

Thursday 24 May 2018

The President, **Mr Wilkinson**, took the Chair at 11 a.m. and read Prayers.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Committee of Privileges

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

That Mr Wilkinson, Ms Forrest, Mr Finch, Mr Dean and the mover be appointed as Committee of Privileges of this Council to inquire into, and report upon, complaints of breach of privilege which may be referred to it by the Council.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Orders Committee

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

That the President, the Chair of Committees, Ms Rattray, Mr Gaffney and the mover be appointed as the Standing Orders Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

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

That Ms Rattray and Mr Valentine be appointed to serve on the Public Works Committee in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of the Public Works Committee Act 1914.

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation

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

That Mr Farrell, Ms Rattray and Ms Forrest be appointed to serve on the Subordinate Legislation Committee in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of the Subordinate Legislation Committee Act 1969.

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts

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

That Mr Dean, Ms Forrest and Mr Gaffney be appointed to serve on the Public Accounts Committee in accordance with the provisions of section 2 of the Public Accounts Committee Act 1970.

Motion agreed to.

Joint Standing Committee on Integrity

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

That Mr Dean, Mr Gaffney and Mr Valentine be appointed to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity, in accordance with section 23 of the Integrity Committee Act 2009.

Motion agreed to.

Joint House Committee

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

That the President, Ms Forrest and the mover be appointed to serve on the Joint House Committee of this parliament.

Motion agreed to.

Joint Committee - Library Committee

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

That Mr Farrell, Mr Finch, Ms Forrest, Ms Rattray, Mr Valentine and Mr Wilkinson be appointed to serve on the Joint Committee of both Houses to manage the Parliamentary Library.

Motion agreed to.

TASMANIAN HEALTH SERVICE BILL 2018 (No. 3)

Consideration of Amendment made in the Committee of the Whole Council

Resumed from 23 May 2018 (page 25)

[11.05 a.m.]

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

That the bill as amended in Committee be now taken into consideration.

Motion agreed to.

Mrs HISCUTT - Mr President, I move -

That the amendment be read.

Motion agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill read the third time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from 23 May 2018 (page 75)

[11.08 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I welcome the opportunity to make some comments in reply to Her Excellency's speech on the opening of the Forty-Ninth Parliament.

I do not intend to cover areas more appropriately addressed in a reply to the state budget, which is almost upon us. I expect many of the election commitments will be reflected there.

I am pleased to note Her Excellency's comments regarding Tasmania leading the nation in electing over 50 per cent of women to the House of Assembly. Of course, until very recent times the Legislative Council has had 40 per cent female members and with the election of another woman to the seat of Prosser, we are now at 47 per cent. Indeed, we are doing well in the gender diversity measure.

Parliament overall now has 50 per cent male members, reflecting our society in the gender diversity measure at least. However, we must not overlook the need to work to ensure other diversity measures are also considered.

I make this point because I recently attended a women's forum held in London as part of this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, or CHOGM. Other forums included a business forum, a youth forum and a people's forum. Some joint sessions were held that added value to the contributions of all who attended. I will comment further on the resulting communiqué from this forum at a later time.

The representation of women at all levels of government was a topic discussed throughout the forum. It was great to be from a jurisdiction already leading the way in our nation and many other parts of the world.

As Her Excellency stated, Tasmania became the first Australian state parliament ever to achieve this milestone of national significance. I agree that is worthy of celebration.

I congratulate the Government on its success at the 3 March election and sincerely wish it all the best in working to make Tasmania a better place to live, work and spend recreational time.

I also congratulate the members of the House of Assembly re-elected at the 3 March election. For those who were elected for the first time, it is a great privilege to be elected to parliament and it comes with significant responsibility. I recognise and thank those who retired or lost their seats for their contributions. It can be a thankless task at times, but there are rewards when you are able to assist constituents with challenges they face and have an impact on the future of this wonderful state.

I note the contribution of our first female premier, Lara Giddings, who retired and is now the proud mother of daughter Natasha. Lara gave up much to serve Tasmania and made a significant contribution to this state for many years. She also created many firsts for youth and women throughout her career. Lara remained a strong, articulate and well-informed contributor to parliament whether in opposition, as a backbencher, a minister, treasurer or premier - often holding more than one challenging portfolio. It was a remarkable achievement. I wish her every happiness and success in her even more important current role of raising one of the next generation of female Tasmanian leaders.

I acknowledge and note the retirement of former member for Rowallan, Western Tiers and McIntyre - he moved around - Mr Greg Hall. Greg represented his electorate well over 17 years as a member of the Legislative Council. He made a significant contribution in this Chamber, including by serving as deputy president and chair of committees for a number years. I wish him well in his future endeavours and in his retirement from parliament, which I am sure will not be boring or lacking in ongoing contribution to the region in which he lives.

I congratulate the member for Hobart on his re-election. I have waited do this and I think this is the appropriate time. I am sure he will continue to represent his constituents well and work hard in the best interests of the state. I congratulate and warmly welcome the inaugural member for Prosser. I am sure she will work hard to represent the people of Prosser, who gave her a recent vote of confidence. I look forward to her contribution in this place. I congratulate the Leader on her renewal of the appointment as Leader of the Government in this House. Her role comes with a significant workload and I believe she manages it well. I congratulate the members for McIntyre, Mersey and Launceston for their appointment as deputy chair of committees. I thank members for their vote of confidence in me by electing me to the position of Chair of Committees and Deputy President. I thank members who have publicly and privately congratulated and wished me well in that role; it is appreciated.

