industry, on jobs, on communities and on families in these regions. There was the immediate response and I was really proud of what I saw across the forestry industry. There were the firefighters we had within STT, Parks and the Fire Service and the people we had volunteering on the ground. The participants we had, particularly at the Southwood site, individuals who were protecting their businesses with bravery and pride. This was really impressive. I would like to mention them this evening.

I also acknowledge the recovery efforts afterwards. I am heartened to see that the Neville Smith processing facility at the Southwood site is back up and running. This is a good thing for that community. It is a good thing for industry. It is wonderful to see the salvaging opportunities, particularly from the private forests are starting to go over the port of Hobart. These are good

initiatives and it shows that we have an industry that is resilient. It shows that we have an industry that can withstand these types of challenges, and the Government is proud to be supporting it in different ways. I pay my thanks and tribute to other ministers around the Chamber and their responsibility areas for getting the power back on so quickly, including the minister, Mr Barnett, because the initiatives came together through government and community support. We saw the three levels of government working very closely together. I want to thank the responsiveness of the councils. I worked very closely with Bec Enders particularly around the Southwood site, which was a credit to those communities. It is something we should be indeed very proud of.

In conclusion, I am very proud to be responsible for these areas I am responsible for. As I mentioned earlier the resources and the building and construction industries employ thousands of Tasmanians in urban and regional areas, and this Government's policies will underpin the sustainability of these industries into the future.

The Budget was about maintaining the momentum, and that is what we are doing. We are making sure that in times of revenue challenges, we are investing money into the right areas to ensure we continue to see this economic growth, continue to see jobs created and, through Jeremy Rockliff's portfolio, continue to see young people trained right across Tasmania to be able to have these opportunities. This party knows that what we can do for these communities is provide jobs for the future. We can provide strong economies. We can provide them with the confidence that they can invest and can build their first home with the support of the Government. They can do that because they have a job they are proud of, one they know they will have in the future. They can build their families and they can underpin communities. That is something I am very proud of and, indeed, I know my colleagues are very proud of that. Through this Budget period we have been able to help underpin the economy and help create those jobs to ensure that going into the future we maintain a strong state in Tasmania.

**Estimates of the Minister for Building and Construction and Minister for Resources agreed to.**

**Progress reported; Committee to sit again.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Affordable Housing Action Plan No. 1**

[9.34 p.m.]

**Mr JAENSCH** (Braddon - Minister for Human Services) - Madam Speaker, I wish to address a point of order raised earlier today by the member for Bass, Ms O'Byrne, where she raised some questions regarding the reporting of the Government's Affordable Housing Action Plan No. 1.

I wish to clarify again the issue of the targets as set out in that action plan. As I stated in the House of Assembly Estimates committee last week when our Affordable Housing Strategy was launched and our first action plan for 2015 to 2019 was published, in the opening pages of that we acknowledged that the issue that Tasmania is facing with housing is one of supply. On page 5 of that document, it states that -

The Government's target is to increase supply by around 900 new homes as well as funding a range of supports ...

It goes onto say -

This includes:

- substantial land release to private developers with the capacity to supply around 250 new lots.
- Around 300 new social housing properties under partnership with local government, private and community sectors ...
- more crisis accommodation.

On page 7, there is a map that outlines the potential new supply and proposed location of that supply. At the bottom of the page it states, 'total new supply of 941 affordable homes, social housing and supported accommodation'. The map lists land release or lots, and supported accommodation facilities or SAFs.

It also refers to standalone homes, some of them are units built for elderly people, some of them are community housing developments, and some of them are lots of land needed in areas that are priced well and set up so you can build homes.

To get the social housing target of 372, we add together from that same map 200 community housing units, 80 private developer grants, six elderly units, four group homes, 12 shovel-ready projects, 40 backyard units and 30 inner city units. This is where we get our target of 372 for social housing. As at the end of May, we are at 316 and we are on track to make 372 and possibly more.

