



**PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF DEBATES**

**Tuesday 17 October 2023**

**REVISED EDITION**



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**Tuesday 17 October 2023**

The President, **Mr Farrell**, took the Chair at 11.00 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

## **QUESTION ON NOTICE**

### **43. BUSHFIRE SHELTERS**

[11.09 a.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I have the answer to question number 43 on the Notice Paper for the member for Murchison about bushfire shelters.

**Ms FORREST** asked the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, **Mrs HISCUTT** -

Noting the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) website states 'there is no conclusive evidence that private bushfire shelters are safe to use', and 'The 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission found conflicting evidence where seven people died in private bushfire shelters whilst others claimed that a shelter may have saved their lives', and that 'The Commission concluded that extreme caution should be taken with respect to the use of private bushfire shelters', can the Government advise:

- (1) How these claims can be reconciled with:
  - (a) the final report of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission which supported the use of private bushfire shelters, particularly as noted in Recommendation 4;
  - (b) the adoption of performance standards for private bushfire shelters in the National Construction Code;
  - (c) the accreditation of at least one private bushfire shelter by the Victorian Building Authority that meets the requirements of the National Construction Code;
  - (d) research by the CSIRO that found in the 2009 fires in Victoria two people died in bushfire shelters of their own design while nine people survived; and
  - (e) that in the 2019 fires six households sheltered in approved bushfire bunkers and none came to harm even though three of their houses were destroyed?
- (2) If the claims about private bushfire shelters made by the TFS are not supported by the evidence but nonetheless discourage Tasmanian householders from installing private bushfire shelters of the kind approved in Victoria, what risk could this advice from the TFS pose to the safety of Tasmanians living in bushfire-prone areas?

**Mrs HISCUTT** replied -

- In Tasmania, home owners are able to have private bushfire shelters installed or constructed if they comply with the requirements of the National Construction Code, the Building Act 2016 and Building Regulations 2016.
- Home owners must be provided with the necessary approvals including a Certificate of Likely Compliance issued by a licensed building surveyor, and a Building Permit issued by the relevant permit authority.
- These standards and approval requirements are to ensure that such buildings are satisfactorily constructed and meet all necessary safety specifications.

Turning to your particular questions:

- (1) (a) The Tasmanian Government accepted the recommendations of all reports arising from the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

In respect to private bushfire shelters, this includes:

- (i) ensuring appropriate criteria are in place where no other options are available.
- (ii) acknowledging that private bushfire shelters are a 'fall back' option.

The Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) advice accords with those recommendations of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

- (b) The Tasmanian Building Act 2016 and Building Regulations 2016 regulate building work within Tasmania. The Building Act 2016 requires all building work, plumbing work and demolition must comply with the National Construction Code.
- (c) The TFS website provides an advice document about private bushfire shelters, including support to individuals wanting to construct a Class 10c building by providing information on:
- (i) relevant criteria, being the National Construction Code.
  - (ii) regulatory pathway, design, and maintenance requirements.
- (d) It is noted that those shelters that existed at that time were not regulated, nor were there specific criteria for their design, construction, and maintenance. The National Construction Code has since been adapted to provide performance criteria for such buildings, and the CSIRO points to the National Construction Code as the relevant performance criteria for these.

The advice provided by the TFS regarding the use of private bushfire shelters and criteria for their construction is consistent with that promoted by the CSIRO and reflects contemporary research and policy on this matter.

- (e) The TFS website provides an advice document about private bushfire shelters. This advice notes the evidence that people have both perished and survived when using private bushfire shelters, and that this option is not without risk.
- (2) The TFS's strong advice continues that households should be prepared for bushfires, including preparing their properties and implementing a Bushfire Survival Plan. Leaving early is always the safest option. This message is strongly communicated by the TFS through its dedicated public education programs.

## **TABLED PAPER**

### **Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts - Report - Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Continuing Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

[11.12 a.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, I have the honour to present the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts No. 25 of 2023: Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Continuing Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic - Preparation for the State Border Re-opening on 15 December 2021.

Mr President, I move -

That the report be received and printed.

**Report received and printed.**

**Ms FORREST** - Mr President, I move -

That consideration of the report and its noting be made an order of the day.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **RESIDENTIAL BUILDING (HOME WARRANTY INSURANCE AMENDMENTS) BILL 2023 (No. 13)**

**House of Assembly Agreed to Council Amendments**

**The House of Assembly advised that it agreed to the Council amendments.**

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Member for Pembroke**

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the member for Pembroke, Mr Edmunds, be granted leave of absence from the service of the Council for this week of sitting.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS**

### **Scottsdale High School Cattle Handling Program**

[11.17 a.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre) - Mr President, I recently had the opportunity, with many others, to attend the open day at the Stronach View Farm Campus celebrating 25 years of the Scottsdale High School cattle handling program. This celebration had two key events, one on site at the school farm and the other an evening celebration which, to the delight of organisers, was attended by the Honourable Jo Palmer. I contacted Kylie Rattray-Cassidy, a Scottsdale High School teacher who is the current Stronach View Farm and Angus Stud coordinator to source the accurate history of the cattle handling program. Kylie kindly shared her notes from the evening event, which I will read almost directly from her words:

Thank you to Mrs Deanna Scott for her recap of the first 10 years of the program ... Deanna was a leading light in this space and paved the way for our present program. I often remind our current students just how lucky they are! When I started, we had a show box, a set of leather halters, bale string lead ropes and some golf clubs converted into show canes. And those white coats! Very impractical. There were no blowers, no clipping chutes, no clippers, no fancy stuff. Over the years, we have been able to build up our equipment through generous donations, winning prize money and hard work. The year we won the Grand Champion and the Reserve Grand Champion carcass at Sheffield, we bought our first cattle blower. This was a big deal. Chris Hall then very generously donated our trailer, the envy of all schools, and Alan Willis did the modification.

In 2020, we were fortunate enough to receive funds to upgrade our cattle yards to their current format. Prior to that, the farm board had made many improvements, again with funds available from the farm board volunteer input. This included the Lance Hall practice arena, new toilets and changerooms. Many of our early cattle handlers would remember the old arena, if you could call it that; a temporary electric fence tape down on the grass in front of the classroom.

Mind you, Mr President, the classrooms are a former old residence and they need to be upgraded.

It was a challenge with newly broken in cattle to keep them contained, at the same time keep your footing. What a huge improvement our facilities have undertaken in the last 25 years and all for the benefit of our students. ...



The first show team I coordinated back in 2009 was a team of three Angus heifers ... I can't imagine that now, having broken in and shown teams of up to 24 cattle. These days we only show by the truckload.

Mr Lance Hall of Quarterway Angus was the first stud to entrust us with his valuable livestock. Mr Hall would call into the farm whenever he knew cattle handling and training was on, and you could see the students' spirits lift by his presence in the yards. He would always have his wooden stick at the ready, to give a heifer a good talking to if it played up. I still recall my first year of showing, and just prior to the Launceston show I must have overdone the grain feeding and the cattle got the runs ...

But I will not share that today.

In 2013, I was finally able to convince the farm board at the time we should start our own Angus stud. I still recall that meeting, where I tabled my proposal, and was faced with negativity, it's too expensive, there will be too much paperwork and how long are you staying for? Ten years on and it's probably safe to say it was a good move.

That year we purchased our first stud cow, Quarterway Ellenor, and boy, was she a handful ...

However, it wasn't all fair sailing, things never are. Ellenor's first bull calf was born with an ugly big birthmark and shortly after injured his hip.

The stud continued to grow.

The establishment of Stronach View Angus stud has been a pivotal point for our program and students. The cattle are born here on farm and grow up with the students around. The students get to know the cattle from the start and the cattle get to know the students. It's a win, win.

I think back to my early years, where we would break the cattle like we were at the rodeo. Thank goodness, this is not necessary anymore. I will often talk to our handlers about my first experiences when I started in the cattle handling program. I would take notice of what Mrs Scott was up to and wonder why she spent so much time 'playing' with cattle. What was the point?

In 2009, I inherited the cattle handling reins, or leads in this case, after Deanna retired. I'll be honest, I wasn't thrilled about the situation, but I accepted the challenge. I can still remember this day, the afternoon when Chris Hall passed me a lead rope with an Angus cow on the end of it and said 'Hold this'. I nearly died of fright.

15 years on and I can't imagine not doing it. My life is planned around the show season. I must pay tribute to the late Mr Lance Hall, Chris Hall and Brian Medcraft for their mentoring early in the program. Without your

patience, expertise and support, I wouldn't have developed the skills to continue on the program.

I love this line:

Cattle handling is not just big hats, flash boots and bling, it's really hard work. You may have been fortunate enough to hear the ABC radio interview this week, where [two of the cattle handlers] Adara and Ajana spoke. They said, 'You just don't show up on show day!' It takes weeks of preparation and practice to train your animal to be prepared for the show ring.

Isn't that a fact, Mr President?

... Show day can be very stressful, washing, cleaning, and preparing your animal only for it to wipe snot over your freshly ironed clean shirt or you have done your very best to train your animal and she plays up a treat in the showring. At every show, we have tears and tantrums, mostly it's the students, sometimes it might be me. This builds resilience and the ability to get back up and have another go.

This year, we had one of the handlers [Adara Hall] finally win the big prize one at a show - Champion Handler of the show. This is awarded to the best overall handler for the show regardless of their age. This handler has been participating in the program since Grade 3, when she tagged along with her older sister, who I might add, was also an outstanding handler. We just couldn't keep her away from the cattle.

That shows the commitment, Mr President.

... Over the years we have travelled around the State and had many great shows and some funny experiences. We've had handlers in water troughs while waiting to go in the showring, our bulls play fighting and tearing the front off the stalls at Westbury, handlers who 'loose' their heifers at the show, ...

Quite an array of events.

This longstanding program, the Scottsdale High School Cattle Handling Program, is what it is as a result of a strong community that pulls together to support our young people and their future. For over 25 years, it's been the generosity of the people, businesses and our cattle handling family, who have kept this program running. I would hate to begin to add up the volunteer hours that have supported it.

Kylie and her husband, Matt, have been exceptional in their work in supporting those cattle handlers at the Scottsdale High School.

It is estimated that about 350 students have been involved in the cattle handling program at Scottsdale High over the 25 years. It is an absolute credit to the previous teachers and now

our own Kylie Rattray-Cassidy for the work that they do. I wish them all the best for the upcoming show season.

## **Volleyball Tasmania**

[11.26 a.m.]

**Mr GAFFNEY** (Mersey) - Mr President, before I start, I congratulate the member for Windermere on his elevation to the ministry and wish him all the best in his new role and responsibility. Congratulations.

This morning I bring the sport of volleyball and the role and importance of Volleyball Tasmania to the attention of all members.

Volleyball Tasmania is the recognised state volleyball body under Volleyball Australia Limited, a dedicated group of enthusiasts fostering vibrant and inclusive volleyball experiences within our community, striving to promote health, teamwork and community engagement.

Volleyball is actually one of the most well-liked sports with approximately 900 million participants and fans across the world. Unfortunately, in this state and country, unlike other countries, volleyball does not receive the same due recognition, media attention or financial support as many of our traditional sports.

Volleyball can be played almost anywhere - in a stadium, on the beach or even in the backyard - with the only requirements being a net, which could be a rope strung between two trees, and a ball. Given this disparity, Volleyball Tasmania's priorities are to promote, develop and coordinate the sport of volleyball - indoor and beach - at all levels; foster inclusiveness, equality and protect members from harm; foster skill development and promote social priorities to ensure an enjoyable experience, and to engage migrant communities to explore participation opportunities and partnerships.

Community volleyball at the Port Sorell Banksia Stadium in my own electorate is a perfect example that welcomes international workers and fruit pickers to its fully inclusive teams and rosters. It builds partnerships with specialist organisations, such as Disability Services, and/or mental health providers to enhance engagement from all members of the community, including the aim of delivering a sitting volleyball program and, finally, it encourages collaboration within the school network to enhance student participation opportunities.

As many of us recognise, a successful sport needs a healthy junior development program, or JDP. Volleyball Tasmania is proud to say they have an excellent program, led by an experienced director of coaching, Adrien, ably supported by a dedicated team of volunteers.

Adrien was appointed as head coach of the Australian Men's under-16 team and comes with 20 years experience in coaching volleyball across a wide variety of organisations and performance levels.

Tasmania's JDP runs annual talent ID camps, bringing skilful young players to the attention of Australia's national coaches. It bodes well for the future of this sport to know that

there are currently over 100 athletes attending the weekly JDP training sessions, striving to be selected in the Tasmanian state junior and youth teams.

In 2023, four Tasmanian volleyball teams competed at the Australian Junior Championships in Sydney; another five teams went to the Australian Youth Volleyball Championships in Bendigo to compete against other states and territories.

It is always an eye-opener for our young athletes to come up against the bigger and better resourced states. However, I am aware they were able to hold their own and can be very proud of their performance and I am sure the Government's recently extended junior travel assistance program will play a big part in their ability to participate at future championships.

Tasmanian volleyball teams are always praised for their spirit, and individual players on their behaviour. We might be a small state but we set very high standards, and the more exposure our young athletes come up against at a higher level with the success of JDP, the sport of volleyball in Tasmania looks very promising.

In recent years, state team youth members have been selected to attend national camps. Selection for the camps is based on an individual's performance in youth championships and other events held throughout the year and camps are restricted to athletes identified as having potential to make future Australian teams.

In 2023, Volleyball Tasmania launched its Road to Brisbane program, a high-performance pilot program of 16 athletes with the aim of getting Tasmanian athletes selected for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic squads. This program is available to athletes who show the will, determination, ability and commitment to represent their nation at the Olympic level.

I am happy to say that as well as developing grassroots athletes, Volleyball Tasmania also supports and coordinates an elite women's and men's team aptly called the Echidnas.

My colleagues may be interested to know that a spike is the terminology used for an attacking move in the game of volleyball. I think we can all make the association between that definition and the clever use of the Echidnas' team name.

In 2022, the Echidnas participated in the Australian Volleyball League with some great results. It was unfortunate that they were not able to gain a licence to compete in the inaugural 2023 Australian Volleyball Super League, or the AVSL competition. However, the Echidnas are participating in a number of interstate tournaments this year and hosting interstate teams in Tasmania.

The Echidnas' aim is to be included in the AVSL in the not-too-distant future. Volleyball Tasmania's challenge is to continue developing the talent and gaining sponsorship and funding to cover the cost of participating in the AVSL but attracting sponsorship for a minor sport is not easy.

Members, we understand that, as with every sport, facilities, funding and partnerships are an integral part of being sustainable whilst improving the sport both at the social fun and fitness level and continuing to cater for the talented elite individual. In order to increase participation,

you need sufficient facilities. However, to gain facilities one needs to demonstrate increased numbers in participation.

Volleyball Tasmania has a dedicated board, together with a team of hardworking and capable volunteers who donate their time and efforts to enable the volleyball community to thrive. Without suitable beach and indoor facilities and the monetary means to do this, volleyball may well cease to exist in its current form. This would be an absolute tragedy as volleyball is a sport that caters for all ages, genders, body types and abilities.

As a former physical education teacher, I understand the importance of sports like volleyball, which appeals to most students as there is less body contact and perhaps a greater emphasis on team fun and cooperation.

I have been fortunate to represent Tasmania in a number of sports, and indoor volleyball is one of them. However, my all-time favourite 'fun in the sun' sport has to be beach volleyball. As an aside, my volleyball partner Brendan Schmidt and I were ranked number one in Tasmanian beach pairs for a substantial period of time in the late 1980s and early 1990s when Loughrans sponsored the statewide beach volleyball championships to the tune of \$25 000 for prizes. Members of my family were surprised to receive microwaves, toaster ovens, sandwich makers, video cassette recorders and small televisions for Christmas presents that year.