Before responding more directly to Her Excellency the Governor's speech, I will make some points regarding our role in the Legislative Council and how I will endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for Tasmania and the people of Murchison. My approach to this will, at it has been in the past, be collaborative. However, I will challenge and argue against short-termism and promotion of populist politics. We have seen a win-at-all-costs approach that has created an erosion of trust at all levels of government.

I am not sure how many members are aware of the Australian Futures Project. I hope they are after my contribution on Tuesday. If you are not, I urge you to visit their website and learn more. The project is a non-profit company with a key mission of fixing short-termism in Australia. They acknowledge this is a big task but state their concern that short-termism is blocking a flourishing future for Australia. They suggest that until short-termism is fixed we cannot create the future

Australians want. This applies equally to Tasmania. We have a chance and, I believe, a responsibility to move beyond this approach, restore trust and work for the wellbeing of all our citizens. We can achieve this through the formulation and application of relevant and compelling visions for a future and a clear pathway to achieve the future we want.

We need to know and articulate the future we want. If you cannot dream it, you cannot describe it or articulate it, you cannot take the people with you and you will not achieve it. We need to work collaboratively to solve the big challenges we face at local, state and national levels. Short-termism is a significant barrier to solving some of the big challenges we face as a state and country. We know change is constant and we need to adapt and change, too. We have seen this place change over the years. We need to ensure all Tasmanians benefit as we solve the problems and challenges we face and create an environment in which we can all flourish.

All decisions we make in our communities, and particularly in our role here in the Legislative Council, need to be made with an acute awareness that the decisions and choices we make here need to bring long-term benefits to all Tasmanians.

We must avoid short-termism if we are going to be able to solve the big challenges in health, education, housing, planning and infrastructure - to name a few - and see the state flourish. It is through this lens that I will focus my decision-making and consideration of all matters before the parliament over the come years.

To respond more specifically to the Governor's speech, I will make a few comments about the improving economy of the state, as noted by Her Excellency. This improvement is welcome and positive, provided we can all share in the benefit. The Government always needs to have a balanced approach with regard to economic growth that is beneficial, and from which we all benefit. We all benefit if economic growth is managed and consideration given to its long-term impact on Tasmania, our people and our environment.

We have seen significant growth in tourism. While this has an economic benefit, it can also present other challenges that need to be planned for and managed.

Her Excellency said that not many places are able to boast World Heritage wilderness at their backdoor, the cleanest air in the world and easy access to some of the world's best beaches and fishing and camping spots - not to mention our fantastic mountain bike trails and walking tracks, our historic architecture and low-rise cities, and what is internationally renowned as the freshest produce. Tasmania's way of life is unparalleled.

This is true and to ensure it is not lost, we must ensure that adequate planning for and investment in infrastructure is undertaken to meet demands associated with growth in tourism and population. We need to be particularly careful that we do not damage the very things about Tasmania that bring people here.

Her Excellency mentioned the Government's long-term plan and policies to address Tasmania's growth to ensure all Tasmanians, no matter where they live, can share in the benefits. I do not quite share her optimism in the alleged long-term plan because I do not believe there is any real evidence of long-term planning and commitment to infrastructure and health, to name two. We constantly see short-term fixes in health and pre-election pork-barrelling in infrastructure aimed at winning votes rather than planning for our future.

In the last year or so, including the 3 March election, we have had frequent commentary regarding the make-up and value of the Legislative Council. This certainly happens from time to time, especially when a government is being challenged in the upper House regarding some of its legislative program. This is not new and has happened in the past.

It is important to put this in context. The vast majority of legislation and motions put by the Government in this House are supported. Unfortunately, a vocal few have sought to undermine and criticise the role and function of Legislative Council, suggesting members are acting as a barrier to legislation and the Government should be able to expect every policy position put to the Legislative Council to receive endorsement almost without question.

Disappointingly, some of this inaccurate assessment and criticism of our role and function, and lack of appreciation of the work we do, is coming from within. Some commentators, particularly those critical of the Legislative Council, are fixated on the use of slogans and politically loaded words such as 'mandate'. That is a tool of choice for those intent on criticising individuals and seeking to discredit the views of others rather than focusing on the important issues.

No doubt the vast majority of Tasmanians understand, accept and appreciate the role of Legislative Council.

The party that wins any election is elected to form government, and to govern and bring forward policy and/or legislation it believes necessary and beneficial for the state to the parliament, which includes both Houses.

If the elected government is unable to provide the evidence of the need, benefit and stakeholder support of a particular policy, that policy may well be challenged, likely to be amended and occasionally rejected by the Legislative Council. That is how it works.

This is particularly true for policies not presented to the people in a timely manner prior to the election. Not so long ago the Legislative Council was described as the last bastion of conservatism with a majority or voting bloc, to use a well-worn slogan, of conservative members. Some would call these members right-wing.

In the past, progressive governments have had legislation rejected by this conservative bloc. That is the other side of the same coin and not new to Tasmania.

I believe the description of being right- or left-wing unnecessarily stereotypes individuals and policy platforms, and I prefer to use more descriptive terms. My politics are moderate, are predominantly socially progressive and economically conservative.