On page 11 of the document titled 'New Affordable Supply Prevention Actions', listed is land release at Somerset, and I quote -

We will subdivide 15 lots and provide community facilities on the former Somerset Primary School site. The lots will be predominantly sold to private home buyers.

We will develop a residential subdivision of approximately 22 serviced lots on land at Devonport.

I confirm that, as reported in the quarterly housing report for June 2018, Somerset yielded 16 lots and Devonport, 23.

On page 19, under the title 'Measuring Success', it again points to residential lots as part of affordable housing supply. What we have is a commitment to increase supply by around 900 new homes. The mechanisms for increasing supply are many. Part of that is releasing land ready to build on in the right areas, for the right home builders and the right first homeowners who require affordable land in the right areas, appropriately zoned. That is part of the supply of that 900 and has been since 2015.

### **Race Horse Death - Brighton Training Grounds**

[9.38 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I am off and racing because I want to speak briefly about the mystery of the horse death at the Brighton training grounds on



Friday, 31 May. I raise this again because I raised it with the minister in Estimates last Thursday night and it was clear that the Office of Racing Integrity had begun an investigation the previous day into information it had received about the death of a horse at the Brighton training grounds on Friday night, 31 May.

I raised it again today in response to the minister's Estimates contribution and asked the question, 'Where is the horse's body?'. The minister got up in response and said it had been confirmed by the Office of Racing Integrity that the horse had been buried. We need to know where the evidence is. It is not enough for the minister to simply say it has been confirmed by the Racing Integrity body that the horse has been buried. We have had no meaningful update to the House about the investigation. If the Office of Racing Integrity has confirmed it has been buried, presumably it has a carcass. If it has the carcass, it should be able to do an autopsy. We should be able to understand what the cause of death of the horse was.

**Mr Jaensch** - Could it have been eaten by something else?

**Ms O'CONNOR** - You raise the interesting question, minister. It would appear that massive equine has evaporated and all we have is an assurance from the Office of Racing Integrity, which began its investigation the day before Estimates, that it has confirmed the horse was buried.

We need to see the evidence that they have confirmed the horse was buried because our information is that the horse's carcass has not been located. That is information from inside the racing industry.

There are legitimate questions to be answered about the welfare of the horse, what happened to that horse and why it died, but there is apparent unwillingness to provide information in the public interest. Unless that information is provided to the House it will smell strongly of a cover-up and we do not want to have that in relation to our racing integrity body. We need to understand how that horse died. We need to understand what the person who was charged with the responsibility of that horse, the trainer, did with that horse's carcass, the body of the horse after it died. At the moment there is no clarity whatsoever. Until the minister produces the evidence of the Office of the Racing Integrity finding that horse's body, we will continue to ask questions.

This is a matter of animal welfare. We do not know how that horse died. We do not know how it was treated. What was alleged to us is that the trainer of that horse was so slack about paying their vets bills the local vets did not want to have anything to do with the trainer of that horse. If you have a person who is not paying their vets bills, are they going to pay for an excavator to bury a horse's body? That is a relevant question. We need to hear from the minister. Where is the evidence that the Office of Racing Integrity has conducted a thorough investigation? Has the Office of Racing Integrity interviewed the trainer of that horse and been taken to the location of the alleged burial? There is no evidence to point to that at all. Given that the results of the investigation into the death of 13 beautiful polo ponies on the *Spirit* in January 2018 is still not known and there has been no transparency about what happened to those horses, it is not unreasonable to be sceptical about this Government's response to animal welfare concerns.

I call on the Minister for Racing to produce evidence in this House that the Office of Racing Integrity has undertaken a thorough investigation, that they have located the body of the dead horse and they have conducted an autopsy to determine how that horse died. I feel around me a level of amusement that I am again talking about the Brighton horse death mystery and asking the question about whether it has been fed to the lions. Unless we in this place ask these questions, no-one will

speak for the animals who are part of this industry. If there is a persistent welfare issue in the racing industry, this House should know about it and should be given the opportunity to deal with it.

### **Member for Braddon, Dr Broad - Educational Qualifications**

[9.43 p.m.]