Whitegoods aside, whilst there has been a mention of playing in a certain stadium being aspirational for our young girls and boys to become AFL footballers, I believe there are a myriad of minor sports such as hockey, soccer, basketball, badminton, netball, table tennis, swimming, athletics, tennis and even frisbee golf - or, as I have been reliably informed, disc golf - which provide the natural social structures, skills, fitness and capacity to keep many more Tasmanians engaged in a sport. This is a more realistic way that will improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and encourage the long-term participation in health and sporting activities well into middle age and beyond.

Volleyball is one of the most enjoyable sports on offer with much less risk of physical injury than corporatised sports like AFL. Yet, sponsorship deals for these more community-focused sports would not be as forthcoming if we, as a state, put all of our financial eggs into one AFL basket as a single multi-use stadium at the affluent end of the state.

It is both heartening and inspiring to know that Volleyball Tasmania is on a mission to have representation in the 2032 Olympic Games in Brisbane and they would love to be able to bring their supporters and wider community with them.

Volleyball Tasmania encourages anyone who wishes to invest in the future of the sport of volleyball, its participants and wider community to please contact them to discuss how that can be achieved and how they can work together in partnership. I assist Volleyball Tasmania sponsorship when I can and if any member has the capacity to assist, I am certain the board of Volleyball Tasmania and its members would be extremely grateful.

## **RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Members, I welcome to the Chamber today students from Year 9 at Hutchins School. At the moment, we have just finished our Special Interest Matters, where

honourable members have five minutes to speak on topics of interest either in their electorate or elsewhere. That happens every Tuesday, which is private members' day, and then we will go on further with our Orders of the Day and look at other business that members have brought to the Council for discussion. I am sure all honourable members will welcome you to the Legislative Council today, and I hope you enjoy your tour of the Tasmanian parliament.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Ministerial Appointments**

[11.35 a.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, on behalf of the Premier, I wish to advise the Council of ministerial appointments:

- Jeremy Rockliff MP as Premier, Minister for State Development, Trade and the Antarctic, Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, and Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- Michael Ferguson MP as Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, and Minister for Planning.
- Guy Barnett MP as Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Health, and Minister for Veterans' Affairs.
- Nick Duigan MLC as Minister for Energy and Renewables, Minister for Parks, Minister for Heritage, and Minister for Small Business.
- Felix Ellis MP as Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth, Minister for Resources, Minister for Racing, and Leader of the House.
- Roger Jaensch MP as Minister for Education, Children and Youth, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.
- Madeleine Ogilvie MP as Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation, Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs, Minister for Science and Technology, Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries, and Minister for the Arts.
- Jo Palmer MLC as Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Minister for Community Services and Development, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence.
- Nic Street MP as Minister for Housing and Construction, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister for Stadia and Events.

The honourable Leonie Hiscutt MLC continues as Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, and the honourable Jane Howlett MLC is appointed as Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council.

## **MOTIONS**

### **Joint Sessional Committee on Gender and Equality - Change in Membership**

[11.38 a.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the member for Windermere, Mr Duigan, be discharged from the Joint Sessional Committee on Gender and Equality, and the member for Prosser, Ms Howlett, be appointed to the resulting vacancy.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, I move -

That a message be transmitted to the House of Assembly acquainting that House accordingly.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Legislative Council Government Administration Committees A and B - Ministerial Portfolios**

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the following revised list of ministerial portfolios be allocated to the Legislative Council Government Administration Committees A and B as a result of ministerial portfolio changes, and further -

That Committee A comprise: the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer, the Minister for Instruction and Transport, the Minister for Planning, the Minister for Primary Industries and Water, the Minister for Disability Services, the Minister for Community Services and Development, the Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence, the Minister for Energy and Renewables, the Minister for Parks, the Minister for Small Business, the Minister for Heritage, the Minister for Education, Children and Youth, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, the Minister for Resources, the Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth, and the Minister for Racing.

That Committee B comprise: the Premier, the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, the Minister for State Development, Trade and the Antarctic, the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, the Minister for Housing and

Construction, the Minister for Stadia and Events, the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Minister for Local Government, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Justice, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs, the Minister for the Arts, the Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries, and the Minister for Science and Technology.

Further, I move -

That the member for Windermere, Mr Duigan, be discharged from Committee A, so that he does not have to examine himself.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Select Committee on the Provisions of the University of Tasmania Act 1992 -  
Change in Membership**

**Mr VALENTINE** (Hobart) (by leave) - Mr President, while I congratulate the member for Windermere for his elevation to the ministry, it does necessitate that I move -

That the member for Windermere, Mr Duigan, be discharged from the Select Committee on the Provisions of the University of Tasmania Act 1992.

**Motion agreed to.**

**MOTION**

**Consideration and Noting - Government Response to the Report of the Legislative Council Select Committee on Road Safety in Tasmania**

[11.41 a.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Mr President, I move -

That the Government Response to the Report of the Legislative Council Select Committee on Road Safety in Tasmania (No. 31 of 2022) be considered and noted.

Mr President, at the time of the report, it was noted that Tasmania had the worst road safety of any state with 6.6 deaths per 100 000 population, which was far higher than the best performing state - Victoria - which had 3.17 deaths per 100 000.

It has been a journey that commenced back in 2021, but in the world of policy and change, every step counts. During this period, the composition of our committee evolved, as some members departed and new ones joined. I thank all members of the committee, no matter how long they served, as well as our committee secretary for the final report that paints a vivid picture of the state of road safety in Tasmania.



I also extend my sincere gratitude to all the members of the public who actively engaged with the inquiry, whether it was through making submissions or providing testimony during our hearings. Their contributions were invaluable. The level of buy-in from stakeholders and organisations that participated was heartening, and it was a testament to the fact that road safety in Tasmania is a concern that transcends boundaries. Many individuals in our state, whether directly or indirectly, have been touched by the heartbreaking impact of road accidents. The devastation caused by casualties on our roads is a shared burden that we must collectively bear.

While we all hold a responsibility and stake in road safety, it is the Government that is entrusted with the duty of enacting policies, plans and legislation designed to reduce and, ultimately, eliminate deaths and injuries on our roads. The numbers speak for themselves, and I commend the Government for taking our select inquiry's report with the gravity it warrants. It should be noted that during our committee hearings and deliberations, the Government did implement many of our recommendations along the way. That was very heartening to see.

Each year, approximately 300 people in Tasmania face serious injuries or lose their lives on our roads. The objective of the Towards Zero Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy is unequivocal: to witness fewer than 200 deaths and serious injuries by 2026. The Government has pledged its commitment to this vision, earmarking over \$75 million in the Towards Zero Action Plan for the years 2020-2024. This comprehensive plan encompasses 42 evidence-based initiatives across key areas including: making rural roads safer; improving safety in towns and cities; saving young lives; promoting safer road use; ensuring the safety of visitors; and enhancing safety through vehicles and technology.

Over the past half century, we have made significant strides in reducing road fatalities and injuries despite a five-fold increase in registered vehicles. However, recent data signals that our progress has plateaued. Unless we change course, reaching the 2026 target is in jeopardy.

The introduction of the Automated Traffic Enforcement Program (ATEP) is a positive step forward. Eight mobile speed cameras have already been deployed, and this measure is estimated to reduce fatal and serious injuries by up to 10 per cent. During 2023, this has expanded to 16 cameras equipped with advanced capabilities to address issues like seatbelt compliance, particularly not wearing a seatbelt, mobile phone use and things we all know cause distraction, which causes serious injury and death. Improved monitoring technology will enhance its effectiveness. The community is becoming accustomed to seeing the new mobile cameras out on our streets and I sincerely hope are adjusting their driving behaviour accordingly.

One of the committee's recommendations, but not supported by the Government, with regard to revenue from fines being allocated to road safety, was recently revisited by the Chair of the Road Safety Advisory Council, Scott Tilyard. It is worth reading in part of a statement in *The Examiner* on 19 September 2023 by the Road Safety Advisory Council's Chair, Scott Tilyard, who -

... wants some of the state's speed fine haul to be earmarked to fund road safety efforts.

The state government raked in \$3.2 million in speed camera fines over the past year and at least some of this money should be ringfenced to fund road

safety initiatives, the chair of the Tasmanian Road Safety Advisory Council has said.

Scott Tilyard said the revenue generated by traffic fines is put into the government's consolidated revenue coffers and some of it comes back to be spent on measures aimed at saving lives on the road.

'The revenue generated through speed cameras and other forms of electronic traffic enforcement is fairly substantial, and obviously that revenue is put back into road safety, but not directly,' Mr Tilyard said.

'I'd like to see at least a portion of that hypothecated directly into improving road safety.'

Mr Tilyard said several other Australian states ringfence some or all of their fine revenue for use in road safety efforts, and has said that the state government should examine doing the same in Tasmania.

Infrastructure and Transport Minister Michael Ferguson said the government had invested heavily in road safety, spending \$75 million over five years on its Road Safety Action Plan.

It also spent \$9.3 million to introduce the state's speed cameras.

Between September 2022 and August, the new mobile devices caught more than 35,000 drivers breaking the law.

'Revenue generated via infringements from motorists caught doing the wrong thing on our roads and risking lives is allocated to fund government services such as health, education and road safety measures that benefit everyone,' Mr Ferguson said.

He did not provide any comment about earmarking speed camera revenue for road safety initiatives. Mr Tilyard's call came after a heart-breaking year on the road in Tasmania, with 51 people losing their lives in 2022 - 51 per cent above the five-year average.

We have had further deaths over the last few weeks and I'm not sure how our figures are tracking, but it is terrible to see any deaths or serious injuries on our roads.

As unpopular as speed cameras can be, it is imperative to address the issue of speed limits. The 2011 and 2022 Legislative Council Select Committee inquiries both recommended government adoption of a consistent approach to managing speed limits on state and local roads. We cannot afford another decade of inaction. This time, inaction is not an option after the worst year for road trauma since 2009. The fact that we have had two inquiries deliver the same verdict underscores the necessity for sensible reform, and we urge the Government to embrace all of our recommendations from the 2022 inquiry, including consistency across the entire road network.

It says in the summary from the Government's response to our inquiry that 37 of the recommendations - and we had 49 recommendations - are already in place and underway, or

are already being considered by the Government. Six of the recommendations are supported, supported in part or to be considered, and six of the recommendations are not supported.

We were very pleased to see that the Government, along the way of our inquiry - which took a considerable time with a variety of prorogues and different delays that occurred - did commence some of our recommendations and some of the things we were discussing in our hearings, particularly with regard to a dedicated traffic branch. We all notice that now we are seeing more marked vehicles on the road.

It all helps to slow people down and the fact that you might just see a marked police car when you are travelling up the Midland Highway, or you might see one of those square pizza ovens, as they are called, with a long pole sticking out of it - I have to admit I saw two on the way down yesterday. Things like that are slowing people down.

However, just looking at some of our recommendations and the ones that the Government did not support, recommendation 5: 'The Government consider investigating a mechanism for mandatory road safety audits to be undertaken around all road accidents involving a fatality and/or serious injury.' We noticed that some states had a dedicated area just for doing audits. The Government has said that State Growth investigates all fatal road crashes. I am quite sure they do, but I do not believe it is quite the same as having a dedicated group to undertake that. It would have been good for that to have been supported.

Another one that was not supported was to do with 'the Government consider mandating minimum information to be made to a purchaser on a vehicle's ANCAP safety rating, both at the point of sale and when advertising'. The Government did not support that. They felt that mandating would only be supported if it was a national approach. However, public education will improve. It was felt that these issues are really important, particularly when purchasing a new vehicle.

An interesting one was our recommendation 48, that 'the Government increase the share of the Heavy Vehicle Motor Taxes pool to local government'. We know how many heavy vehicles there are on the roads and the damage that they do to the roads. It was not supported by the Government and their response was that Tasmanian councils have received \$1.5 million annually since 1996-97. It has not increased. This amount was determined as part of an agreement between state and local governments to compensate for the abolition of local government road tolls. This is only a small portion of the total funding pool made available to councils to utilise for maintaining roads affected by heavy vehicle usage. Other funding sources include - and they go on to say the other funding sources that councils can get.

However, our committee noted that the money taken in had increased significantly but the money going out had remained the same as it was in 1996-97. It is unfortunate that was not supported.

There were many important recommendations and one of the most important that I would consider, when I find it - so many here - was with regard to teaching our young people to drive and to drive safely. 'The Road Attitude and Awareness Program may be of benefit in complementing existing youth driver awareness programs in Tasmania', and that was our recommendation 39.

We had hearings where a fireman, in particular, and others mentioned it as well, that they were willing to have more rider and driver education for our young people and felt that a fireman going into schools and talking to these young people was really quite useful as opposed to the fear of a policeman or what was actually happening now. It was not to stop what was happening now but it was to increase it, to have more driver education for our young people. We all know, they start off, they are probably the ones that get in a fairly big vehicle, most of them do or many of them do, with their P-plates, and you actually see it there, and they have no experience. Unfortunately, that was not supported by the Government.

The Government said that the Rotary Youth Driver Awareness - RYDA - program, a nationally developed and fully evaluated program developed by Road Safety Education delivers a series of educational road safety sessions for 16- to 18-year-old students with a focus towards laying the foundation for safe road use throughout students' lives, and that is great. We are not saying that should not be continued, it was just adding to that.

My understanding is that the gentleman who came to see us is going to pursue some of those in the schedule that he was planning to do in schools. I understand the Government might be assisting him in some ways, but it would be great to see it rolled out through our public system and through all our schools so that the more education we can get for our young people once they are on our roads, the better. It is all about saving lives and saving accidents. We know the fatalities are terrible - we see the numbers of people dying - but we do not often see how many people in the vehicle might be seriously injured, and that can impact them for the rest of their lives. There is certainly something to be said about the numbers that we see, because we do not have numbers for how many people are seriously injured in each accident.

The RACT Chief Advocacy Officer, Garry Bailey, rightly points out that with 80 per cent of Tasmania's road networks managed by councils, the infrastructure simply is not there to support higher speeds. Yet, these are the roads most regularly signposted at 100 kilometres per hour. In 2022, not one of the 11 speed limit reviews and changes applied to a council-controlled road. This disjoint between state and local government responsibilities is a significant hurdle to establishing a consistent speed-setting regime in Tasmania. It has been mentioned by the member for Elwick on a number of occasions that - I think it was the RACT - had commented that they felt that our report was a blueprint for the future of road safety. That is why it is important that the more of our recommendations that are supported by the Government, the better. It is the Government that sets the policy and puts the money in. It is all about saving lives and doing what we can.

As I said, most of the recommendations were supported or already in place. Six were not supported. I appreciate that the Government did take note along the way of what the committee was doing. They listened to what the committee was doing and as we proceeded, a lot of things were rolled out. I also greatly appreciate the conversations that I had with the Deputy Commissioner of Tasmania Police, Jonathan Higgins - always good, always ready to give advice and assist along the way. Our committee decreased to three at the end.

**Ms Rattray** - Quality not quantity, honourable member.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - It was always quality, from the beginning. We lost a couple of members along the way, and I also appreciate the contribution that they made. Everyone worked very hard on the committee. It is a very important issue. I appreciate the response from the Leader that most of the recommendations were supported or are underway. It would

have been good to have had all of the recommendations supported. I guess we will continue to push for that.

Mr President, I note the response from the Government.