History shows a conservative group of members of the Legislative Council regularly voted to block legislation seeking progressive social change, including, but not limited to, maintaining protections enshrined in Tasmania's anti-discrimination laws and decriminalising homosexuality and pregnancy termination, and allowing marriage equality, to name a few. Some of these same people now seek to criticise and condemn those with moderate and socially progressive views who support progress in these areas and who oppose some conservative policy positions. How is this any different from what the conservative bloc did in the past?

I have one more comment on the mandate question. If ever we need a reminder of the role of parliament, we saw it downstairs with the election of a new Speaker. The Government may have had a mandate to nominate a particular person as Speaker, but the House, in its wisdom, voted for

someone else. Isn't that the way democracy is supposed to work? Parliament is not simply a facility for rubberstamping. Proposed changes to gun laws, pokies in pubs and clubs, sentencing and TasWater are examples of contentious matters raised during the recent election campaign. In some cases these were real points of difference between the conservative and progressive parties, if you want to call them that.

Government policy straddles the progressive/conservative divide. To continue to classify them as one or the other shows a limited view of the world. It is interesting to note, for example, the introduction of mandatory sentencing has been proposed by the Liberal Party in Tasmania and by the Labor Party in another jurisdiction. Does this make mandatory sentencing a progressive or conservative policy, a left- or right-wing policy? Is maintaining pokies in pubs and clubs a conservative policy? Is maintaining TasWater in current hands a progressive policy? It provides no benefit to the debate or public discourse to use such narrow, ill-conceived descriptions. We need to take a broader view and assess each policy on its merits and potential benefits.

The Tasmanian Liberals by retaining government have a right and a responsibility to bring forward policy positions and fund all election commitments. However, the voters also know the Legislative Council has a role to play, ensuring policy requiring legislative change meets the above tests of evidence of need, community benefit, stakeholder support, and is effectively drafted to achieve the stated policy objective.

Gun laws were hidden from the voters until, falling out of a cupboard only a limited number of Tasmanians had access to, two days before the election.

Mrs Hiscutt - The letter was written earlier than that.

Ms FORREST - This was when it fell out of the cupboard, I said. The information was sent to some people, but when it was publicly released and fell out of the cupboard, it was only two days before the election. This was after many people had already cast their vote. In regard to this, a number of the proposed changes are sensible and not contentious. However, stating the Government has a mandate for all proposed changes in the absence of meeting the above test beggars belief.

As with most challenges, often more than one solution exists. These solutions do not often require the dead hand of legislation, which is often a blunt instrument. For example, why extend firearms renewal from five to 10 years when a drivers licence has, at most, a five-year renewal after many hours of training? If this proposed change delays processing renewals, as many licences fall due at the same time every five years, staggering the renewal to smooth out the workload of the firearms branch could address this.

Resistance to the proposed takeover of TasWater in the last term of government came from the conservative right-wing members as well as the so-called left bloc, and was comprehensively defeated in this place. TasWater is a capital-intensive business and needs to continually upgrade and maintain the long-term generational assets it is responsible for. A revenue stream is needed from this business to fund its ongoing capital works and major maintenance, regardless of who owns it. I have consistently stated there is merit in state ownership, but if this were to occur, it must have the right structure and governance model.

History shows a minister holding the pricing lever risks short-term decision-making at the expense of long-term sustainable investment. I am not opposed to state ownership of key infrastructure, but we need to ensure the model is right.

We now see a different, more conciliatory approach from the Treasurer with an option that was not taken to the people for a mandate. The Government still went to the people with a mandate to take over TasWater. It is only since the election that has changed. Interestingly, this new proposal was an approach I suggested to the Treasurer in mid-2017 in a one-to-one meeting with him well before we debated the TasWater takeover legislation last year. At this meeting he rejected this proposal. I also wrote an opinion piece about the suggestion, published in the *Mercury* on 4 July 2017. This is not something that I thought of afterwards. I will quote a short section of the opinion piece -

It is a sure sign that we are heading down the wrong track when the disputing parties summon lawyers.

In the case of TasWater, I have been curious as to the legal basis to seizing water and sewerage assets. I simply assumed the government was on safe legal grounds - not according to legal advice attained by TasWater and its shareholder owners, the 29 municipal councils. What now? The last thing we need is a dispute between two tiers of government. To what end? To score political points? So that things get fixed quicker?

If the latter is the case and money is the problem, why doesn't the Government invest in the company rather than try a hostile takeover?

...

Has the Treasurer considered all options before heading down this adversarial path using questionable tactics? Is there another way to achieve what Tasmanians want - clean, safe drinking water and compliant sewerage services at an affordable price?

The Government has provided \$20 million per year in the latest 2017/18 budget to give councils what they would have received as shareholders of TasWater. Half, say \$10 million, would pay the interest on a \$300 million loan the Government could borrow to invest in TasWater. So why doesn't the Government chip in equity to solve any problems? It would then have money left over after paying interest to spend elsewhere.

...

It can be a win-win for all parties. The Government can put equity into TasWater so its pet projects can be brought forward, provided existing shareholders agreed to their interests being slightly diluted. The Government would pick up a seat or two at the board table so it could speak to the wider community on the management of infrastructure instead of sniping from the sidelines. And the community would be spared the spectacle of two levels of government engaged in a melee that will ensure a further loss of trust in the political process.

I am not sure of all of the details of the memorandum of understanding, but it seems the Treasurer was not averse to my proposal after all. Of course, we need to see all the detail before we can agree to the final proposal when it is presented to the parliament.

Mr Valentine - And we would need to know what the councils think, too.