**Dr BROAD** (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to give a personal explanation. During the resources debate I believe the member for Clark, Ms O'Connor, drew into question my qualifications and used unparliamentary language at which I drew offence. I have not spoken in parliament about my qualifications apart from discussing the title of my thesis in my first speech. To be awarded a doctoral degree or a doctor of philosophy required about eight years of hard work at university. As a scientist I have published a number of publications in a number of different formats. For the benefit of the member for Clark, I might list some of those so that she may not draw into question my qualifications in future and so I may not need to take offence.

She might be very interested to look at some of these because they relate to some of her own personal interests. I believe the member for Clark is taking over from the position of the former member for Braddon, who consistently drew into question my qualifications by calling me the so-called doctor.

For people's benefit, the first doctoral degree was awarded in medieval Paris in around 1150. It may have had even earlier precursors in the Islamic madrasahs. The first doctor of philosophy was awarded in Germany in around 1650, well before any medical doctor. The first official recognition of a doctor being a medical practitioner without a PhD was in 1838. The title of doctor, as applied to my qualifications, dates back almost 1000 years. After eight years of hard work, I was awarded a doctoral degree. This was based on my thesis, which was published in 2007 and has been referenced a number of times internationally and has been downloaded some 4000 to 5000 times.

**Ms O'Connor** - I take it all back. You are a genius.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, Dr Broad has a right to feel insulted and this is interesting.

**Dr BROAD** - When you call my qualifications into question, I have the right to defend myself.

Some of the things I have published are *Estimating Annual Generation Rates of Total P and Total N in Different Land Uses in Tasmania*, which was published in the *Journal of Environmental Management*; *Agronomic and Gross Margin Analysis of Insect Pest-Suppressive Broccoli Cropping System*, published in *Agricultural Systems*; I could go through the insect papers but that is not as exciting as *Comparing the Risk of Phosphorus Runoff Following Single and Split Phosphorus Fertilizer Applications in Two Contrasting Catchments ...* and the *Upper Murrumbidgee Water Quality Pilot Study*. Moving into some of the other published work: *Estimating Nutrient Loads and Turbidity in Tasmanian Catchments*; *Land Tenure, Land Use, Land Management Alternatives* and so on; *Alternative Forms of Land Tenure* -

**Members** interjecting.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, I am going to ask you to be respectful. This is an impressive resume and we should take on board what Dr Broad is saying.

**Dr BROAD** - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am not really trying -

**Dr Woodruff** - Maybe there is something a little laughable about a member puffing themselves up so much in parliamentary time.

**Madam SPEAKER** - No, Dr Woodruff, you would have taken umbrage if someone was rude about your title. Please proceed, Dr Broad.

**Dr BROAD** - Madam Speaker, I am highlighting that my qualifications have been earned. One of the issues with a PhD is that when I went to university, I did not know what a PhD was. I was probably halfway through my first year before I knew what a PhD was. I came from the north-west coast and I did not know anybody who had a doctorate. Part of the reason why I am stating this is because people need to know there are qualifications at the university that are at a higher level than a bachelor's degree. We need more doctorates in society. We need more in the north-west coast. The north-west coast has some of the lowest -

**Mr Barnett** - What about masters?

**Dr BROAD** - Masters is the step in between so congratulations, well done. The north-west coast has some of the lowest educational attainment in the country and part of that is based on ignorance of what is available. I am simply highlighting that somebody from the north-west coast can do quite well and achieve the highest qualification possible at the university. I draw umbrage to having my qualifications questioned. That is why I have drawn offence and the member should be cautious. When the member questions my qualifications, she does not only question me. She questions the University of Tasmania, which awarded me those qualifications.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Thank you, Dr Broad. I am impressed.

### ***Past Tense - Julie Gough Exhibition at TMAG***

[9.48 p.m.]