[11.58 a.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (Macintyre) - Mr President, I rise to make a contribution to the noting of the Government's response to the Legislative Council's Select Committee Inquiry into Road Safety in Tasmania. I acknowledge that this was put forward by the member for Launceston. It was certainly driven quite significantly by that member and it was a pleasure to be part -

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Hopefully, it was safely driven by that member.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Safely driven, that is a fact.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Within the limit.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I also acknowledge the work of my colleagues on that committee. I acknowledge the Government's response. It is well put together. I will make a few comments in regard to some of the areas that have been of interest to me, although all of it is of interest. The member for Launceston has touched on a number of those, even though there are some areas that have not been supported.

I have a couple of questions about the time frame for those areas that have been supported and where it has been indicated that there is some work to be done. During my contribution, I will touch on some of those as well.

There was a covering letter with the responses and it says that the Government reviewed the inquiry's final report and the 94 findings and 49 recommendations and then it goes on to say that 37 of the recommendations are already in place, are underway or being considered by the Government. Six of the recommendations are supported in part or to be considered, and six of the recommendations are not supported.

Mr President, I want to make mention of the recommendations which have been supported for implementation and will be considered under the current mid-term review of the strategy and action plan:

The mid-term review is also considering initiatives proposed by the members of the public during the Road Safety Advisory Council (RSAC) Community Road Safety Forums held in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie in August 2022.

And it says that:

Both the supported recommendations and initiatives identified during the Community Road Safety Forums will be independently assessed for their road safety benefit and, if suitable, considered by the RSAC and this will inform the delivery of the road safety initiatives and the remainder of the current Action Plan and the Strategy more broadly.

I am interested in where that particular process is, around the mid-term review, given that these road safety forums were held in August 2022 - over one year ago now. I would be pleased

to have that advice available for us to consider as well; and I feel sure that the member who has put forward this noting motion today will be interested in what is provided from there.

The Road Safety Advisory Council has important functions in advising the Government around all aspects of road safety and road safety governance in Tasmania as well. The member for Launceston read from Scott Tilyard - council chair - recent advice that they also agreed with that recommendation about taking the moneys that are generated from fines in the state and put back into road safety. I congratulate the chair of RSAC for coming out and supporting that, even though he stated that he would be happy with some of that money, given that it is a significant amount of funds and we know that it goes back into consolidated revenue at this point in time.

**Ms Armitage** - Through you, Mr President; it might take a bit of the sting out of the tail for people who get caught if they knew it was all going back into road safety.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is exactly right. If people can see that what they are contributing to is going to make a difference to the road safety functions of this state, then they may well feel that way. I look forward to the Government considering RSAC's recommendation on that.

When you have 49 recommendations - I think it is 49 from memory - it takes a little bit to get through them.

Recommendation 26 is that the Government consider raising the maximum speed for probationary motorcyclists from 80 to 100 kilometres an hour, in line with other probationary road users in Tasmania. Again, there was a public consultation process held in August and September 2022 to seek community feedback on the Centre for Automotive Safety Research - CASR - recommendation, and it says that RSAC will consider the CASR recommendation and feedback received during the public consultation process and provide advice to Government around that. In its response to that recommendation, the Government indicated that it is currently under consideration. I am interested in where that consideration at and has there been any progress in that? It goes on to outline in the response the CASR recommended maximum speed for learner and P1 riders increase from 80 kilometres per hour to 90 kilometres per hour for learners and 100 kilometres per hour for P1 riders. Again, an update would be very useful. Most of the bike riders I meet on the road are probably doing 90 to 100 kilometres per hour already. Can that be advised please?

On recommendation 28, that senior traffic police should conduct more frequent high-profile media messaging on enforcement activities, it says this is already in place. It goes on to say senior traffic police regularly strategically utilise the media and social media platforms for road safety messages leading up to periods of increased activity - obviously, long weekends and public holidays, and I expect other areas. It goes on to say for road safety messaging leading up to periods of increased activity and risk on our roads, and following large-scale operations, senior police utilise media and social messaging following serious and fatal motor vehicle accidents to reinforce the importance of road safety in our community and highlight the dangers associated with risky driving behaviours. Can we have some examples where that is already in place? At various times, such as prior to a long weekend, you will hear an announcement that Tasmania Police have implemented a particular project or initiative for that weekend period, but that is pretty much all I have really to understand. Is there anything else being put in place, because it says they regularly utilise the media and social media platforms. What other areas of messaging does that format look like?

Recommendation 37 is, 'The Government continues to invest in ongoing community education of Tasmanian road rules and road safety'. In the actions, it says 'supported, underway and ongoing' and then goes on to talk about:

Plates Plus was introduced, which provides a new interactive online learning and assessment tool, designed to improve learner driver education and give all new drivers a safer start to their time on the road.

What sort of numbers are accessing Plates Plus since July 2021, if that information is available? Certainly, the Tasmanian Road Rules Handbook sets out the most common road rules in a series of diagrams and explanatory text. You can purchase this handbook from all Service Tasmania outlets. I did not realise you had to purchase a handbook; I thought that was part of your application when you were undertaking a learner licence. It has been a while since I or anyone in my household has gone through a driver education and receiving a licence process.

Then it goes on to talk about the awareness of road rules, that two brochures have been developed on the top 10 misunderstood road rules in Tasmania and five more misunderstood road rules. How much take-up has there been of that particular initiative?

Road Torque, a series of five three-minute segments televised in July and August each year during Seven Tasmania's nightly news to raise awareness of road safety issues. I recall seeing those in July and August. Why were just July and August chosen? Perhaps it is a good idea to mix up the July and August and perhaps spread them a bit further apart and not just make them at those particular times.

There has been some criticism in the past of the Learner Licence Assistance Program. It talks about providing assistance to individuals who could otherwise not obtain a learner licence through the conventional process due to a range of barriers: low literacy, English as a second language, computer literacy and accessibility issues. I am aware of somebody accessing that Learner Licence Assistance Program. From all accounts, it is quite a successful program. The wait is not unreasonable for having someone to provide that assistance and I would suggest that is probably a very successful program. Again, numbers for that would be useful if they are available.

Recommendation 39: 'The Road Attitude and Awareness Program may be of benefit in complementing existing youth driver awareness programs in Tasmania' - and it says 'not supported; a comprehensive road safety education program is underway'. The member for Launceston has already touched on the Rotary Youth Driver Awareness program, a nationally developed and fully evaluated program developed by Road Safety Education which delivers a series of educational road safety sessions to 16- to 18-year-old students with a focus towards laying the foundation for safe road use throughout students' lives.

An update would be very much appreciated on that RYDA program. As we know, if you are relying on the Rotary clubs of our state, who are volunteer service clubs, to deliver those programs, they are already pretty busy on a number of other community initiatives. What numbers are being undertaken across the state, where they are actually being rolled out? How extensive is that rollout? I was in St Helens last week and our Rotary club there has unfortunately gone into recess.

If you are relying on Rotary clubs and those members to undertake some of those functions for young people in those areas, often in more rural and remote areas, then we may have a bit of an issue. Is there another way that RYDA program is being rolled out to those areas? I do not want to see any areas, particularly those in the McIntyre electorate, that are disadvantaged because of this.

With the price of fuel these days, it is not easy just to volunteer, not only for time but for cost, and it is important we have the right information being provided to our young people.

In the response from the Government, it has indicated a range of other road safety programs aimed at increasing the safety of young Tasmanians. This includes the Driving for Jobs program and \$100 000 per annum provided to the Royal Automotive Club of Tasmania for a range of educational programs aimed at primary and secondary school students. How far does that RACT program reach out into some of those more rural and remote areas in comparison to, perhaps, more built-up areas where the RACT would have an actual presence?

I know that there are a lot of questions and I do not expect that they will all be answered today, but it would be good to get the answers in a timely manner into the future.

Again, the Bicycle Network Ride2School program is aimed at primary school students with a focus on safe cycling, road safety and positive road sharing behaviour, another good initiative.

Then there is \$500 000 per annum to Kidsafe Tasmania, which conducts free child restraint checks to ensure young children are safely and lawfully seated and restrained in cars. I would expect that that was a matter of course for Tasmania Police as well, that whenever they have cause to check drivers who have children, they would automatically check the restraints of young people. I believe that it is eight and under, from memory, even though some eight-year-olds can be quite tall, that is my understanding.

Recommendation 42: that 'the Government consider initiatives to make defensive and/or advanced driving instruction more accessible to Tasmanian drivers'. The response was: 'agree to consider' and 'independent advice will be sought'. I am interested in where that independent advice process is at in regard to recommendation 42. We know that there is a cost attached to advanced driver training opportunities, and I expect that there are probably not a lot of opportunities. I do not know how many companies there are in this state that undertake that. Not many, perhaps north and south, perhaps north-west as well. It would be interesting to see what is happening. 'Independent advice will be sought' - where is that advice coming from and where are we with that advice?

Heavy vehicles pay an enormous amount of road tax, as we know. We have heard many times they do impact on our roads. This is the recommendation: that 'the Government increase the share of the Heavy Vehicle Motor Taxes pool to local government'. It goes on to tell us that Tasmanian councils have received \$1.5 million annually since 1996-97. When we know that it is \$1 million to do a kilometre of road seal, \$1.5 million annually to be divided or put forward to local government is not going to go very far. It is interesting that local government has not been dancing and jumping up and down. Perhaps the new LGAT president in place, who comes from the east coast and who would see the state of some of the east coast roads, would be having a fair bit to say about this long-term agreement that has not been increased since 1996-97.



I cannot believe that that \$1.5 million annually has not been increased, because I can assure you that the cost of registering a heavy vehicle to put on the road - not just the vehicle but there is a separate charge for the trailer and a separate charge for the next trailer and any other trailer that you might be towing behind you - it is not just the one cost - I believe if you pay up-front, the annual fee for a prime mover is about \$13 000. The Government needs to consider that money that is coming in and how that is going out, and particularly with a lot of those heavy vehicles, if they are taking agricultural products in and out of the rural areas, we need to reconsider that allocation of funds. I would like to see local governments start advocating for that.

It goes on to say other funding sources include the Roads to Recovery Program, the Black Spot Program and the Urban Congestion Fund. To their credit, there are some other areas but, again, you have to be lucky to be able to access some of those or, sadly, with the Black Spot Program, you are unfortunate because they often have to have some crash data and statistics behind a black spot area to receive funding. That is another area of interest.

As I said, 49 recommendations; it was a significant body of work and I will do whatever I can to support the committee in continuing to raise these matters with the Government. I look forward to the progress that continues to be made in making our roads safer in Tasmania for those who are not only residents but those who visit our state. I note the Government's response.

[12.21 p.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, in relation to the member for McIntyre's multiple questions, I will take the *Hansard* when it is out and forward it on to the department to see that if we can get some full answers. There were quite a few questions there and we will make every effort to cover them, but I cannot do them all right now.

**Ms Rattray** - It is a good opportunity to get them on the record.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - I thank the member for Launceston and the committee for the response to the report. I note your dwindling members, for one reason or another. Those who were left did very well.

The number of deaths on Tasmanian roads last year was the highest for more than a decade. It is tragic and simply not acceptable. The impact of these deaths and serious injuries on families, friends and entire communities is nothing short of horrific. These statistics show how many challenges still lie ahead in our efforts towards the target of zero serious injuries and deaths on Tasmanian roads. Achieving this vision will only happen if every single one of us does the right thing when driving.

As a government, we have ramped up our efforts to save lives and reduce trauma. Automated traffic enforcement cameras have been in force throughout the state since September 2022 and more than 35 000 drivers have received fines for speeding. This was as at 25 August. Every one of those drivers is a potential deathtrap. The 10 cameras have now been increased to 16, as promised, with the final two new cameras arriving a few weeks ago, late in September 2022. I think that should be late September 2023. I will seek some advice on that.

I am advised that was a typo, so the 10 cameras have now been increased to 16, as promised, with the final two new cameras arriving a few weeks ago in late September 2023.

Speeding continues to one of the biggest causes of fatal and serious injuries in Tasmania, with one-third of crashes being speed-related. Early analysis indicates that drivers are changing their behaviour. The analysis compared data collected during the six months post-implementation of the speed camera program from October 2022 to March 2023 with the same six-month period over the three years prior, the pre-implementation period. Comparing the pre- and the post-implementation periods, there was a 1.2-kilometre an hour reduction in average vehicle speed and a 5.1 per cent reduction in the proportion of vehicles speeding. That is 28.2 per cent pre-implementation compared to 23.1 per cent speeding, post-implementation. The additional mobile speed cameras complement the range of latest technology cameras on Tasmanian roads and can detect illegal mobile phone use and seatbelt offences, as well as speeding. These cameras were deployed on 21 August, coinciding with the launch of the new educational program. Mr President, the Click. Store. Go. campaign highlights the risk of distraction or not wearing a seatbelt correctly while driving. The message is simple - before you drive, click on your seatbelt, store your phone away and you are good to go.

The new cameras are mobile and operate all around Tasmania, both day and night. These cameras are important because distraction and seatbelt noncompliance are a factor in 24 and 9 per cent respectively of Tasmania's fatal and serious injury crashes. Dangerous drivers who break the law risking their lives and others are on notice. The penalty for illegally using a mobile phone while driving, or not wearing a seatbelt, is a \$390 fine and three demerit points.

It is clear that, as a government, we will continue to do all we can to ensure people start getting the message and drive safely. The work of the Legislative Council's Select Committee Inquiry into Road Safety in Tasmania is substantial, and the Government appreciates this work and the subsequent report. As you are aware, the inquiry made 49 recommendations. Of these, 37 are in place, underway or already under consideration. Of the remaining recommendations, six are supported, supported in part or to be considered, and six are not supported.

The recommendations will be considered under the mid-term review of the Towards Zero Action Plan 2020-2024, conducted by the Road Safety Advisory Council.

**Ms Rattray** - Through you, Mr President, is there a time frame for that?

**Mrs HISCUTT** - If there is no answer here, I will add that to your list of questions, McIntyre.

**Ms Rattray** - It was in my questions.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Okay. The Government looks forward to receiving the RSAC's advice, though we have not received it yet. Since the Legislative Council inquiry was established in July 2021, the Government has continued to deliver the 42 evidence-based road safety initiatives under the action plan. The new, automated camera program is supported by the Over is Over campaign, which challenges motorists to rethink their attitudes to speed and encourages them to adjust their behaviour by not driving over the speed limit.

The Government is also progressing a review of the motorcyclists graduated licencing system to ensure that young and novice motorcyclists are as safe as possible while learning to

ride. This follows the introduction of a package of enhancements to the driver graduated licencing system to prepare Tasmanians for a lifetime of safe driving. The enhancements include increasing the number of supervised driving hours during the learner licensing phase and including a range of online resources, including a free hazard perception test for learners. Already this year, the Government has announced \$4.7 million for funding under the Vulnerable Road User Program and Safer Rural Roads Program for council and state road upgrades in areas which local councils identify as in need of improvement, as well as a further \$200 000 in community road safety grants.

Mr President, last May, the Tasmanian Government announced a new rule to keep roadside assistance workers safer by implementing a 40-kilometre per hour limit for passing motorists. This expanded the rule that existed for emergency service vehicles; it now applies to breakdown assistance, towing, battery replacement and other on-road support services.

This Government remains committed to its long-term vision of zero serious injuries and deaths on Tasmanian roads. There can be no other target as far as the Government is concerned. No fatality on our roads is acceptable. The Government does note the response and the report. I will get some answers for the member for McIntyre as soon as practically possible. Thank you, Mr President.

**Report considered and noted.**

## **RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AMENDMENT (MINIMUM WINDOW COVERINGS FOR SOCIAL HOUSING PROPERTIES) BILL 2023 (No. 20)**

### **Third Reading**

[12.30 p.m.]

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Mr President, I move -

That the bill be now read the third time.