Ms FORREST - That will all be part of the scrutiny process. We need to ensure the proposal is in the best interest of the state - not just the councils. For the record, I note this was not taken to the people before 3 March.

Mr Willie - There was a similar proposal from the Opposition.

Ms FORREST - I did not see that one; when was that?

Mr Willie - We said it should stay in the current ownership arrangements, but also that we would fund some of the bigger capital projects into super funds. There have been various talks about those sorts of arrangements.

Ms FORREST - Yes, but it was before July when I put that forward. It is interesting how the wheels turn. Last year's budget of capex funding clearly shows budgets being propped up and balanced by repeatedly delaying capital works and raiding profitable GBEs to fund election promises. We need to understand the full deal before making a decision on the best way forward. At least there now appears to be more meaningful engagement and consultation with the current owners of TasWater than we saw in the last iteration.

Regardless, in the absence of a long-term plan governments past and present have consistently deferred infrastructure funding to fund other areas of government activity and balance their budgets. In more recent history, TasNetworks has been the de facto bank for the government. Now it is Motor Accidents Insurance Board. The Premier informed us during the election period that a special dividend will be collected from MAIB to fund some of the hundreds of funding commitments the party had made. Did he ask the voters if they were happy to do this? If the Government is going to use the profits from MAIB, gained from overcharging motorists to fund the Premier's election promises, should he not have sought a mandate from the voters for such a proposal, not just tell them that this is how the election promises were going to be funded? That is what he said.

Mr Valentine - It could be a tax by stealth.

Ms FORREST - He was taking out a special dividend, as he is 'entitled to'. Should the voters be asked whether that is the way they want election commitments funded? Perhaps the voters would prefer lower motor registration costs.

Mr Willie - They canned it halfway through the campaign.

Ms FORREST - Probably realised they ran out of money.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr PRESIDENT - I welcome Elizabeth College students into the Chamber. At present members are debating a reply to Her Excellency's Address to this House on the opening of Parliament on 1 May. We welcome you here and we hope you enjoy it.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr Valentine - A good school in the electorate of Hobart, Mr President.

Ms FORREST - Maybe voters would prefer a lower motor registration cost and these young people in the Chamber would have an opinion on this.

At least we should be able to expect the Government to be open and honest about how all its election commitments will be funded and whether other options may be available to reduce living costs for ordinary Tasmanians. It is ordinary Tasmanians who pay motor vehicle registrations and where some of this money is coming from.

Despite the commentary of some, it seems the Legislative Council does have a role and can add value. The Governor indicated that her Government would continue to work to strengthen the Tasmanian economy and ensure all regions of the state benefit from economic growth with new jobs by reducing payroll tax rates for businesses. This will provide one of the most competitive tax regimes in the country for small- and medium-size businesses.

It is time meaningful tax reform was placed on the agenda. While it is getting a bit of a run in the federal budget, with a bidding war going on between major parties leading up to next year's federal election, there seems absolutely no will to fix the broken nature of the federal system - who raises the taxes, what tax base is used and who spends the money. The states meekly sit around and wait to see what largesse will land in their laps. The system is hopelessly lopsided in favour of the federal government, with state governments completely beholden to the federal masters, and they do nothing about it.

Only 20 per cent of the Tasmanian government's revenue comes from state taxes. Payroll, stamp duties and land tax are the principal taxes, and all have problems.

Stamp duty is regarded as inefficient because it suppresses economic activity more than other taxes. Payroll and land taxes apply to narrow bases and are inequitable.

Since the early 1970s when the then prime minister Mr McMahon handed over payroll tax to the states, the tax base has narrowed. It has been a race to the bottom, because all states have fiddled with the rate and thresholds in trying to make their states more competitive.

The result is a highly inequitable dog's breakfast. The widespread view is payroll tax is an anti-employment tax. Any attempts to broaden the base, lower the rate and make it fair are unlikely to succeed because they are too politically hot and challenging. Why not scrap it? Why not get rid of it?

The federal government has floated corporate individual tax cuts totally around \$300 billion over a 10-year period. That averages out at \$30 billion a year. Coincidentally, payroll taxes collect about \$25 billion yearly across all states.

Why not a bit of cooperative federalism for once? If the overall consensus view is payroll taxes are beyond repair - and I am not the only person who thinks this - scrap it, arrange for taxpayers to receive a share of income taxes about to be handed out as part of the latest federal vote-buying campaign.

We will have yet another bill to deal with before the financial year dealing with the ongoing erosion of the payroll tax base. Why do we not think and act more broadly?

Her Excellency also commented on the issue of housing. This is an area in which the government has dropped the ball and is now playing catch-up. The Housing Summit is fine, but people are lacking safe, secure and suitable shelter, and they need outcomes. One of the essentials of life is shelter. If a person or family does not have safe, secure and simple shelter, their chance of experiencing good health, accessing education and gaining an educational outcome that will assist them into employment and reduce the reliance on social support is extremely low.

Access to shelter, both emergency and longer term, is predominantly the responsibility of a caring community. Government must take the lead. This does not mean all social housing should be provided by government through the public sector. Government needs to set policy to facilitate and encourage the participation of non-government organisations and private enterprise in the provision of and access to safe, secure and suitable housing for all Tasmanians.