**Ms BUTLER** (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, on Friday evening just past, I was honoured to attend the opening of Tasmanian Artist, Julie Gough's exhibition *Past Tense* at TMAG. The exhibition will run until November this year. I thoroughly enjoyed it and suggest that anyone who has the opportunity to attend this exhibition should. I attended with my family and we were deeply moved by the exhibition. It is very powerful. The exhibition uncovers and engages with Tasmania's violent past and colonial history. It also deals with the artist's own family story as both 'oppressors and oppressed'. Some of the delicate yet powerful artwork is absolutely fabulous and something we should be encouraging all students to attend, especially school students from grade 5 up.

It talks about the lack of proper education that we receive about that colonial past in Tasmania. The artworks show these fabulous early Tasmanian colonial landscapes with everyone waving at each other and looking so happy but the brutality in what was actually going on at that time was real and significant. We need to make sure that we certainly understand as Tasmanians what happened and pay respect to the descendants of those people who were murdered. They were massacred and this exhibition deals with what happened in a very, very powerful way.

There are journals and there are historical artefacts as well that are part of the exhibition. Augustus Robinson's journals from the time are there talking about the Tasmanian Aboriginal

people at that time as very much not as even being human. It is something we need to make sure we understand as a cosmopolitan society, to make sure that we never go down that track again.

I implore everybody to visit TMAG and have a look at Julie Gough's fabulous exhibition. It is world class.

### **Northern Tasmanian Football Association - Game Day**

[9.51 p.m.]

**Ms COURTNEY** (Bass - Minister for Resources) - Madam Speaker, I speak tonight with delight to congratulate the Northern Tasmanian Football Association on their hugely successful representative game day in Launceston over the weekend last. I am very proud indeed to be Patron of the NTFA.

It was wonderful to have this played at Invermay Park with its popular playing surface. Although it was a bit misty to start with at the beginning and a bit cold the sun did shine by the end of it and it was wonderful to see a crowd of more than 1600. It was a fabulous family day out and it was also wonderful for them to be able to host this as a free event for people to come and enjoy and welcome New Horizons to raise money at the gate for that popular club in Launceston.

The crowd was treated to the Under 18s clash between the NTFA and the NWFL, women's game between the NTFAW and the Southern League and the seniors contest between the NTFA and the NWFL.

I take this opportunity to recognise the leadership teams of the NTFA sides. With regard to the NTFA Women's team to coach Cabel Hall, Assistant Coach Rob Beams, Captain Letitia Johnston, and Vice Captains Emily Perkins and Courtney Sharman. To the NTFA Under 18s: coach Jake Lowe, Assistant Coach Rob Moore, captain Jack de Wit, and vice captain Ned Carr, and the NTFA Women's, the coach Anthony Taylor, assistant coaches Jack Maher, Anthony Axton, Andrew Cox-Goodyer, captain Lee Harding and vice captains Mark Walsh and Allan O'Sign.

The three NTFA rep sides played and they were strong and competitive on the day. We unfortunately did not take home a gong in any of the matches but I want to recognise the best players on field. Dylan Smith from the NWFL and Jake Pearce from the NTFA side for the senior's game. For the Under 18s, Thomas Liefhebber from the NWFL, and Declan Bowditch from the NTFA, and for the Women's Tiarna Ford from the SFLW and Scottsdale's Raigan Kettle, the best northern player.

I thank the leadership of Scott Rigby in this event. His support of the NTFA and also, in particular, his support of grassroots and the building patronage in women's football in northern Tasmania. His personal support for the women's league is impressive and genuine, and it is something that I am very delighted to be a part of and I am very proud to be patron.

I also pay tribute to the many volunteers who make these events happen. It is often those around the field who do not necessarily get the glory of victories, that do not run out with the team, but they are the ones that make it happen. Within the office, Reg Lyons who is the GM, Trudy Rundle who does an amazing job as the Administration Officer, and Rick Fontyn, who has come along as the manager, Media and Marketing, is doing wonderful role within the NTFA.