**Bill read the third time.**

### **MOTION**

#### **Consideration and Noting - Government Administration Committee B Inquiry into the Office of Racing Integrity - Report**

[12.31 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre) - Mr President, it is my pleasure to speak to the Legislative Council Sessional Committee Government Administration B committee report. This was a targeted report and a targeted inquiry into the roles and functions of the Office of Racing Integrity (ORI).

The committee went down this path after arranging to have a meeting; and the day before the proposed meeting the then minister, Madeleine Ogilvie, announced an independent review into the matters that were raised within the harness racing industry. She then announced a

racing and national integrity expert, Mr Ray Murrphy, would undertake an investigation. There were some significant terms of reference - seven to be exact - and they are included in the background of this report. Concerns were raised from an *ABC News* investigative story relating to the harness racing dominance of Mr Ben Yole's operations in Tasmania. Particular allegations were made regarding team racing, race fixing, serious animal welfare concerns and the integrity of a number of racing meets.

The committee felt that, with the independent investigation and review underway, it would be a responsible course for the committee to look at the roles and functions of the Office of Racing Integrity. So, of its own motion, the committee was aware of the concerns and we were listening to the questions around the level of public confidence in the Tasmanian racing industry.

As it is well stated, racing is an industry that requires the highest of integrity. The Office of Racing Integrity has an important role in monitoring and maintaining that integrity and all aspects of the racing industry in our state. It is also expected to deliver the highest standards of animal welfare. Without a strong monitoring and compliance regime, the integrity of the industry will not meet community expectations.

Through the inquiry, the committee focused on the roles and functions of ORI and its current administrative processes to appropriately address issues and concerns with upholding the integrity and welfare of animals in the Tasmanian racing industry.

Mr President, there are 23 findings and seven recommendations within this report. It was a short inquiry, with almost an interim report, because we are still to see anything from the Murrphy report at this point in time. I believe the Government also has an interim report that has not been released at this point in time and the Leader, when she makes her contribution, may give us an update on where that sits at this point in time. A number of extensions have been given to Mr Murrphy to complete his work. With seven significant terms of reference, it appears that there is a lot of work that needs to be done. But how long do we keep the racing industry waiting before there is some sort of public announcement about the work that is being done?

Just for completeness, the Murrphy investigation opened on Tuesday 4 April 2023 and closed at 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday 2 May. The then minister for Racing announced in June that an eight-week extension had been granted by the Government for the final report to 31 August and then the committee understands that Mr Murrphy advised the secretary of DNRET at a meeting on 22 June that the current time frame would be insufficient to complete the investigation as per the terms of reference having regard to procedural fairness where relevant. Subsequently, at a meeting, the secretary of the department and Mr Murrphy verbally agreed to an extension until the end of August. Mr Murrphy then formally requested an extension from the Premier in a letter on 23 June. We still do not have that report that we have been waiting on for some time now.

Back to our findings and recommendations. The findings we put into different categories. The area one was the background and the first finding was about the significant public concerns that were generated after the ABC investigative report that raised those serious allegations. Then it went on to the Tasmanian Government, which launched the Murrphy investigation, and the responses to the allegation raised by the report. At the time of this report,

the investigation was expected to be delivered to the Government by 31 August, noting the matters relating to the terms of reference 1 and 2 of the investigation are still being progressed.

Our next area was the loss of confidence in Tasmanian harness racing. That was the loss of confidence in the Director of Racing, publicly stated by the Tasmanian Harness Racing Breeders, Owners, Trainers and Reinspersons Association. That was finding 4.

Finding 5, notwithstanding the loss of confidence by some racing industry stakeholders and the instigation of an independent review into the Office of Racing Integrity, the Director of Racing remains active in his role and there have been some question marks about that.

The Government's review of the Racing Regulation Act 2004 was expected to replace the Office of Racing Integrity with an independent racing integrity commissioner with powers to set integrity and animal welfare standards, comprehensive audit compliance and undertaking their legislative functions. Then it goes on that the Government's intention was to have a new oversight and racing integrity structure in place upon commencement of the new racing regulation legislation.

The committee would welcome new racing regulation legislation, and I feel sure that most Tasmanians who have any interest in the racing industry would be very interested in that. I would be interested in a time frame for that and where that sits on the Government's agenda at this time.

Regarding the functioning of the Office of Racing Integrity, the Government has commenced that reform to increase the independence of the Office of Racing Integrity. A very big part is the animal welfare legislation and I will not put a lot of effort into that because I know other members of the committee would appreciate the opportunity to have input and drill down into some of those. There were three areas of findings relating to animal welfare. I will leave that to others and not take every area, otherwise it is disrespectful to some of my members.

Another area relating to the findings was that it was not clear to the extent to which an updating of the members' statement of expectation for Tasracing will be aligned with or inclusive of the Animal Welfare Act. This is another area that will need some focus and attention. The summary of animal welfare across the Tasracing codes - the Director of Racing has commenced publishing quarterly reports of greyhound breeding, retirement and injury statistics in relation to the Tasmanian greyhound racing industry. These were only available in the annual report previously. To have these published quarterly will be a positive for the industry and it will be easier to track those, given that we only have an annual report in October. Sometimes when we have the opportunity to have a debate on that, it is not until the first week or thereabouts, at the end of November or in early December.

Another area of interest for the committee was the Greyhound Adoption Program. There is a very good what I consider a useful appendix for Tasracing's annual animal welfare expenditure for the financial years ending 2020-22. One of the areas that was of interest to the committee was the fact that it talks about animal welfare operational expenditure and it is a significant amount of money, \$1.762 million, which in itself seems like a lot of money. When you are looking at road repairs, maintenance of buildings, maintenance of grounds, maintenance other, petrol and oil, motor vehicle registration, maintenance of vehicles, electricity, rates and land tax, water costs, fire equipment, waste management, plumbing and

gas maintenance, electrical services, fire equipment maintenance, even down to COVID-19 security, health and safety initiatives, interstate travel and accommodation, consultant's fees. I note that consultant's fees and postage for 2021 and 2022 have actually been deleted and they are not there. Also, facility hiring and catering for 2022 has been omitted.

You can imagine that takes a lot of the funds for animal welfare out of the animal welfare budget when you are putting all of those other consumables in amongst that. That is appendix B and a very useful table to be focused on that. In our findings, approximately \$1.76 million, which included funding for other expenses, including overheads.

The role of the RSPCA, an important area for animal welfare - the existing animal welfare legislation includes the RSPCA Tasmania animal welfare officers as authorised officers and their role specific to registered horses and greyhounds is through an administrative arrangement with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. The RSPCA receives core inspectorate funding under the Primary Industries and Water portfolio and project funds for tasks relating to the Racing portfolio and the RSPCA Tasmania advocacy functions are not funded by Government.

There is a recommendation on ensuring the funding agreements with the RSPCA include funding for advocacy activities related to the Government policy and legislative development. The committee felt with the work the RSPCA does in promoting animal welfare and those obligations it has in those roles and functions, that having some separate funding arrangements for those advocacy activities the RSPCA does - whether it is to sit on a committee for that work - it takes somebody away from their work on a day-to-day basis. The committee felt it is such an important role that it should be funded separately. If you are taking someone out of your organisation for a day, two days and even some of their workload to assist the Government in their work in promoting and meeting the animal welfare expectations, then it is not unreasonable to have it funded. Where does the Government feel it needs to go in supporting that recommendation? The RSPCA does receive core inspectorate funding under the Primary Industries and Water portfolio and project funding for tasks relating to the Racing portfolio. Again, the RSPCA is funded for those roles, so why not for what they do in regard to advocacy functions currently not funded by Government?

Ministerial accessibility. The Minister for Racing's diary was provided to the committee in regard to the time frame. Again, I will leave that area for another member to cover who I know has a keen interest in that. In the committee's view, it showed there were some gaps on where the minister put the efforts of the ministry and those responsibilities for stakeholder groups during the particular period of April 2022 through to May 2023.

The ministerial complaint handling was a key part of this inquiry around the roles and functions of ORI. The complaint handing process between the officers of the then minister for Racing and the department breached general conflict of interest principles. You cannot check your own homework, it is as simple as that. If there is a complaint put into the system about the Director of ORI and the complaint goes there, then certainly it is going to be a conflict. That process was something the committee looked at closely.

Perceptions of conflict of interest in complaint handling processes may deter industry participants in the community from lodging complaints in the future. Again, if you do not feel you will have an opportunity to put a complaint into the system, particularly if it is in regard to a particular person involved in where the complaint may go, you may well hold off on putting

a complaint in the future. We do not want that. If there is a complaint that needs to be put forward by an industry participant or anyone else, then they need to have full confidence they will have an independent process to deal with that.

On the staffing of ORI, no evidence was provided to the committee to indicate the Office of Racing Integrity staff positions required role-specific training. Any organisation has role-specific training. It is very clear you need to understand the roles you are undertaking and how you should be carrying them out and that was an area of interest to the committee.

The Government's progress against the Monteith Review recommendations - quite an old report now. The Government is progressing with the recommendations of the Monteith Review. But, when we go to the recommendations, they certainly need to move on the Monteith Review, particularly on the recommendations to improve animal welfare outcomes within Tasmania's racing industry, that they be further progressed by the Government as a priority. Animal welfare is a key part of the racing industry and there is a huge community expectation that sits alongside that and we need to be assured. The Monteith Review was extensive and the Government needs to continue to work on those recommendations to improve animal welfare. That was recommendation 3.

In regard to the background, the first recommendation was the Murrhiy report be publicly released in its entirety. Get on with it - that is the message from the recommendation; get it out there into the public. Whenever there is a delay, there are still question marks about the industry. It is in the interests of not only the industry, but the community and the expectations. If you engage somebody to undertake the work and you put some time frames on it, how many times are you going to extend those time frames and just keep it going and going? It is not helpful.

The second recommendation is legislative reforms should be expedited to increase the independence of the Office of Racing Integrity. I come back to the fact when we do not have confidence in the Office of Racing Integrity, which needs to have that independence to be able to ensure the community are confident there is an independent body, then it is not going to be helpful for the industry.

The existing members' statement of expectations for Tasracing should be contemporised to include compliance with the Animal Welfare Act 1993. It is currently not included in the members' statement of expectations and the committee felt it should have been there.

**Mr Valentine** - Off-radar, at that time. It was a while ago, 2015.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Quite a while ago, but not decades ago. I am sure there will be other members who would like -

**Mr Valentine** - I would certainly have some comments.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The Greyhound Adoption Program: the Government should ensure Tasracing has sufficient resources to fully fund retired greyhound rehoming services across the industry and for private providers. There is more than one provider of this important initiative for retired greyhound rehoming services. Brightside is one that comes to mind. There needs to be a full focus of government to make sure that both the GAP program and other private providers are funded to be resourced. I have already touched on the role of the RSPCA and the

report notes 'ensure funding agreements with the RSPCA Tasmania include funding for the advocacy activities related to Government policy and legislative development'. I do not see a conflict there at all with the RSPCA being funded to have input into those important areas, because they are on the ground every day and they know and understand and see the issues that come forward to them. Everyone knows that you pick up the phone to the RSPCA and action happens. So, the committee believes funding of those advocacy roles is important.

Ministerial complaint handling will ensure that the complaint handling processes between the office of the minister and the department are clearly defined in relation to conflicts of interest. There needs to be a policy put in place, and parameters to work within, so that people clearly know when a complaint comes in, where it goes to. If it is about, for instance, the Office of Racing Integrity directly, then you do not send it to the Office of Racing Integrity, particularly if it is around a person who works in that office.

We live in Tasmania, everybody knows everybody - particularly within the racing industry. Of course, they have a really good understanding; they work with them, they meet at social events, all of those things, and there needs to be an absolute, clearly defined process around any conflict of interest.

The committee will certainly be interested in the responses from the Government in regard to this set of recommendations. It is not an extensive list. When you look at 49 for a road safety report, then 7 for the area of scrutiny that the committee undertook, I would expect that it would be pretty easy to get in, get it done and get on with it. I hope that is the approach that the Government will take, because they have a full commitment to the racing industry, and I will talk a little bit more about that when we wrap up this discussion. At this point in time, I will leave something for others, Mr President, and put forward my offering.

[12.57 p.m.]

**Mr VALENTINE** (Hobart) - I cannot get left behind, Mr President.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - No.

**Mr VALENTINE** - We know what happens when one is slow. I thank the Chair of the committee for her contribution on this short inquiry. It was a short inquiry; there was no public input in terms of submissions to the inquiry. Members of the community do take an interest in racing as a sport in terms of the animal welfare issues. I have been here since 2012, and it seems to me that these concerns seem to increasingly be raised. That, in itself, is something that gives us cause to be undertaking short inquiries like this.

This was a short inquiry because there is a major inquiry underway. As the Chair of the committee has already pointed out in her offering, we focused it just on the Office of Racing Integrity. I recall, at the time when we discussed this, we did not want to be treading on areas that the inquiry, instigated by the minister, was going to go. There were concerns about industry operations, and when there are concerns coming out of the public domain about industry operations, we must take notice. That is our role here - it is one of reviewing government operations and legislation and all of those sorts of things, and it is something that we really do need to -

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



## QUESTIONS

### Marinus Link - Memorandum of Understanding

#### Mr WILLIE question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN

[2.30 p.m.]

Has a memorandum of understanding for Project Marinus been signed with the federal government yet? If not, why not, and when will there be a memorandum of understanding in place?

#### ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for his question. I might just seek some advice.

**Mr Willie** - It must have been a tricky question.

**Mr DUIGAN** - It is a great pleasure for me to stand here as the Minister for Energy and Renewables to take this question and, again, I thank the member for the question.

Progressing Marinus Link on Tasmania's terms is an important step in our Tasmania First Energy Guarantee, which will ensure we continue to deliver the nation's lowest power prices. Our Government has put a line in the sand and we have landed on the right side of that line for Tasmania.

We said we would only progress the project if it stacked up for Tasmania and we have recently announced revised partnership agreements. That is exactly what it does. It means we can progress the project ahead of making a final investment decision next year, confident that the massive benefits it will bring to the state are fair and affordable.

We have a plan and we are getting on with it. It is a plan that grows supply, which is very important, that will create jobs and that will keep power prices down.

**Mr Willie** - Just to clarify. Partnership agreements, is that the memorandum of understanding with the federal government? Has that been signed?

**Mr DUIGAN** - Contracts for the Marinus Link project are conditional upon the successful conclusion of the final investment decision due by December 2024, and it is a clear indication that Tasmania is on the verge of a renewables revolution that will benefit all Tasmanians.

Regarding the MOU, I am advised that an agreement will be in place by January 2024. An agreement for the new entity will be in place by January 2024 and my department is working with the Victorian and Australian governments to deliver that. I am advised that the MOU to which you refer will be finalised in the coming weeks.

### Marinus Link - Procurement

**Mr VALENTINE question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES,  
Mr DUIGAN**

[2.35 p.m.]

On 5 September last, the Government announced via then minister for Energy and Renewables, Guy Barnett, that Marinus Link has signed a capacity reservation agreement for a high-voltage direct current cable with Prysmian PowerLink. The Prysmian Group issued a concurrent press release in Milan, revealing the capacity reservation agreement fee of up to €90 million, which is in the vicinity of A\$150 million.

Now that the supplier has been selected, a price range agreed, commercial-in-confidence no longer applies and the agreement has been underwritten by the Australian Government, can the minister please advise of the terms of both the agreement with the Prysmian PowerLink and the underwriting agreement with the Australian Government, including the value of any payments to be made by Marinus Link, the Tasmanian Government, or their GBEs and/or subsidiaries in the event the Marinus Link project does not proceed after a final investment decision has been made?