The relatively recent growth of the sharing economy and the emergence of platforms such as Airbnb and Stayz has added to the challenge. The state Government has acknowledged this impact and offered incentives to property owners to convert Airbnb properties to long-term rentals. This is not enough and more needs to be done. I am not convinced about the sharing economy arguments. We need to be mindful of what is happening overseas, where there is a growing revolt against the short-term accommodation industry which is disrupting local economies. Existing property owners may benefit by extra income and higher land values. Banks welcome being able to make higher loans, but there are downsides that hopefully the member for Launceston and her committee can explore. It is a really relevant point.

Government has been leasing inner city offices, many of which have been vacated recently by workers moving to other accommodation, including the new Salamanca building where some of us have offices. These buildings may have secured office tenants but some of them may still be vacant or not fully occupied. Maybe the Government could offer incentives that could be provided to the private owners of these buildings in the CBD in our major cities and towns to repurpose parts of these buildings to provide a range of housing options, including affordable housing and social housing.

The same applies to second and fourth floor spaces above retail shops in our inner city areas. High density inner-city accommodation assists in meeting many of the challenges facing individuals without secure accommodation. It is close to services, including transport, education, employment opportunities and health services. Ownership of a vehicle, a costly exercise, becomes less important and can create increased disposable income for the tenant. Planning schemes and legislation generally provide such use. We do not need to change anything to enable those spaces to be used for housing.

Perhaps additional incentives should be considered to encourage private property owners to consider housing as a viable option. If legislative change is required, which I do not believe it is in many areas, make it a priority. Focus on things that are going to make a difference to Tasmanians. The new Minister for Housing needs to start making some outcome-focused decisions with the winter upon us. The need is obvious.

I agree with and support Her Excellency's comments regarding the Government's belief in the power of education and the opportunities it provides. The commitment of more new teachers and other vital school staff is welcome, with additional support for the early years and additional mental health support in our schools an ever-increasing need, unfortunately. The progressive removal of school principals from staffing formulas, enabling principals to focus more on school leadership, I

believe will benefit all. This is particularly so if the principals and aspiring principals are provided with relevant, targeted professional development to prepare and assist them in their role.

Mr Willie - That need is greater than ever. There is a big group of principals about to leave the system.

Ms FORREST - They are all about to retire, yes. I know it is the case in jurisdictions such as Finland that all principals have management training and qualifications before they are appointed to any leadership position. You have to remember Finnish teachers all have a masters degree before they even reach the classroom. You cannot become a principal without completing another degree in business management. It is taken seriously. A principal - I am sure the member for Elwick will back me up on this - requires a different set of skills in addition to teaching skills.

Mr Valentine - They have teaching skills, which is important.

Ms FORREST - They do, but they need to have the additional skills to take on the principal's role.

Mr Willie - They are administrators and educational leaders.

Ms FORREST - That is right.

Mr Willie - Sometimes they are project managers if the school is being redeveloped.

Ms FORREST - That is correct; they take on a huge range of roles.

Mr Valentine - If the change is to put them in more as administrators, they have to have that teaching experience; that is what I am saying.

Ms FORREST - I will be interested to know more about what the Government actually proposes in this area and hope some of the members of committee B will take this up in Estimates to find out what is actually being proposed.

Health services, particularly access to quality time and care is a matter of concern to all Tasmanians. It is clear that governance of the Tasmanian Health Service - THS - has been poor and change is needed. We have dealt with the legislation and will finish this today to address that.

The one-THS model is widely supported, but the need for local decision-making is crucial. While the proposed changes are broadly supported, we need to make sure there is no unnecessary duplication and all available funds are spent on patient services.

I was going to say more before we debated the bill, but I wanted to make the point that my proposed amendment for focusing on outcomes-based data is really important. I am pleased it was incorporated into the bill.

It is important to manage a budget within the health system and ensure the efficient and economic operation of a hospital, but the efficient and economic delivery of health services and the efficient and economic use of resources have to be in a context of good patient outcomes.

There is already a requirement to collect health data and provide this for research and reporting purposes. In numerous past budget papers, the patient outcome measures as opposed to output

measure have been lacking. It will not be in this year's budget. That is already at or returned from the printers.

It is vital to remain focused on patient outcomes, not just the number of procedures being carried out but in ensuring adequate investment in primary and preventative health to all to prevent the demand on our acute health services.

This winter is going to be equally challenging for people seeking acute medical care, particularly in the south of the state as the Royal Hobart Hospital rebuild continues. I am not sure how much damage was done during the recent storms, but it adds to the challenge of the medical staff and patients seeking to access the Royal.

The member for Rumney spoke about the challenges and the numbers of ambulance ramping. This coming year will be really challenging, because the rebuild is not finished. The 250 extra beds are not there. The beds at the Repat will perhaps take some load, but we must have adequate trained nursing staff to back up those beds. Sometimes it must be specialist nurses. You cannot operate without them. The operating theatre and the Department of Emergency Medicine and Intensive Care Unit have to be adequately staffed. With flu season last year, even the staff got sick - and then you are really in a bind.

Mr Valentine - It is not just something money can fix.

Ms FORREST - No, it is not. Planning for it and having a bit of redundancy in the system does not hurt.

It is one thing to open additional beds onsite or offsite, but unless there are adequate numbers of suitably qualified and skilled nursing staff being paid a rate that attracts them to Tasmania, there will be a problem.

I will leave other comment regarding some of the other election commitments and that sort of thing particularly relevant to my electorate but also more broadly for Tasmania until a later time. I note Her Excellency the Governor's speech on the opening of the Forty-Ninth Parliament and again congratulate the Government on its re-election. I look forward to working constructively with the Government and other members of this House to achieve the best possible outcomes for the people of Tasmania.