The NTFA match managers, the Senior Men, Geoff Skeggs; the Under 18 Men, Anthony Gibbons; the NTFAW, Susie Gibbons; and Ground Manager, Jimmy Hammersley. The NTFA trainers, Ernie Blackberry, Steve Pubello, Bruce Bell, Debbie Goss, John Barrett and time keepers who bring much joy and enthusiasm and passion, Trudy Rundle and Vicky Winley.

I thank you all and I am proud and delighted to be associated with the NTFA and looking forward to being so for many years to come.

### **Member for Braddon, Dr Broad - Educational Qualifications**

[9.55 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, since Dr Broad has spent seven minutes of parliament's time having a spray at Ms O'Connor and completely misunderstanding her comments about his qualifications -

**Dr BROAD** - Point of order, Madam Speaker.

**Madam SPEAKER** - I do have a point of order and I believe he took umbrage.

**Dr BROAD** - Standing order 127. Personal explanation, it says 'that such matters shall not be debated'.

**Madam SPEAKER** - I am reluctantly advised that it is not a point of order. I understand your concerns. I would like it if we could play nice in this place.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - I will play really nice, Madam Speaker. The point is that Dr Broad utterly misunderstands the point that Ms O'Connor had made when she was talking about being perplexed about his qualifications. I am a doctor of Epidemiology and I won't spend parliamentary time talking about the detail of my qualifications or anything like that.

What I understand, as a doctor of science, is that when you do a PhD, you ought to, in my view, have an understanding about logic, about rationality and particularly an understanding about evidence. The way that Dr Broad votes, and the comments he makes time and again in this place, have first of all surprised and then shocked me that a man with a PhD in science so can so utterly reject the evidence and science in motions that we bring into this house.

Three examples come instantly to mind. First of all, Dr Broad voted against the best legislation in this country on voluntary assisted dying. The best. A conscience vote - and he voted against it. All the evidence for it but he voted against it. He voted with ideology and with politics.

The second one, the marine farming review panel. How could a man of science possibly continue to defend to the hilt this Government's toxic marine farm review panel with only five out of nine members on it making an approval for Storm Bay, the largest salmon expansion in the state ever, against all the science, against all the benchmarks of evidence with no one on the panel with any credibility?

Finally, a man of science, a doctor of philosophy, how could he possibly have cooked up an amendment to the Greens motion to call a state of climate emergency in Tasmania? The United Nations International Panel of Climate Change, a thousand scientists, the best in the world, peer

reviewed, all in agreement that we must act on this as an issue of urgency, it is an emergency and he cooked up a politically motivated amendment to that motion.

Frankly, I am tired of it. Let's get on and talk about the evidence. Let's try to make change that is based on the reality of what we are working with and not going with ideology and cooking it up as science.

### **Tasmanian Bus Association - Annual Conference**

[9.59 a.m.]

**Mr TUCKER** (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I suppose I should put on the record that I am a farmer.

**Madam SPEAKER** - There you go, congratulations.

**Mr TUCKER** - It was an honour to attend the Tasmanian Bus Association annual conference and dinner on Saturday, 1 June, which was held at the Country Club at Prospect. The Tasmanian Bus Association began back in 1947 as the Tasmanian School Bus Association, which was formed following the commencement of school bus transport in the early 1940s. During 1999, the TSBA executive appointed a full-time general manager together with changes to the association structure. The current structure became a reality in 2001 when a new structure was implemented and a board of directors appointed. Since completion of the new structure, member services have expanded with the biggest execution being the development of the wholly-owned subsidiary company, TBA Services, as the trading arm of TBA.

TBAS is now the major provider of passenger vehicle inspections in Tasmania. From 2004-08, the TBA played a leading role in implementing the new bus cost model together with the new service contracts. Since development of the TBA, the association has grown to a point where it is now regarded as a professional organisation, respected both locally and nationally through the passenger transport industry. The TBA is committed to serving the interests of its members in the community to ensure safe, reliable, efficient services, and to maintain community service values in the delivery of road passenger transport operations.