**ANSWER**

I thank the member for his question. Marinus Link Pty Ltd (MLPL) is engaged in tenders with international suppliers for equipment (cable and converter) works packages.

Following approval by shareholding ministers, MLPL issued a tender to pre-qualified tenderers for the supply of high-voltage DC cables in December 2022 and in January 2023 issued a tender to pre-qualified tenderers for converter stations.

Throughout this procurement process, MLPL has provided timely updates at every step of the tender process, both through regular verbal updates to shareholding ministers in meetings, as well as in written briefing form.

MLPL also provided access to a highly secure 'data room' to representatives from the Commonwealth, Victorian and Tasmanian governments and associated agencies, with access only provided following the implementation of appropriate confidentiality and conflict of interest arrangements.

Between May 2023 and July 2023, submissions from multiple pre-qualified tenderers for HVDC cables were received. MLPL undertook a rigorous evaluation of the cable offers, and determined the offer from Prysmian provided the best value for money.

Following the conclusion of the HVDC cable Capacity Reservation Agreement (CRA) negotiations, and with MLPL (and TasNetworks) having worked closely with the state and Commonwealth governments, the parties entered into the CRA and related underwriting arrangements.

Importantly, the underwriting agreements are a matter for the Commonwealth and Prysmian, with the state Government and TasNetworks not being responsible for the underwriting of the cables.

The CRA only reserves manufacturing and installation capacity for the stage 1 cable. It does not mean an end to MLPL's cable procurement process, which is ongoing and has moved into a full (EPC - engineering, procurement, construction) contract negotiation phase.

The details of the CRA and the underwriting arrangements remain, to the extent that they have not been disclosed publicly or reported in the media, commercially confidential.

MLPL remains committed to achieving optimum commercial terms for the project, with final negotiations and evaluations likely to continue for a period of up to six months with suppliers, including Prysmian, before entry into EPC contracts.

From a probity perspective, MLPL has ensured that each party tendering for HVDC cable supply had the opportunity to present their best offer terms possible for evaluation, including providing feedback where relevant, particularly on key terms such as pricing.

There remains a risk that the premature release of commercially sensitive information could adversely impact MLPL's relationship with the supplier market and the overall value proposition of the Marinus Link project. This could also compromise any future procurement of a second cable for the project.

As noted, the procurement process for HVDC cables has now moved to negotiations on full (or EPC) contracts. Marinus Link Proprietary Limited is also in a live procurement process for converters and will initiate a tender process for associated civils packages shortly. While MLPL continues to provide shareholding ministers with indicative investment updates as the tender processes progress, final investment will not occur before all tender processes have been concluded.

**Mr Valentine** - With respect to that, the question is, what is the exposure of the state Government if the project does not proceed? If the project does not proceed and the cable is not purchased -

**Mr DUIGAN** - I think I will have to leave the answer to my question there, if you do not mind.

**Mr Valentine** - Thank you. I will absorb what you say.

### **North West Transmission Developments - Access to Energy**

#### **Mr WILLIE question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN**

[2.41 p.m.]

Mr President, it was remiss of me not to congratulate the minister on his elevation to the Cabinet, but this is my congratulations, firing a few questions at him. Also, congratulations to the new Deputy Leader of the Government in this House.

The North West Transmission Developments project is now out to tender. What steps have you taken to ensure the project will be scoped to ensure potential users will be able to access the energy they need, including proponents like HIF Global and other large energy users?

## **ANSWER**

When it comes to our state's future energy requirements, the Tasmanian Liberal Government has a plan and we are getting on with it. Our Tasmania First Energy Guarantee is making sure Tasmania has the power it needs for economic growth, new jobs, along with always having the lowest possible power prices in the nation.

TasNetworks' North West Transmission Developments are of strategic importance to this plan on delivering the benefits of Project Marinus, providing the backbone to transport a greater volume of electrons around the state, which is required as our state grows.

I acknowledge the concerns for some in the community about these developments. They are large-scale infrastructure projects with complex and long delivery times. All projects in Tasmania are subject to rigorous environmental and planning approvals with the opportunity for public submissions on issues that affect landowners and communities.

As with the announcement of recent times about the rescale of Marinus Link from two cables down to a stage 1 one cable and a stage 2 two cables, there is further work being undertaken on the rescoping of the North West Transmission Developments and what that may need to look like.

My expectation is that TasNetworks will continue to engage with all the impacted landowners, all the potential energy users and the people that will want to plug into that network extension. We will have more to say about what that will look like in the coming weeks and months.

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### **Answer to Question**

#### **Memorandums of Understanding**

[2.44 p.m.]

**Ms PALMER** (Rosevears - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr President, I would like to give an answer to a question I took on notice. This is a question that Ms Rattray asked me in the last sitting day, and I made a commitment to get back to her. The question was:

Given the importance of memorandums of understanding between the Inland Fisheries Service, Hydro Tasmania and Tasmanian Irrigation, what is the progress on renewing the MoU with Hydro Tasmania, given that it expired on 30 June 2022. I also understand Tasmanian Irrigation is not current at this point in time. I would like an update on where those important memorandums of understanding are at.

## **ANSWER**

I can advise that Hydro Tasmania MoU is close to being finalised, with final details in negotiation. The MoU Water Level Arrangements 2018-2022 is still in effect until the new agreement is signed.

The MoU with Tasmanian Irrigation is current for the period 2019-2024. This MoU expires on 25 July 2024, so we will commence discussions before the end of this year to develop a new MoU.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I thank the minister.

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### **Ashley Youth Detention Centre - Nelson Mandela Rules Application**

**Ms WEBB question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT**

[2.36 p.m.]

Mr President, this is the first time I have risen today so my congratulations also to the new minister here, well done, and also to the new Deputy Leader. May you go well in your new roles.

My question is to the Leader. I think this is a follow-up, so thank you for re-presenting it.

Do the regulations and policies governing operations of the Ashley Youth Detention Centre formally incorporate and reflect the Nelson Mandela Rules, as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 17 December 2015, and which inform assessments made under OPCAT?

If so, detail how the Nelson Mandela Rules are applied and monitored.

### **ANSWER**

Mr President, I thank the member for the question. I do not think I have officially congratulated the new minister either, but it is going well today. Well done. And of course, congratulations to the Deputy Leader, sitting behind me.

In response to the member's question, I advise:

The department is currently conducting a review into AYDC policy and procedures to ensure alignment with contemporary standards, legislation and international human rights obligations. The Nelson Mandela Rules will inform this review.

In Tasmania, the Nelson Mandela Rules are monitored through the Tasmanian National Preventive Mechanism, which appointed Mr Richard Connock in February 2022.

The Office of the Tasmanian NPM is currently in the implementation phase of its development and DECYP has been working with the NPM to fulfil its oversight role. This has so far included support to conduct a site visit of AYDC in May 2023 and to provide it with policies and procedures that pertain to 'governing the treatment of children and young people deprived of their liberty'.

The department will continue to support the Office of the Tasmanian National Preventative Mechanism to formally incorporate the Nelson Mandela Rules for monitoring the AYDC.

### **Tasmanian Irrigation - Price Increases**

**Ms LOVELL question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Ms PALMER**

[2.49 p.m.]

Mr President, since everyone else is doing it, I had better add my congratulations to the new minister and also to the Deputy Leader. I did run into the minister on his way to his first Question Time in the other place this morning and gave him very sincere well wishes and I hope that was painless for him.

Minister, can you confirm that Tasmanian Irrigation has been informed that the TasWater Board has decided to move towards full cost recovery for water provided to farmers on the South East Irrigation Scheme stages 1 and 2 from the 2024 season?

#### **ANSWER**

I thank the member for the question. I am aware of TasWater's proposal to increase its prices to supply water for the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme. This is an operational matter for TI and for TasWater and it would not be appropriate for me to comment.

### **Water Costs - Coal River Farming Region**

**Ms LOVELL question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Ms PALMER**

[2.51 p.m.]

The Coal River farming region has driven agricultural diversification in Tasmania. Can you confirm these farmers will see water costs increase tenfold, by 1000 per cent, if TasWater's full cost recovery decision proceeds? Given that this could drive many farmers on this scheme out of business, how is your Government going to support these farmers?

#### **ANSWER**

I thank the member for the question. Again, this is an operational matter between TasWater and TI and it would not be appropriate for me to comment, other than to say our Government is a huge supporter of farmers right across our state. That is certainly evident in the extraordinary investment from the federal government and our state Government into irrigation schemes across Tasmania.

## Fire Safety - Solar Panel DC Isolators

### Mr VALENTINE question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

[2.52 p.m.]

Given the recent media on fire events in solar panel DC isolators in the Northern Territory, can the Government please provide:

- (1) Available information on the number of DC isolated fires in Tasmania over the past five years, by year;
- (2) Details on the make and model of DC isolators involved in causing such fires and the incidences involved with each make and model over the past five years, by year;
- (3) Action being taken to ensure the safety of DC isolators being installed by industry;
- (4) Action being taken regarding the issue of specifications to installers of such facilities on buildings to guard against damages as a result of the risk of fire; and
- (5) Steps being taken to advise residents and businesses as such hazards and action they should take to mitigate the risk of such events from previously installed DC isolators.

### ANSWER

I thank the member for the question. The background is:

Direct current (DC) isolator switches are used to isolate solar panels or an inverter for solar installation where necessary. DC isolators first became mandatory for solar installations under the applicable Australian Standard in early 2007.

In response to your specific questions:

- (1) Electricity Standards and Safety, Consumer Building and Occupational Services (CBOS) commenced recording electrical fire data on 1 January 2019.

Since 1 January 2019, there have been 33 fire incidents relating to DC isolators in Tasmania. The number of fires that have occurred each year are as follows:

2019: 5  
2020: 3  
2021: 15  
2022: 6  
2023: 4

- (2) Starting with 2023, there were four items. The first one is the make, the model and then the conclusion of each incident.

Mr President, I seek leave to table the table in the answer to question (2) and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

**Leave granted.**

**See Appendix 1 for incorporated document (page 59).**

(3) Part 1 - Monitoring of the DC isolators being used by industry

To ensure the safety of DC isolators being used by installers in Tasmania, CBOS continually monitors fire incident data so that if a pattern of failure with a particular device brand is ever identified, a recall notice could be issued to the responsible supplier of the product in Tasmania.

Fire incident data is also shared between the other states and territories so that any emerging patterns can be addressed promptly by all jurisdictions.

Part 2 - Inspections of solar systems

Electrical contractors in Tasmania are required to notify solar installations to the electrical safety inspection service contractor, TechSafe Australia Pty Ltd (TechSafe), through submission of a Certificate of Electrical Compliance (CEC).

These inspections are intended to identify and address noncompliance with solar energy systems, which includes DC isolators.

If a noncompliant installation is identified, a defect notice is issued to the responsible contractor requiring rectification. Noncompliance with this notice can lead to infringement notices and licence sanctions. If an imminent safety risk is identified during this inspection, the installation can be disconnected by the inspector to mitigate the risk.

In light of this strong regulatory framework and continual monitoring by CBOS, any unscrupulous conduct in the solar industry in Tasmania is identified quickly and appropriate action taken to protect consumers.

The federal government's Clean Energy Regulator also performs a limited number of inspections of solar installations in Tasmania. However, they do not have compliance and enforcement powers in relation to electrical work standards. As such, their inspection findings are made available to CBOS for further investigation.

CBOS works closely with the Clean Energy Regulator and the Clean Energy Council in coordinating compliance efforts to continually improve the standard of solar installations in Tasmania.

(4) Manufacturers often prescribe specifications for the installation of products. The Australian Standards require installers to comply with any manufacturer specifications.

There are also a number of other Australian Standards that installers must adhere to. The Tasmanian government can also prescribe certain requirements for an installation.

In light of the safety incidents relating to DC isolators, CBOS has worked to change the Australian Standards applicable to DC isolators through the Electrical Regulatory



Authorities Council (ERAC). CBOS continues to work with the ERAC to ensure the Australian Standards remain current and appropriate.

Any changes to Australian Standards or other rules and regulations in Tasmania are communicated to industry by CBOS via a number of means. These include newsletter articles in the monthly CBOS newsletter, emails to industry stakeholders, explanatory notes published on the CBOS website and discussion at various industry events held throughout the year. This ensures the industry is up to date with the latest requirements.

- (5) CBOS has responded proactively to the issues relating to the DC isolators by implementing an extensive public awareness campaign on the importance of periodic inspections and maintenance of solar energy systems.

Periodic inspections and maintenance ensure that deterioration of solar components due to exposure to the weather is rectified before an incident occurs. It also provides owners with assurance that their systems remain safe.

The education campaign was widely supported by the Clean Energy Regulator, Clean Energy Council and electrical industry representation bodies. The program included direct correspondence with the owners of approximately 39 000 solar energy systems in Tasmania. Media campaigns ran concurrently with the correspondence to assist with raising awareness.

Contractors have reported a significant uptake in solar maintenance services across Tasmania and have reported rectifying a number of issues related to solar deterioration. This has assisted in reducing the risk of further solar-related electrical safety incidents from occurring.

Ongoing efforts are underway to continue to amplify this safety message, including providing educational material to owners of new solar installations where they are inspected by the department's contractor.

In addition, for people who purchase a property with an existing solar energy system, CBOS has collaborated with TasNetworks to ensure that a safety message about the importance of maintenance is included in correspondence from TasNetworks to new owners. I will table that in a moment.

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### **Suspension of Standing Orders**

### **Extension of Question Time**

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council)  
(by leave) -Mr President, I move -

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended to give question time another two to four minutes.

**Motion agreed to.**

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## **Crown Leases - Kettering**

### **Ms LOVELL question to MINISTER for PARKS, Mr DUIGAN**

[3.03 p.m.]

The Kettering Waterfront Leaseholders Association has raised concern over waterfront crown lease increases at Kettering being significantly higher than CPI and without basis. Can the minister please advise:

- (1) What is the justification and methodology behind these cost increases?
- (2) What has been the range of increases for the 2023-24 financial year?
- (3) Why are waterfront crown land leases in the current review process being offered for terms between two and 25 years; why are they so inconsistent?
- (4) Crown Land previously embarked on a program to encourage Crown Land leaseholders to provide facilities that benefit the community. Is this program still in existence or still under review?

### **ANSWER**

Mr President, I thank the member for the question and congratulations, and thank you to all who have expressed that.

- (1) The Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) Tasmania land rental policy provides the methodology for setting lease fees. The rental policy has been in effect since 2008.

All agreements, including those waterfront crown leases at Kettering, are subject to rental reviews as per the terms of each agreement.

In non-commercial situations, the annual rental for all non-commercial marine structures is set as a percentage of land value as shown on the valuation list most recently provided to the relevant rating authority by the Office of the Valuer-General. The percentage is 6 per cent of land value.

In commercial agreements, the commercial lease category includes industrial establishment, commercial marine structures such as wharfs, marinas, and shore-based aquaculture facilities, depots, and storage facilities. All commercial lease agreements have market rental set by the Office of the Valuer-General and undergo a rental review every two years (lease contract permitting). Minimum rentals are set by the Director-General of Lands, with the minimum rental for a commercial site set at \$500 per annum.

- (2) There has been no change to the rental policy in 2022-23. As noted earlier, the rental policy has been in effect since 2008.

Any increase to individual rental charges is in line with the terms detailed in each executed lease agreement and in respect to the rental policy.

- (3) The agreement terms negotiated between PWS and the individual lessee is based on the usage, purpose, and requirements of the lease application.

The standard term for non-commercial marine leases is a minimum of five years, with a maximum of 25 years.

Commercial marine leases have a minimum term of 10 years.

- (4) The program is no longer in existence and has not been operating for some time.