[11.44 a.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I congratulate the Premier and his Liberal team for being returned as our state Government for another four-year term. In doing so, the Premier has become only the second Liberal premier to win a majority in consecutive elections. He should be recognised for this achievement.

I join with Her Excellency the Governor in celebrating that Tasmania's parliament has once again increased the level of female representation in both its Houses. I agree Tasmania is certainly a vastly different place than it was just a few years ago.

If we turn our minds back four years to the Hodgman Government's first electoral win, never had there been a female Speaker in the House of Assembly. Recently the new member for Denison, Sue Hickey, became the second female appointed to that role. While those appointments were achieved in a slightly different manner, nevertheless a second female Speaker is a notable event. I

hope that these achievements will encourage more women to aspire to leadership roles. There is now an equal gender representation in this parliament: 20 female and 20 male.

With progress in mind, I am pleased to hear that the Government has a strong resolve to see the state continue to move forward and address proactively the challenges that face Tasmania. The assertion of a surplus and the Hodgman Government's most recent budget prediction is a welcome result, highlighting the positive outlook of Tasmania's economy. Certainly, one of the greatest threats to achieving continuous surpluses has been the recent calls for a reduction in Tasmania's GST share. I was therefore pleased to see the recent federal budget has allocated an additional \$190 million in GST funding for Tasmania. No doubt this money will assist the Government to continue improving essential services in health, education and housing to benefit all Tasmanians and the needs of our economy into the future.

My electorate of Mersey is one area where government investment in flagship industry sectors of tourism, agriculture and fisheries is often noticeable. Significant changes have been evident in my electorate as business confidence and the economy have improved, bringing more jobs to those fortunate enough to reside in Mersey.

Tourism has remained a pillar of the local economy and will no doubt continue to grow. I am very pleased state and federal funds are being promised to attract tourists and also provide healthy recreational pursuits for visitors and locals alike. A good example is the Kelcey Tiers Mountain Bike Trail, which will provide a wonderful opportunity for a loop pathway from the TT-Line through Latrobe, Railton and sections of the Kentish municipality along the Tiers and back to Devonport. For those not in the mountain bike fraternity, most mountain bike trails in Tasmania go out and back. The one in Kelcey Tiers, which is a little different, will actually start at the *Spirit of Tasmania* and go around so it is a continuous loop. It is an added attraction and bonus. Well done to the councils and the state Government and federal government for that initiative.

While a slightly different type of cycling experience, the recent federal announcement of continuation of funding for a coastal cycle pathway has also received media attention. I am very pleased that process is continuing. I can remember being one of the initial contributors to the discussion when I was mayor of Latrobe in 2003 and 2014. I believe that conversation took place around 2005.

In the last few weeks, it was announced that TT-Line has finalised a contract to replace both *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels in the new future. These new ships will carry more vehicles, cargo and people to and from Tasmania. They will build on the recent growth in passengers who have utilised the *Spirit of Tasmania* ferries since their refurbishment. They will also complement the eventual replacement of the *SeaRoad Tamar* with a sister ship to the *SeaRoad Mersey II*.

Importantly, these ships will be more environmentally friendly and provide a modern gateway to Tasmania that aligns with our clean, green image. This increased capacity will provide new opportunities to those Tasmanian businesses that compete with other Australian and international businesses. One such business is Costa Berries, located in East Devonport, which has recently expanded. A \$7.1 million federal government investment has seen the opening of a berry distribution centre, supporting the creation of up to 100 full-time equivalent jobs in Mersey. Over the last decade agriculture has faced some challenges in my region. However, investments such as the one at Costa Berries give people confidence that a stable job is not a pipedream in the modern economy.

Just over the hill, I am also pleased to see changes occurring at Devonport Airport. The development of a 15-year master plan will consider any potential for increased capacity, numbers of airlines utilising the site and other uses for the airport facility.

One such use has been advocated for by the Devonport Chamber of Commerce and by Senator Steve Martin and others as a Qantas Flight Academy. Should this proposal take off, this will result in up to 500 students studying, living and contributing to the local economy each year. While I hope the academy is based in Devonport, if it is not, I hope the academy is at least based somewhere in Tasmania. This is one of those opportunities where parochialism should not be detrimental to the end game.

I was pleased to hear the President of the Devonport Chamber, Ms Stacey Sheehan, say at a recent luncheon with the Prime Minister and Premier that as long as all Tasmanian submissions vying for the academy are given a fair and equitable hearing, the best place option will be supported by the Government. I totally agree with those sentiments. We just hope at the end of the day, that Tasmania is chosen for the academy ahead of any contenders from the mainland.

If other airlines choose to fly and complete more routes to Devonport, this can only bolster our tourism industry and make the north-west an even more attractive destination. These gateways to the north-west will also benefit from a recent announcement of an extra \$30 million of federal funding to support the development of a Cradle Mountain cableway. This development will improve safety, ensuring that both people and the environment are protected as they visit the area. The delivery of up to 60 000 more tourists will no doubt have flow-on effects in my electorate, enabling more people there to find meaningful work on the north-west coast. These are certainly exciting opportunities for the Mersey electorate and the surrounding area. I hope all political parties provide their support.