To ensure the future sustainability of Tasmania's land transport system, and to provide Tasmanian communities a viable, alternative travel choice and ensure services meet the mobility requirements of all in the community, it is important to promote the Tasmanian bus industry in partnership with government.

The goals of the Tasmanian Bus Association are to protect the ongoing viability of the Tasmanian bus industry; develop and implement policies that improve the efficiency and professionalism of the Tasmanian bus industry; provide assistance and advice to bus operators on issues which will impact on their businesses; promote industry unity and professionalism; and stimulate employment opportunities and job security with the industry by encouraging sustainable growth of business - something that the Labor Party should probably be listening to because I know they fall asleep in the bus shelter.

Each year the Tasmanian Bus Association presents awards on the evening and this year there were two awards announced. The 2019 industry achiever award went to Leonie Jack, of Jacks Coaches, Longford. Jacks Coaches are a Tasmanian bus company, a family owned business. David

and Leonie Jack purchased their first bus over 30 years ago and have now grown to a fleet of 17 vehicles, specialising in weddings, the wedding days, and extended touring, local transfers and school services.

The second award was given to the director of the Tasmanian Bus Association, Ian Garth, who was given life membership. Life membership is an honour recognising outstanding contributions. Indeed, a significant, incredible achievement to both Jacks Coaches and director, Ian Garth in receiving these most prestigious and deserving awards.

### **Campania Fire Brigade - 50-Year celebration**

### **Sorell Bowls Club - AGM and Presentations**

### **Oatlands Bowls Club - Presentations**

[10.03 p.m.]

**Ms WHITE** (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about some of the community activities that have been occurring across my electorate of Lyons.

I had the great pleasure of attending the Campania Fire Brigade's 50-year celebration and that was held a couple of Saturdays ago and this is a testament for the strength of the local community. This service organisation has continued for such a long time. It was established after the 1967 bushfires, which I think is when many of Tasmania's rural and regional fire brigades began because they felt that was one way they could help prepare and protect their communities in the event of any future bushfires.

Robin Howlett spoke and he was recognised for his many years of service to the Campania Fire Brigade; and Kate Gillham, the 2019 winner of the Volunteering Tasmania Emergency Service Awards also gave a brilliant speech and was incredibly inspiring to listen to.

The Campania Fire Brigade is unique in that it has a 50:50 male/female split of members and volunteers, and they are quite big number of young members that are participating in the Campania Fire Brigade too. I was thrilled to see that they have many generations of families there supporting that important organisation. They look to have a very good future ahead of them.

I took my daughter, Mia, along. She was very excited to see the fire trucks but was a bit reluctant to get in the fire truck. She had the opportunity to sit up the front but was not so thrilled to do that when we took the chance to sit inside the truck but she had a lovely day as well.

I thank the Campania Fire Brigade for inviting me to join with them to celebrate 50 years.

I also recognise the Sorell Bowls Club who invited me to attend their presentation event they held recently as part of their AGM and to recognise the players who had represented the Sorell Bowls Club in the past season. I congratulate John Scott, the new President, and the new members of the Executive on the important responsibility they have now to lead Sorell Bowls Club and to also thank the outgoing Executive and congratulate them for all of their work particularly because they oversaw the redevelopment that has occurred which has made it a much more attractive venue for them and much more fit for purpose. I look forward to continuing to work with the club and supporting them as they prepare for the new season.

Again my daughter, Mia, joined me for this event. She was a little bit shy to start with but she warmed up after she had a couple of party pies and started running around. I thank Gwen for sharing the last party pie. That was very kind because all she wanted was a party pie and there were none left. Thank you, Gwen, for sharing the last party pie.

Finally, I recognise the Oatlands Bowls Club who invited me to attend their trophy presentation on 1 June. It is another lovely community club where everyone supports one another. We had a traditional home cooked meal, terrific company, and members and players were recognised for their efforts in the last season. They have a very strong club there. I have no doubt they will continue to have a lot of success for many years to come and look forward to continuing to support that club and wish them all the very best for the upcoming season.

**The House adjourned at 10.07 p.m.**