PWS assesses each lease application received on its individual merits against all relevant principles, policies and legislation to ensure compatibility with and sensitivity to the cultural, natural, and strategic values of the site.

Where a piece of public land has competing applicants for a particular activity or type of proposal, a public expression of interest process may be initiated to ensure a proposal appropriate for a particular site, which will be assessed against social, environmental, and economic benefits created for the community.

Mr President, I am aware the member for Rumney has one more question to address to the Leader, so I will suspend again to enable her. Mr President, she is happy to wait till tomorrow.

## **MOTION**

### **Consideration and Noting - Report - Government Administration Committee B Inquiry into the Office of Racing Integrity**

**Resumed from above (page 28).**

[3.07 p.m.]

**Mr VALENTINE** (Hobart) - Prior to the lunchbreak I was referring to the interest of the public in relation to matters associated with animal welfare. During this inquiry, questions were asked in relation to the members' statement of expectations. When I asked the question, there seemed to be a little bit of quizzical. I am not sure it was high on the minds of those being questioned, but nevertheless, it is a statement which the member for McIntyre pointed out through interjection. It was 2012, not 2015, when this particular members' statement of expectations was put together. I apologise if I gave some incorrect information there. It was 2012, when Bryan Green was minister for racing and Lara Giddings was premier and treasurer. It is some time ago, but as you read through this statement of expectations, there is no mention of the Animal Welfare Act or indeed animal welfare. I will just read some of it into *Hansard* so members are aware:

This Members' Statement of Expectations has been prepared by the Minister for Racing and the Treasurer (the Members), following consultation with Tasracing.

The statement sets out the Government's broad policy expectations and requirements for Tasracing.

The *Corporations Act 2001* and the Constitution of Tasracing govern the operation of the Company.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the following Acts:

*Racing (Tasracing Pty Ltd) Act 2009*;  
*Racing Regulation Act 2004*; and  
*Government Business Enterprises Act 1995*

By its omission, it is quite clear there is no animal welfare act in that particular list - clearly something that does need to be rectified. I am aware in the responses received from the Government that the statement of expectations review has commenced and will conclude once the Racing Regulation and Integrity Bill is enacted as legislation. That is in the Government's response to this particular report.

I am pleased to hear that because the Members' Statement of Expectation goes on to deal with purpose and strategic expectations and in that section, the principal purpose of Tasracing is to develop a competitive and sustainable racing industry.

Clearly, it should say something like 'in compliance with associated animal welfare legislation' or something to that extent.

It talks about principal commercial objectives and strategic expectations, but again, some of those strategic expectations should focus on animal welfare. Animals are a primary factor of this particular industry and clearly, there need to be declarations in the statement of expectations that cover that.

It talks about compliance with government policies:

In pursuing the strategic objectives in the context of the Government's directions, and undertaking its functions and exercising its powers, Members expect Tasracing shall act in accordance with:

- the governance framework for Government businesses;
- Treasurer's Instructions and guidelines that are applicable to Tasracing; and
- Government policies specifically applying to Tasracing as advised by the Members.

Again, there should be something in there with regard to animal welfare. It talks about the nature and scope of operations, the business presence outside the state. It talks about non-commercial activities. There is no mention in there, for instance, of the Greyhound Adoption Program and one would expect that would be a non-commercial activity - every reason to be revisiting this Members' Statement of Expectations. It is pleasing to see the Government are at least recognising that in their response to recommendation 4 and with regard to the Greyhound Adoption Program. On our recent visit to South Australia on another inquiry, we noticed that prisoners are actually involved in preparing dogs for adoption. It is an interesting circumstance not only good for the dogs - they are getting the attention - but probably good for the prisoners as they have a focus, purpose and all of those sorts of things.

Nevertheless, this report we have produced here with the short inquiry does point up the fact that non-government operations are not part of the funding profile that exists. Other members will probably talk more about that. We have a long way to go. It is clear that the public expect greater attention to animal welfare. It is clear that they want to see animals treated with respect. Having an Office of Racing Integrity that the community can have faith and trust in is an absolutely fundamental thing that has to exist. We do have to be able to trust the integrity body that is there to keep an eye on the industry. Many in the community would say that the industry should go and that is an argument for another day. There is no question about it, the Office of Racing Integrity is exactly that: the Office of Racing Integrity, with emphasis on the integrity. It needs to be paid attention to, and I am sure the community will be very thankful if they can find it in themselves to trust that organisation.

[3.16 p.m.]

**Ms WEBB** (Nelson) - I rise to speak on this, just briefly, because I think the Chair of the committee has done a sterling job making a wide range of comments. Other members are still yet to comment as well with some reflections. I appreciated the contribution from the member for Hobart that covered some areas that I am particularly interested in.

I found this an informative short inquiry that we undertook. It is not an industry that I have a great deal of familiarity with, while others on the committee do. I appreciated benefiting from their insights and their knowledge of the industry as we progressed through the short inquiry. In her contribution, the Chair spoke about the circumstances that sparked off our interest in undertaking a short inquiry process and the fact that public concerns had been generated through media coverage of some particular, serious allegations relating to the harness racing industry in this state.

When shocking things are brought to light through the media, then questions, quite naturally, are raised and through the mechanisms we have in this place it is appropriate to undertake scrutiny and seek information that we can contribute into the public discourse and onto the parliamentary and public record in relation to this.

As the Chair mentioned, the Government at that time also commissioned the Murrinh investigation, which continues and will be particularly useful and informative once it is fully completed. I will not go through this report or the findings and recommendations in detail, as many of them have been spoken about. The things that are of particular interest that I will speak to briefly in my contribution relate to a couple of matters relating to the issue of integrity. Members in this place will not be surprised to find that is an area of interest for me. I speak about good governance and matters of integrity of process, and integrity of public decision-making, on any issue that I can speak about. It was no different here.

There were some concerning things that came to light as we looked into some of these matters. When you look to the report, finding 4 speaks about that the Tasmanian Harness Racing Breeders, Owners, Trainers and Reinspersons Association (BOTRA) had publicly stated their loss of confidence in the Director of Racing. Any time you have a particular sector or industry where you have significant stakeholder people and organisations and groups in that industry expressing such a serious concern as a loss of confidence in the person who is responsible for regulation or oversight, then that is problematic and it is telling. It means that serious action is required.

That indicated to me the seriousness of the situations that were being faced in the industry and the need for more prompt action. One of the things I noted as we progressed through this short inquiry process is that, clearly, looking back to the Monteith Review, the Government is taking action in this space. They had a model presented through that review, that model is intended to be put in place, and development of legislation and development of that model is progressing. However, as with so many things, there is a frustration there when things take a long time and are not seen to be done as a matter of urgency, when there are people out there in the mix of particular activities within industry who are sorely needing those reforms and the improvements that they should deliver.

While it is positive and we heard quite clearly from the Government and from the minister - the then minister - that those Monteith Review reforms are progressing and they sound positive, there is a frustration that it is taking longer than it should and than those in the industry would like it to.

I note finding 5, which says:

Notwithstanding the loss of confidence by some racing industry stakeholders and the instigation of an independent review into the Office of Racing Integrity, the Director of Racing remains active in his role.

I point to that because that also raises some concerns for me. When we think about integrity and we think about questions being raised relating to good governance and things being done appropriately, when an issue has been identified very clearly as needing to be investigated and the person who sits there at the centre of that with responsibility remains in that role, that can be problematic. There can be a perception that is not appropriate while investigations are underway.

I understand why concerns were raised with us and it does give me pause too; that is no personal reflection or any comprehensive assessment on my part of the role being done by the Director of Racing. Sometimes it is a matter that if there is a perception of appropriate process, it is important to follow through and potentially stand people aside while investigations occur and while results are pursued and then considered, analysed and brought forward. Quite possibly, the person can step back in once that occurs. Standing someone aside is not necessarily a comment that they have done something wrong; it is an appropriateness at times while investigations are followed through.

I have talked a little there about things to do with finding 8, about commencing the legislative reforms. We heard from the then minister that it was hoped that legislation would be tabled this year to give effect to those reforms. It would be good to hear from the Government confirming that is the case and that we are on track. We heard that the development of the model and its implementation can happen concurrently. Once the legislation is passed and enacted, that model will be there, ready to go. It would be good to have that confirmed by the Government, if possible, in their contribution.

Animal welfare legislation and animal welfare discussions were a matter of some focus as we undertook the short inquiry process, and I know the member for Hobart has gone to this area already with his contribution. In noting it myself, there are a couple of things I will point to regarding the fact that from that previous Monteith Review we have suggested reforms

relating to animal welfare legislation specific to the racing industry. We are waiting still for those to come about.

You will see in the report that finding 10, and also finding 11 to some extent, lays out the suite of compliance instruments that cover animal welfare matters in the racing industry. It is a real list there. In finding 11, it speaks about the complex range of mandatory and discretionary animal welfare requirements in the industry. It covers legislation, policies, codes of practice, guidelines, standards and rules.

The point I make there is that it can always be, in my mind, a little concerning when people start to make a big list of all the things that are governing a certain space in terms of regulation, as if to say, because we have a long list, therefore regulation is appropriate and effective. The point I would make is that just because there is a list of compliance instruments and what could be seen as a complex range of instruments governing requirements, it does not mean that those things are appropriate or effective. In fact, having such a complexity of interactions can in fact work against appropriateness and effectiveness in terms of regulation and the outcomes we are seeking to achieve through regulation.

As we were undertaking this short inquiry process, hearing about that long list of instruments and the potential complexity and interactions amongst a number of legislative, policy, COVID-19 practice guidelines, standards and rules prompted me to imagine that it probably works against effectiveness when it comes to animal welfare. I hope that is what we are aiming to address to some extent with the Monteith Review reforms that are coming through in this space.

When you have a long list of regulatory instruments and you have a complexity of interactions amongst various policies, rules and codes, it can become very difficult to undertake accountability and comprehensive scrutiny of what is and is not happening in terms of effective regulation. It can become fragmented, and it can become difficult to see where the gaps are and what is falling through the gaps. When things are being governed and reported in different spheres, when there are different people responsible for oversight or implementation - all of these things can work against effective regulation when it comes to achieving the intended outcomes.

So, I hope that we are on a track that brings us closer to something that is readily navigable by everybody involved, and by those who are looking into this space with the intent of holding to account outcomes we want to see when it comes to animal welfare.

I was pleased to find a piece of work that came to fruition in real time as we undertook the inquiry. It relates to finding 13 in the report, which is that the Director of Racing had commenced publishing quarterly reports of greyhound breeding, retirement and injury statistics in relation to the Tasmanian greyhound racing industry. That came up back in June this year during Estimates, and then we followed up in hearings for this inquiry to check that it was underway. I believe the first public reporting under that program occurred in July, reporting on the March to June quarter. That is a positive development.

I believe it was the new Chief Vet in the industry that had prompted some of that in discussion with the Director of Racing. I apologise to anyone if that was a misrepresentation of where that came from. However, open and transparent reporting around greyhound welfare matters related to breeding, retirement and injury were particularly important. Matters like

ensuring that deaths within 14 days of a race-related injury, for example, were attributed to being a race-related death and those sorts of matters are now much more visible through that quarterly reporting.

Some developments can come about quickly when people put their mind to it, and particularly when they decide to start being transparent and making information available. That can sometimes allay fears and concerns that are out there amongst stakeholders and in the community.

Mr President, I will briefly mention the Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP). It is of keen interest to a lot of stakeholders, around the rehoming of former racing greyhounds. We know that the GAP that is officially part of Tasracing gets the bulk of industry funding to undertake the function of rehoming. There are private providers who are also doing that work, because the GAP simply cannot cater for the full need. There is a funding discrepancy there, which is of particular concern. Government funding still goes to the private providers for some elements, such as dental care and some other health-related matters for the greyhounds, but not for undertaking the full rehoming and care process that has to go around it.

It was pleasing to hear that there is a new funding stream becoming available; it was called the Racing Animal Welfare - RAW - grants, from memory. This has been identified as a way to provide a higher level and more distinct funding to private providers doing the rehoming. It was interesting to me to hear that the funding for that program was to come from within the existing animal welfare budget. That causes me to wonder, what is being displaced? If that is from within the existing budget, what is it taking money away from, and will it be sufficient funding to appropriately support the organisations that are doing that work? That remains to be seen. Perhaps the Government can confirm where that funding round is up to.

While we were conducting the short inquiry process and as reflected in the evidence presented in the report, it was still three to six months away before the details of that program were to be made public and progressed. It would be good to hear how far down the track we are, because we know that those private providers are out there right now, caring for animals and rehoming them. They are often doing so under great duress, in terms of their financial capacity.

I note finding 18, which is about RSPCA Tasmania and its advocacy functions not being funded by Government. I think that the recommendation about providing funding for such activities is the one that is not accepted by the Government, which is disappointing to hear. From my background in the NGO sector, I know that no matter which aspect of the NGO sector you look at, not-for-profit organisations are often delivering services - and that is what they are funded for - but they are also expected to undertake advocacy activities. When I say that, I mean to participate in government policy development or strategy development or implementation.

It is work that they often do not get financially supported to do, but they are still expected to do it. They are seen as remiss by the community and also by government if they do not participate and contribute. It is my view that if we are drawing on the experience, expertise and information provided by those sources into our policy development and implementation processes, or our assessment processes, but we are not investing in that and supporting that to happen, we are taking advantages of NGOs - the RSPCA included.



**Mr Valentine** - In this case they said they did not want it. They asked, but it is interesting.

**Ms WEBB** - I wonder about that.

That probably covers most of the areas that I wanted to reflect on. I note that others have done a good job on some of the ones that I have not mentioned and other members may still be speaking after me. The other part of this inquiry that caught my attention was about complaint handling processes. That seemed to be a situation that had presented a lot of consternation to certain parts of the industry. It is problematic if people do not feel they can safely make a complaint in a way that will not seem to be compromised by having their complaint passed through to the person that might be related to the matter of the complaint. When we had a particular example that we were presented with and asked questions about, there seemed to be, as reflected in finding 20, the potential to see a breach of general conflict of interest principles, where a complaint was passed through to someone who was, in fact, part of the material in that complaint. I believe that now has been rectified, from what we heard through the inquiry. It is a basic governance matter that all entities who are having a complaints process in place really need to pay close attention to, to ensure they get right. As soon as people feel they cannot bring forward a complaint safely, we are not doing the best we can for making sure things are operating appropriately and minimising risks, and making sure we appropriately support people.

I will leave my contribution there and note for the record I am very happy to have been part of this short inquiry; it is my first time as a member of Committee B. Thank you to the Chair, other members and particularly those who brought a great deal of experience and understanding of the industry that I was happy to experience the benefit of.

[3.36 p.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Madam Deputy President, the Government released its response today for the Legislative Council short inquiry into the Office of Racing Integrity, after carefully considering the report's seven recommendations, and is on record as fully supporting six of the seven recommendations.

Mr President, I seek to leave to table the document.

**Leave granted.**

**Response tabled.**

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Madam Deputy President, I table the Government's response to the Sessional Committee of Government Administration B short inquiry process report on the Office of Racing Integrity, noting there is a lovely letter to the chair to start with.

Madam Deputy President, as I said, we support six of the seven recommendations; the exception is a recommendation regarding funding for the RSPCA for advocacy activities related to government policy and legislative development. The recommendation is not supported by the RSPCA.

The Government has been consistently on the record as a strong supporter of the Tasmanian racing industry, which generates more than \$185 million a year in economic activity

for the state. It involves more than 5800 people across the state. Probity, integrity and animal welfare are critically important in the racing industry and underpins confidence in racing.