However, as acknowledged in Her Excellency's speech, growth presents certain challenges for Tasmania as well. Housing is one such problem, though I am pleased to see the Government is taking this seriously. I congratulate member for Braddon Roger Jaensch on his elevation to the position of Minister for Housing and on his desire to address the housing issue. I am aware that Roger is a very hard worker and will be doing all he can as minister to investigate and find possible short-, medium- and long-term solutions. This is not an easy task. It is not only an issue of supply generally, but also of ensuring that housing space and stock close to the CBD is available for people to use.

I, along with many Merseysiders, am very pleased that places such as the former Devonport maternity hospital site have recently increased the availability of usable land towards the centre of Devonport.

Mrs Hiscutt - Do you have any more information on what is happening there, or not yet?

Mr GAFFNEY - No. There is still much more to be done in the housing space. I look forward to considering the merits of any legislation the Government will present in the near future.

Another issue that growth has presented to Tasmania - and this has particularly affected, and has ramifications for, my electorate - is the recent fruit fly infestation. While this is still ongoing, the Government should be recognised and thanked for providing support through the Fruit Fly Assistance Package to those affected. Operating as a safety net, this will no doubt assist growers and their employees by ensuring their businesses are able to recover eventually. The swift response

of Biosecurity Tasmania and its workers to quickly and effectively address a key risk to our agricultural prosperity is worthy of a special mention.

With this in mind, I was also pleased to hear of the announcement of \$20 million of federal budget money to help Tasmania bolster Biosecurity Tasmania. This will enable Biosecurity Tasmania to increase its number of employees and will further support efforts to maintain Tasmania's fruit fly-free status. Although perhaps too little too late for those farmers and growers in my electorate who are still feeling the effects of the present fruit fly outbreak, this funding will provide them with some confidence that future investments in their businesses hopefully will not be hampered by another fruit fly incursion. The future development of our local economy relies heavily on a pest-free environment.

Mr Valentine - Let's hope for a very cold winter.

Mr GAFFNEY - It is always cold in Hobart.

Another key driver of agricultural tourism and business development in my electorate is education. As a former teacher and educator, I am pleased to hear the Government will invest record levels of funding into the education system. The direction of this funding towards the front line, with new teachers and support staff being introduced, will mean that children and young adults in my electorate will receive the attention to teaching they deserve. The Government's decision to commence adding extra teachers and funding to those schools that need it most will help to level the educational playing field. My electorate, however, has been well served by Don College as its local public college since 1973. When reading John Thompson's principal's message, I was reminded about what is so special about this coastal institution. His message states -

Don College is a gathering point for students from our local high schools where students support each other in achieving success in Years 11 and 12.

It is feared that the extension of high schools to year 12 will inevitably erode the student bases of colleges such as Don. Without transferring to a gathering point such as Don, our young adults will not enjoy the benefits of such an environment and will not have the opportunity to expand their personal networks. For instance, under the one-size-fits-all mentality, a high school student who, for a variety of reasons, may not have had a successful high school career will not have the opportunity to transition to what can be a new environment where they can make new friends and leave their high school years behind them. For many, that can be a fresh start.

Or perhaps a student who is not academically pushed by their peers at a high school will not have an opportunity to meet and mix with a number of talented students from all schools in the Mersey electorate, thus challenging them to perform at a higher and more industrious level.

I find it difficult to believe that students forced to extend to year 12 at their current high school will not suffer through reduced core selection compared to the current Don College. Although the minister has indicated colleges such as Don will remain with fewer students, they will be unable to provide the breadth of classes they do now and will not have access to staff fully qualified in their chosen field of study. The question is whether this will result in a less academically fulfilling year 11 and 12 education for future students compared to those of today. These changes may simply result in education becoming too hard when students are expected to attend multiple campuses.

I understand the Government's intention when proposing such a radical change to establish an educational system, because we need to address the retention of students until year 12. I acknowledged previously that in geographically isolated communities there are some advantages presented by extending high schools to years 11 and 12. However, I am not satisfied the proposed changes are evidence-based and appropriate without strong qualitative and quantitative supporting data from schools that have already transitioned - to only offer numbers is not enough.

The last thing the people of Mersey and Tasmania need is another Tasmania Tomorrow-style of reform that is well-intentioned but rushed and ultimately at the expense of student outcomes. The best investment in Tasmania's future is to ensure the adults of tomorrow are better educated than those of today. I look forward to working constructively with this Government to ensure Tasmania is the best place it can be for all Tasmanians.

I will briefly address some of the criticism levelled at this place in recent months, inside and outside this House. Accusations have been made that this place has become irrelevant and obstructionist. I respectfully disagree. As Dr Kevin Bonham said on the perceived problem -

... this is a very old debate, but the novelty in the present situation is having a left-wing LegCo overseeing a right wing government. Up until the late 1990s, malapportionment meant the other way round was much more common.

We must remember these are not new criticisms. The former member for Rumney, Lin Thorp, characterised this criticism a decade ago in *The Parliamentarian*. She said -

Over the years, the Legislative Council has been criticized for being unrepresentative, protected by an unfair election method and perpetuating the 'myth' that it is a House of independence. At other times it has been praised as a vital control on the legislative programme of the government of the day.

Displayed on the Legislative Council website, Mr President said -

... it is the only House of Parliament in the Commonwealth, and probably in the world, that has never been controlled by any government or any political party. It has always had a majority of independent members making it a truly genuine House of Review.