The Government is well advanced in progressing integrity reforms with the draft Racing Regulation and Integrity Bill 2023, which will strengthen governance, integrity and animal welfare across all three codes of racing in Tasmania. I think the member for McIntyre asked about where that bill was up to; it is being progressed. Consultation on the draft bill closed on 6 October 2023 and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania is now working through those submissions. The Government therefore welcomes the committee's recommendations to expediate legislative reform.

**Ms Webb** - To be tabled this year?

**Mrs HISCUTT** - To be tabled this year?

**Ms Webb** - That is what was suggested to us; I was just after some confirmation.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - I will just seek some advice on that on the end, but it says the consultations closed on 6 October 2023 and they are now working through those submissions. Remind me if I forget.

**Ms Forrest** - Ask the minister tomorrow.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - The Government started work on those important reforms in 2021 with the Monteith Review and they have been formed from evidence-based industry best practice. Their delivery will provide the Tasmanian racing industry with a modernised, effective and fit-for-purpose model for regulation and integrity. I will just make a note here.

The purpose of the draft bill is to create a Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner with the power to set integrity and animal welfare standards for participants in the Tasmanian racing industry. It will enhance integrity governance within Tasracing to become operational and responsible for all three codes of racing, including pre-race day, race day management, animal welfare and stewarding. It will provide an additional advisory role for the RSPCA in animal welfare in racing while retaining the power for independent investigation of animal welfare matters, including recommendation 2, to expediate legislative reforms. The Government welcomes and supports recommendations 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7.

Recommendation 1 relates to releasing the final Murrhy report as soon as practicable after it is completed. The Government has already released the interim Murrhy report and will release the final report when Mr Murrhy finalises it. The Government will not be inappropriately asking Mr Murrhy to report. When he reports, he reports. We will not be putting any pressure on him to do such in any particular time.

Recommendations 2 and 3 relate to advancing the Racing Regulation and Integrity Bill 2023 as a priority, which is being undertaken and delivering key animal welfare priorities, including establishing an advisory role for the RSPCA. This is in addition to work we have advanced for animal welfare reforms, such as the recent amendments to the Animal Welfare Act 1993 to ban the use of pronged collars. The member for Rosevears as the Minister for Primary Industries and Water recently announced a review of Tasmania's dog welfare regulations to ensure all dogs in the state have good welfare outcomes.

A reference group with the Office of Racing Integrity and the RSPCA Tasmania has been created to immediately undertake a gap analysis of the current dog welfare regulations against the Tasracing Greyhound Animal Welfare Manual 2015 to ensure contemporary, enforceable welfare standards for greyhounds in Tasmania and Tasracing's progress on the development of an equine welfare code of practice in racing, which is due to be released for public consultation.

On recommendation 4, the statement of expectations review has commenced and will conclude after the Racing Regulation and Integrity Bill is enacted as legislation.

Recommendation 5: the Government takes the welfare of greyhounds seriously and will continue to work with industry and rehoming providers to ensure animal welfare is a priority. The role of ancillary rehoming agencies is acknowledged and supported through Tasracing's funding of the mandatory desexing of all greyhounds on retirement. Further support for ancillary rehoming agencies will be offered through Tasracing's soon to be introduced racing animal welfare grants program. This initiative will provide funding for all eligible organisations meeting Tasracing animal welfare criteria.

Recommendation 7: the Racing Regulation and Integrity Bill 2023 restructures the regulations of the Tasmanian racing industry. The bill includes establishing an independent commissioner supported by an independent complaints process. Since July this year, complaints management processes have now been put in place with the Minister for Racing's office to direct how complaints are managed. The complaints policy for the Office of Racing Integrity has also been delivered in September 2023 and now provides specific guidance for complaints that relate to an individual Office of Racing Integrity employee's conduct. This policy can be found online by any member of the public on the Office of Racing Integrity's website.

The Government does not support recommendation 6 regarding funding for the RSPCA for advocacy activities related to government policy and legislative development. The RSPCA Tasmania has an advocacy role independent of government and has indicated to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment it will not be seeking further funding for provisions for advocacy services relating to government policy and legislative development. This position has been confirmed by the CEO of the RSPCA. The Tasmanian Government provides funds to the RSPCA Tasmania, based on agreed objectives with a focus on activities, projects and inspectorate services. Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, through Biosecurity Tasmania, has primary responsibility for the Animal Welfare Act 1993, with RSPCA Tasmania undertaking agreed animal welfare inspectorate activities under a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. The MoU provides base annual funding of \$550 000 for the RSPCA inspectorate services.

The Government has also provided RSPCA with grant funding of \$200 000 to support animal welfare initiatives specifically related to racing, which include access to an investigation management system, Comtrac, for RSPCA inspectors to align with the ORI and Biosecurity Tasmania; support for modernising memoranda of understanding between the RSPCA and other relevant animal welfare regulators in Tasmania, including Tasmania Police, the Office of Racing Integrity and Biosecurity Tasmania as part of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania; and analysis by the RSPCA of options for lifetime traceability options for greyhounds and adoption processes, and linkages to local government.

A further one-off grant of \$50 000 was provided to the RSPCA in May 2023 to assist with the purchase of equipment to increase inspectors' safety. Also, the RSPCA will be provided funding of \$150 000 in 2023-24 for an additional inspector to support the important compliance work undertaken by the RSPCA.

I will seek some advice, Mr President.

A couple of members of the inquiry asked about the legislation and when it will be happening. Our aim is to have it tabled by the end of the year, and we are still working towards that.

In conclusion, the Government supports six out of the seven recommendations from the committee's report and, as I have discussed today, is well advanced in progressing these recommendations. The Government notes the report.

[3.48 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre) - Mr President, you would have to say six out of seven ain't bad. I appreciate such a timely response by the Government to the report. It has not gone unnoticed that it is a very timely response.

Given this is my fourth time to the lectern today, and I have omitted on those three former occasions to also acknowledge and congratulate the member for Windermere on his ministry, it is well deserved and I look forward to his contributions in his areas of responsibility as time moves on. I also acknowledge the member for Prosser in the role of Deputy Leader and supporting the Leader in the Legislative Council. I congratulate them both and apologise for not doing it earlier in the day.

I have indicated that I was pleased to receive the responses. I am somewhat surprised - no, we did not ask the RSPCA to come to the committee because we did not ask anybody. It was relating to the roles and functions of the Office of Racing Integrity. The department, Tasracing and ORI were those that presented to the inquiry.

During the committee deliberations and given that we know that the input - and I already mentioned this in my contribution earlier - into animal welfare and the RSPCA having such a key role in advocacy services, and certainly relating to government policy and legislative development, we felt it was an entirely appropriate recommendation. I am somewhat surprised that the RSPCA would rather wait for a funding grant to do additional work in that area rather than have something on a more regular basis. That is entirely up to the RSPCA how they go about funding the work they do. I am somewhat surprised by that but, as I said, that is their call. We felt that would be an advantage to the RSPCA. Never assume, that is the message here.

**Mr Valentine** - Perhaps they believe that because their role is independent, then they should maintain that independence by not being funded.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But recently there was a \$200 000 grant for works, so I am not sure -

**Mr Valentine** - No, it is an interesting -

**Ms RATTRAY** - It is an interesting one and the RSPCA has made a call on that and I respect their call. The committee were here to assist that very important organisation. As I said, how many times do we hear people have called the RSPCA for support, for input, for assistance. That was where it came from, a good place. It was well intentioned.

I appreciated the contribution from the Leader in responding to the other six areas of recommendations. She covered off on those and I will not repeat what the Leader has presented.

In closing, I sincerely thank members of the committee for their commitment to the work of the committee. It was a short inquiry and as we know, there are quite a lot of committees overlapping in this place; members have a lot of commitments, and to be able to manage to line up members' diaries and make time to get this inquiry - at least this part of the inquiry - completed for now, is appreciated. On behalf of all members, I acknowledge and thank the committee secretary and the Parliamentary Research Service for their excellent support through dedicated investigative work to assist the committee. It was forensic in some areas. We thank both Simon Scott and Allison Scott for their work. It is always appreciated and they may well be listening, so they will hear their thanks firsthand.

As I have said in my executive summary, the 23 findings and seven recommendations in this report should assist and now we have seen from the response from the Government that it has assisted in delivering greater compliance and integrity within the Tasmanian racing industry to meet community expectations. That was the momentum for the inquiry, to have those community expectations met. That legislation that will be tabled in this parliament this year will go a further step towards meeting those community expectations.

In regard to the Murrin report, just a comment that the Government will not interfere with the time frames. The Government has already put time frames - two time frames - that have not been met in regard to this matter. I am not sure how long the Government is prepared to wait, and that question mark still remains over the industry while ever that report has not been tabled. That is my view on that. I cannot speak on behalf of all other members, but that is my view. I suggest that somebody needs to put a time frame somewhere because I know the members of the industry are very keen to see a resolution to this. Walking up the street in the town where I have my office, I was recently tapped on the shoulder and asked, 'Any idea when that report will be due?' and I had to say, 'No, I don't'.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - Through you, Mr President, we have noted your comments.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Again, Mr President, I appreciated the opportunity and I thank all members for their input and contributions. I apologise if any member felt that I did not leave enough for them to say. They can be the Chair next time and get the first start.

**Report considered and noted.**

## JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENERGY MATTERS IN TASMANIA

### Consideration of Resolution to Establish Committee

[3.56 p.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, in noting this resolution from the other place and their request that this House considers the establishment of a joint House committee into energy matters, I think it is all self-explanatory. I am not going to speak at any great length about this at all. I will say that the mover of the motion downstairs, Mr Tucker, and I have had many conversations about energy-related matters over some time now. I also note it is a matter of great public interest. Members are probably well aware there is an energy inquiry that has been established in Government Administration Committee A which has a different focus. There may be some crossover in the second term of reference, but the first term of reference is the key to the Government Administration Committee A one as it relates to energy prices and the impact of energy prices on cost-of-living pressures. It does look at the opportunities and challenges for the state as Tasmania is the owner of the power generation and transmission infrastructure. There would be some crossover in this; but the Government Administration Committee has a very targeted approach to looking at those matters.

I did have numerous conversations with Mr Tucker about the framing of the terms of reference for this inquiry that is being proposed in the lower House. They are broad, and intentionally so. They are to look at not just what is happening now in our energy sector, but to look at what has happened in the past that has led us to here. It is also to look to the future - as you will see from term of reference (1)(d), which is to look more deeply and thoroughly at Marinus Link and the North West Transmission Developments.

We know that they are very costly investments in the state. There is a degree of concern about the cost to Tasmania of a link that is most likely to benefit the mainland eastern seaboard and South Australia much more than Tasmania, notionally. The people of Tasmania do have a right and an expectation, I believe, to understand how it would affect them.

The other matters look at how the National Electricity Market operates. It is a frightfully complicated beast, I admit, as I know from when the Public Accounts Committee inquired into the extended Basslink outage and the consideration predominantly of the financial impact on the government-owned entities, Hydro Tasmania and TasNetworks particularly, in that regard.

I think the majority of members of the committee, including myself, did an Australian Energy Market Operator training course. That was funded by way of committee funds or by a Request for Additional Funding - RAF, or however it was done, to enable us to get a better understanding. New members may wish to consider that if this -

**Sitting suspended from 4.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.**

**Ms FORREST** - Before the break I was talking about the complexity of this energy sector, particularly once you start dipping into the National Electricity Market and how that all works. For the members of the committee it will be an important learning experience as much as anything. Also, it will definitely help to inform the public debate around Marinus Link and the North West Transmission Developments, as well as matters more broadly related to energy and what our future should be: what it should look like, what the transition to renewables across Australia should look like to some degree, acknowledging that Tasmania has

100 per cent renewable capacity but does not always use 100 per cent renewable energy. On our islands, some diesel generators are still used quite regularly. They are not part of the NEM, so they do not fit into that category.

Mr President, I do urge members' support on this because it will be a valuable piece of work to help inform the public and also inform the parliament about the energy market, but also about what Marinus could mean for Tasmania in terms of the cost, the benefits and even the timing related to it. I know there is great interest in this Chamber and we now have the minister for Energy sitting in our midst. I congratulate the minister; I know he is so looking forward to appearing before GBEs and, notionally, this committee - and the other committee, where he will no doubt be grilled. I am sure by that time he will be entirely up to speed. He might have done the AEMO course to help inform himself.

I reiterate that this is a matter of significant public interest. Marinus Link and associated projects, such as the Battery of the Nation and the North West Transmission Developments, have been on the cards for a long time. There is also so much else going on in this space, in terms of battery storage, the density of batteries and the capacity to store for longer periods. There is the capacity that hydro and gas and coal-fired generation definitely provide, but the desperate need to move away from those non-renewable energy sources for the future of our planet. It is incumbent on all of us to get as much information and knowledge in this area as we can.

I urge members to support the motion. It will take some time to do the work. As with joint House committees that originate in the other place, they have a reporting date in them. That is under their Standing Orders, if anyone was wondering about that. As we know, in other joint committees that have needed more time, there has been a motion to come back to the House to extend that. The committee would need to be re-established if an election occurred and the reporting date can be amended, if required. The reason it is there is because of the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly and that is where this motion originated.

I acknowledge and congratulate the member for Windermere for his elevation to minister for Energy at a really important time in this sector, and also the member for Prosser in her elevation to the Deputy Leader position in this House. I look forward to other members' contributions to this motion.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - Through you, Mr President - while the member is on her feet, did you name the people?

**Ms FORREST** - No; that comes later. It is a separate motion. We have to agree to the committee first.

[4.35 p.m.]

**Mr DUIGAN** (Windermere - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - I am pleased to stand and speak to this. As the Minister for Energy and Renewables, I reiterate that the Government supports the motion relating to energy matters in Tasmania. It is important that we get as much information out there into the community as is possible to do so, as has been reflected by the member for Murchison.

They are complex, interrelated, interconnected sets of large-scale investments that we are looking at and the Government supports this because we are proud of the position we are in

regarding energy in Tasmania; proud of our policies and proud of our plans for the renewable future. It is our Government's mission to make sure Tasmania has the renewable energy supply it needs to grow our economy, create jobs and power the state's transition to a low emissions future. Importantly for me, the decisions that I make while I hold this portfolio are viewed through the prism of delivering the lowest power prices that we can to the people of Tasmania.

The Government has a Tasmania First Energy Guarantee and it is planned to make sure Tasmania will always have the lowest power prices in the nation. The latest report from the Tasmanian Economic Regulator confirms this. It notes that for residential customers in Tasmania, the annual bill, under Aurora Energy's regulated time-of-use tariff, is the lowest, compared to the bills under equivalent regulated tariffs in all mainland jurisdictions for the same consumption.

That is from the independent Tasmanian Economic Regulator. In fact, if you account and adjust for inflation over the past 10 years, residential power prices in Tasmania have fallen by 12.9 per cent. With inflation taken into account, that is quite remarkable and power prices for small business, again adjusted for inflation, are down 22.4 per cent.

It is interesting to contrast that with the time that we are in now which is heavily impacted by cost-of-living pressures, interest rates, filling up the car, going to the grocery shop - it feels like the costs are rising on all fronts. However, it is important to recognise that over the past 10 years, power prices in Tasmania have been particularly well managed. In light of those cost-of-living pressures, we have made sure Tasmania has more generous concessions than any other state in the nation. Our long-term energy plan is delivering and we are increasing our power supply and that is going to be important, in line with our legislated target of doubling our renewable energy capacity by 2040.

I have spoken to a few people over the course of the afternoon, and Tasmanians are rightly proud of our hydro system and getting up to Tarraleah and seeing what is going on up there. It is helpful -

**Ms Forrest** - It is good to see you are getting around to my electorate a bit.

**Mr DUIGAN** - I love it in your electorate.

**Ms Forrest** - Tarraleah is yours in all fairness, but I have got some in mine.

**Mr DUIGAN** - I apologise, I did not think I went anywhere near Murchison.

**Ms Forrest** - The water comes from my area, do not worry about that.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Speaking to other members who had the opportunity to go up to Tarraleah and despite their cars not unlocking and various other spooky things that happened, it is great to see the scope and the scale of what those things look like in the flesh and how you can sink \$100 million into a 35-metre hole in the ground.

It is large scale, these are big investments and we do have a great heritage in that space to be proud of. For the best part of a century, Hydro has provided our island state with an incredible renewable energy resource. We have a very strong supply of energy for our current



needs. In fact, our energy storages are at the highest level for this time of year since 2019. We certainly do not have an energy crisis, but we do need more energy for our future.

As I learn more about this and get more information given to me, 80 per cent of our energy needs fall on the island every year in the form of rain. However, as our economy grows and our demand for energy increases, that percentage goes lower and we need to find ways to fill that ever-increasing gap in the market. That is by virtue of new generation capacity on island.

Again, all this is part of our Tasmania First Energy Guarantee plan that will secure Tasmanian energy for Tasmanians at Tasmanian prices. The first step is securing the future of the Marinus Link project on terms that put Tasmania first. Our Government has always said that we will only progress with Marinus Link if it is in the best interests of Tasmania and Tasmanians. While Marinus Link is an important project for Tasmania by helping to boost extra renewable energy development and support growth in business and industry, the Government has been unambiguous and we will only progress the project at the right price. The right price does not mean at any price.

As members would be aware, there is a line in the sand that Tasmania cannot afford to cross, and as we announced recently, we have had a massive win to progress Marinus Link with a revised partnership and funding arrangement with the Australian Government, the Victorian Government, and the Tasmanian Government. We said we would only progress the project if it stacked up and, with this revised partnership, I think it does. It means we can progress the project ahead of making a final investment decision towards the end of 2024, confident that the massive benefits it will bring to the state are fair and affordable. We have a plan and we are getting on with it.

Marinus Link has agreed to a capacity reservation agreement for a high-voltage direct current cable with Prysmian PowerLink. The capacity reservation agreement has been made possible through the underwriting agreement with the Australian Government. Contracts for the Marinus Link project are conditional upon the successful conclusion of the FID.

Marinus will drive renewable generation development in Tasmania, meaning more electricity, more jobs, more energy, more energy security for the state, and it will drive economic growth and deliver thousands of jobs, particularly in regional areas. As we continue to add more generation into the state, and as I have been travelling around speaking to many wind and solar proponents, they talked to me about the need and the value of Marinus. As they see it, the one thing that adding extra generation and extra capacity into our system does is put downward pressure on prices, there is no doubt about that.

Power prices will be lower with Marinus than without it. We have worked closely with the Prime Minister and the federal minister, Mr Bowen, to achieve this outcome. In my relatively short time as minister, I have had a meeting with Mr Bowen. To quote Mr Bowen on the Marinus project, he has said:

This is a game-changing project for both Tasmania and the mainland, and this updated agreement will not only deliver the benefits of Marinus Link, it will be cheaper to Tasmanians ... a win-win for Tasmanian consumers, for Tasmanian energy security, and to put downward pressure on energy bills.

Tasmania can benefit from the two-way flow of energy across Bass Strait, accessing a diverse range of cheap renewables like solar to import, and selling excess energy when the sun is not shining and the wind is not blowing. I do not know if other members have taken the opportunity to go to the Hydro trading floor or have seen that in times past. You will see when it is a windy day in South Australia and they are paying good money, \$50 per megawatt, to take their consumption or to take their excess generation, that represents a massive opportunity for Tasmania because we will be able to import electricity at times and prices that suit us, and we will be able to sell electricity at times and prices that suit us. There are, of course, benefits for Victorian consumers and for the National Energy Market and the grid, but it is an opportunity for Tasmania to participate in a market on our terms. That is a huge opportunity for us.

This is a vital part of our Tasmania First Energy Guarantee that keeps Tasmania's power prices the lowest in the nation. Indeed, we are paying Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power and we are securing Tasmania's energy security. We need that link particularly in these challenging climate times when the rain does not fall as we expect it to fall and our dams are low. Thankfully, that is not the case now. As I mentioned, 80 per cent of our energy needs fall on the island most years in the form of rain, but we need to make sure we are able to sustain our energy needs through times of climate instability.

We welcome the review and the inquiry. We have already committed to a statewide economic and social impact assessment of the Marinus Link project, which will be led by Treasury. This will be made publicly available at least a month prior to the final investment decision on Marinus Link. That is a whole-of-state business case, for want of a better word, to look at the whole-of-state impacts of Marinus. Treasury will do that. Some of your concerns on the dollars and cents will be heavily scrutinised. This will be a big piece of work with lots of analysis and lots of consultation to be undertaken and will be available for all to see.

We are building a renewable energy future that supplements hydro with continuing investment in wind, solar and hydrogen. I want to emphasise there is no 'do nothing' option for Tasmania regarding bringing on new sources of generation if we want to meet our growing demands. We need new sources of generation on island. What has been lost in the debate over Project Marinus is that it is not a story about export. We would expect even a single cable's scope can help us firm significant new load in the state, developing new industries, expanding our major industrials, or supporting population growth and greater household and business electrification, electric cars and such like.

This will require new generation to be built in Tasmania, to maintain our net renewable credentials, which is the reason so many businesses obviously want to relocate here in the state. Marinus supports new generation in our planned onshore and offshore renewable energy zones, which we will continue to discuss with the community.

In addition to Marinus' energy, security and electricity trading benefits, there are also the expected direct economic stimulus of construction and the renewable generation it enables. A lot of that will happen in your electorate, member for Murchison. The Tasmanian Government understands the future development investment in renewable energy needs to be prioritised and coordinated and is seeking to do this in line with the Renewable Energy Coordination Framework.

One of the key actions under the framework was the establishment of a register of interest process to identify a pipeline of renewable energy generation across the state to help meet the energy demands of this new investment. The RoI identified a large number of potential renewable generation projects. When I say a large number, it is a large number, around 25 000 gigawatt hours of potential renewable energy projects currently seeking approval and aiming to start operation by 2030 - which would be more than double Tasmania's current energy use and certainly enough to support the achievement of our Tasmanian renewable energy target.

We have a full pipeline of new generation programs and at the same time, we are progressing at an ambitious plan for growing our economy and creating more jobs through development of a world-class green hydrogen sector. Our green hydrogen vision, as set out in our Tasmanian Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan, is for Tasmania to be a global leader in large-scale green hydrogen by 2030. We are on track, including to begin hydrogen production in early 2024. I believe our first scale hydrogen electrolyser has arrived in the state and is currently in the unboxing phase - YouTube term - with Blue Economy CRC and they will be plugging it in shortly. We will be generating hydrogen on island and there will be, in 2024, hydrogen-powered buses servicing the city of Hobart. That is exciting.

I will not talk about who I have been speaking to, but I have been speaking to a lot of hydrogen proponents and there were some networking events that happened in Hobart and Launceston last week. There are challenges. There are challenges worldwide because the hydrogen industry is not just new for Tasmania, but it is a greenfields industry. It is happening all across the world at essentially the same time. There is a global race for capital, for technology and a lot of the supply chain issues we are seeing in wind apply to hydrogen also. Electrolysers are a long way out if you order one of those. But green hydro provides a critical enabler in Australia's energy transition. Tasmania has a competitive advantage to offer the industry and the world and we are getting on with the job.

Tasmania has seen a significant interest from a range of proponents, beyond those funded to conduct a study to produce green hydrogen and green ammonia. Fortescue Future Industries, Woodside Energy, Countrywide Hydrogen, LINE Hydrogen and others have all expressed interest in export and domestic-sized hydrogen projects in Tasmania. And ABEL Energy and Iberdrola are working together to deliver a green hydrogen and green methanol production facility at Bell Bay, backed by a new renewable energy generation within the state with a capital investment estimated at around \$1.2 billion.

**Ms Rattray** - Is that a 'b' or an 'm'?

**Mr DUIGAN** - That is a 'b'. There is a heap of things with a 'b' in this space. They are all 'b's. Everything is a 'b' and it is a challenge, but also a massive opportunity. HIF Global, which was mentioned by the member for Elwick earlier, a world-leading eFuels company, has also announced plans for a commercial-scale facility to be built in the north-west of Tasmania. The company expects operations to commence in mid-2026 delivering up to 100 million litres of carbon-neutral eFuels - essentially carbon-neutral petrol and 260 000 tonnes of avoided CO<sub>2</sub> emissions each year. These are all very exciting projects.

Tasmania's green hydrogen potential is also attracting international attention including that, on 15 September, the Tasmanian Government signed a joint declaration of intent on hydrogen cooperation with Bremen in Germany. This agreement identifies five priority areas for cooperation that will support the development of a green hydrogen industry in Tasmania:

research, innovation and development, hydrogen and wind energy industry and business development, remote applications, polar, offshore, Southern Ocean, adaptation to the consequences of climate change, and hydrogen export and import opportunities. The scope of this agreement includes sharing of knowledge on climate change and Antarctic cooperation. These priority areas will help Tasmania to further establish international supply chains to advance our economy, job opportunities, skills, hydrogen technologies, as well as provide new opportunities for trade in sectors ancillary to the hydrogen industry development.

The agreement with Bremen is on top of our already having signed MOUs on green hydrogen cooperation with the Port of Rotterdam, which is one of if not the largest container port in the world and the Flanders region of Belgium, where there is already large-scale rollout of hydrogen infrastructure, pipes and that sort of thing, to explore opportunities for collaboration. There is particularly strong interest in our green hydrogen coming out of Japan, Korea and Europe.

**Ms Forrest** - Is that being shipped out in tanks?

**Mr DUIGAN** - Where is that?

**Ms Forrest** - Out of Japan and places? The green hydrogen.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Not currently, no.

**Ms Forrest** - Is that the plan though, that it is shipped out that way?

**Mr DUIGAN** - I would imagine. It is very energy-intensive to ship it in that way, but it is one of the vagaries of the hydrogen supply chain and something all jurisdictions are looking at, how they manage that - whether it turns into methanol or whether it turns into ammonia or something like that, as a carrier.

**Ms Forrest** - A matter for the committee to have a look at.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Yes. The Government is getting on with the job in building our renewable energy future and our future will still involve Basslink. We are very pleased and we welcome the APA Group progressing with the Australian Energy Regulator to make Basslink a regulated asset. As a state government we support that. Tasmania will be better off as a result of this transparent regulatory process and this will bring Basslink in line with every other interconnector in the National Electricity Market as a regulated asset.

It will ensure, going through the regulation process, that Victoria pays its fair share of the ongoing costs of Basslink and delivers on our energy plan that benefits all Tasmanians. Basslink's transition to a regulated asset would bring surety to the sustainable flow of electricity between Tasmania and Victoria. It also means that for the first time since about 2006, Victoria will pay its fair share of having this infrastructure which is increasingly important to Victoria, as the eastern seaboard looks to shut down vast tracts of coal-fired generation.

Basslink's transition to a regulated asset would bring surety to the sustainable flow - sorry, I may have already said that.

**Ms Forrest** - That is not important at the moment; all that data is up on the website now.

**Mr DUIGAN** - A foundation principle the Government has set for Basslink's conversion is that it is delivered having regard to the interest of Tasmanian consumers, including by achieving a transmission cost allocation to Tasmania that is minimised and no more than the benefits that Tasmanian customers receive. It is important we are not paying more than our share to have Basslink regulated. This will ensure Tasmania continues to pay among the lowest electricity prices in the nation.

Another important step in our Tasmania First Energy Guarantee is our renewable energy dividend. As mentioned, we know power bills are a major cost for all Tasmanian households, so our Government will deliver millions of dollars in energy bill relief to Tasmanians with our renewable energy dividend. Hydro, as mentioned, was built by Tasmanians for Tasmanians; now, Tasmanians will rightly reap the rewards of this Tasmanian success story. This renewable energy dividend means that when Hydro makes money, Tasmanians save money. Just like shareholders receive a dividend, when a business is making a profit, Tasmanians will now directly share in Hydro's profits when their dividend exceeds \$100 million. This is an innovative cost-of-living measure that will help every single Tasmanian household with their energy bills. That is around 254 000 households, including those who already receive some type of concession.

Tasmanians will receive an energy renewable dividend credit on their bill, which means they will pay less and save more. Every dollar counts. This action is just another way our Government is delivering on what matters to all Tasmanians, including relieving the cost-of-living pressures. I welcome the inquiry and support it standing up.

**Resolution considered and agreed to.**

## **JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENERGY MATTERS IN TASMANIA**

### **Committee Appointments**

[4.58 p.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, I move -

That the following members be appointed to serve on the committee on the part of the Council: Mr Edmunds, Ms Howlett, Mr Harriss, and the mover;

And -

That Monday 30 October 2023 at 10.30 o'clock a.m. be the time and Committee Room 1 be the place for holding the first meeting of the committee.

**Motion agreed to.**

## ADJOURNMENT

[4.59 p.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) -  
Mr President, I move -

That the Council at its rising adjourn until 11 a.m. on Wednesday, 18 October 2023.

Mr President, before I move the adjournment, can I remind members of our briefing tomorrow morning at 9.30. That will be the briefing on the supplementary appropriation bill. I am hoping the minister might be able to pop in just for a few moments before Question Time. He might be there for five or 10 minutes to start with.

**The Council adjourned at 4.59 p.m.**

## Appendix 1

Make	Model	Conclusion of each incident
<b>2023</b>		
<b>1</b>	ZJBeny	Unknown
<b>2</b>	ZJBeny	BYH-32
<b>3</b>	Avanco	Unknown
<b>4</b>	Benedict	LS25 PFLH4 A4
<b>2022</b>		
<b>1</b>	NHP	Unknown
<b>2</b>	IMO Pacific	Unknown
<b>3</b>	PVPower	XPDCISO I 000V32A
<b>4</b>	Unknown	Unknown
<b>5</b>	Projoy	PEDSC I00-EL32R-4
<b>6</b>	Suntree	SISO-40
<b>2021</b>		
<b>1</b>	NHP	Unknown
<b>2</b>	IMO Pacific	Unknown
<b>3</b>	PVPower	XPDCISO I 000V32A
<b>4</b>	Unknown	Unknown
<b>5</b>	Projoy	PEDSC I00-EL32R-4
<b>6</b>	Suntree	SISO-40
<b>7</b>	NHP	Unknown
<b>8</b>	IMO Pacific	Unknown
<b>9</b>	PVPower	XPDCISO I 000V32A
<b>10</b>	Unknown	Unknown
<b>11</b>	Projoy	PEDSC I00-EL32R-4

12	Suntree	SISO-40	Internal fault
13	NHP	Unknown	Internal fault
14	IMO Pacific	Unknown	Internal fault
15	PVPower	XPDCISO I 000V32A	Internal fault
<b>2020</b>			
1	ZJBeny	BYH-32	Moisture ingress
2	ZJBeny	BYH-32	Moisture ingress
3	Unknown	Unknown	Moisture ingress
<b>2019</b>			
1	Telergon	Unknown	Moisture ingress
2	NHP	Unknown	Moisture ingress
3	PGK	Unknown	Internal fault
4	Unknown	HGN4- 32DC	Internal fault
5	Telergon	Unknown	Internal fault

Comments to Table

**Internal fault.** This can be attributed to either a failure in the product or caused by arcing as a result of a loose connection (workmanship).

**Moisture ingress.** The ingress of moisture into the isolator enclosure results in arcing (tracking) between the two poles causing overheating and resultant fire.