I am one of those independent members. I was elected by the constituents of Mersey. They elected me to represent their interests and ensure changes to legislation benefit them as well as Tasmania as a whole. I therefore commenced researching bills and policy issues with one thing - an open mind. The questions I always ask myself when I finish researching and viewing bills are: Is this legislation required? Is it a sound and solid bill? Is it evidence-based? Does it enhance the lives of Tasmanians? Will it achieve its stated objective?

If a bill falls short and does not achieve its stated objective, as a House of review, we, as members, may suggest amendments to strengthen the bill. If legislation appears unsupported by evidence of being necessary and effective, it is up to government and stakeholders to put forward cogent arguments in justification of it. I have no issue in providing my support if it is supported by evidence and is a sound bill.

I acknowledge and thank Parliamentary Research Service for providing me with the following statistics. In the first term of the Liberal Government, from 2014-18, 201 bills were debated with only eight defeated. The number of bills was fewer than Labor in its terms from 2006 to 2010, which debated 298 bills and 238 bills. This Government having passed 193 bills is a credible performance for a new government.

Mr President, I believe there is always a transition period as a new government and new ministers find their feet and make their mark. I remember believing, perhaps in my first two years here, that there tended to be a number of bills coming to this place that required many amendments and alterations. Sometimes they looked like different bills at the end of it. I think that was a transition from a more seasoned government to a newer government. But if the only argument in favour of bills is the word 'mandate', we, as members, would not be completing our job effectively if we were just to wave bills through.

One only has to look at the education bill, when this place put on hold clauses 8 and 9 for further scrutiny and investigation regarding the younger starting age of schooling for children. It came as no surprise that after reflection, the minister decided the course of action proposed was not in the best interests of Tasmanian children and the community. Unlike others who have suggested there is a bloc, and all government bills should be passed, I believe it illogical and unreasonable. I congratulate the Deputy Premier and Education minister for his leadership with the final outcome of the bill, which demonstrates quite clearly that we should not pass legislation based on parties' previous policy positions.

A criticism could be levelled that our role as a House of review is superfluous. This is why I have been, and will continue to be, anxious about and critical of the Government's mandatory sentencing reform agenda in Tasmania. I firmly believe the majority of Tasmanians want to provide a safe environment for community members and provide a range of options for the judiciary to make an appropriate judgment based on their expertise and experience. I also have no objection to people receiving appropriate sentences for engaging in criminal activity; however, there is little evidence to suggest mandatory sentencing actually works. Many professionals within the legal and justice system have voiced concerns over the premise.

I have repeatedly asked the Government to present its evidence in support, but I am yet to see compelling evidence in that support. Tasmania must remain a fair, generous and equitable society that ensures victims and their families are treated with respect and compassion. At the same time we need to encourage and invest in a criminal justice system that gives people the best chance to rehabilitate themselves and become productive and positive members of, and contributors to, our community.

However, I am a firm believer in giving credit where credit is due. Last year the Government's proposed TasWater takeover legislation was rejected by this place. I congratulate the Hodgman Government for its change of heart. The chairman of TasWater, Miles Hampton, stated -

Reform of the water and sewerage sector is arguably the single most important economic reform that has been undertaken in Tasmania for many decades, and we can now focus our entire efforts on ensuring the benefits expected from the reform are realised.

As the Premier rightfully put it when describing the compromise, at the end of the day Tasmanians want results. It is our job to deliver them. What we are signing up to today will be a

very important step forward. It shows some maturity when a government recognises that its initial policy position was indeed found wanting and was not supported for a variety of reasons. I also appreciate, however, that in the combative political arena, every opportunity is taken to highlight any weakness displayed by the government. The Labor Party subsequently called this compromise a humiliating backdown.

While I acknowledge the politics of the situation, I am disappointed on behalf of all Tasmanians that the opposing parties, Labor and the Greens, could have said, 'Well done, we are pleased you have listened, and this is a good result', but chose not to do so. The public will respect differences were put aside for the benefit of Tasmania as a whole. Against a backdrop of a challenging previous political year and an election, this was potentially an olive branch moment.

With the new electoral changes in Mersey, I now welcome the residents of Port Sorell and all those who reside in both the Devonport and Latrobe municipalities, although I miss some friends in Turners Beach. While Forth Primary School has now returned to Montgomery, I will pick up Andrews Creek, Port Sorell and Sassafras Primary Schools. I am very pleased to reconnect with these communities. I spent most of my younger years playing and living in Port Sorell; as a Latrobe councillor for 20 years and mayor for 12 years, I have been involved in many of the changes and redevelopments in the area, things like the Port Sorell Surf Club, the Rubicon Grove aged care facility, a new primary school, a community recreation centre, a new town centre and shopping centre - the list goes on.

Mrs Hiscutt - Port Sorell is one of the biggest growing areas on the coast, isn't it?

Mr Willie - There is some expensive housing in Port Sorell.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, you are correct. I take this opportunity to congratulate members for accepting positions on the various committees. I also acknowledge the comments from the member for Windermere in his submission to the Tasmanian Industrial Commission in reference to committee sitting fees.

I wish the Government and my colleagues all the best for this coming parliamentary session. I congratulate members for their participation on many of the parliamentary committees, which play an important role in the function of this Legislative Council. I look forward to working, debating, collaborating with you all to ensure my constituents and the people of Tasmania can have faith in the political process.

[12.05 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, I congratulate the honourable Leader on her appointment in this place. At times we will have rigorous debate, especially over the next few years, but it is never going to be personal. A contest of ideas is a good thing.

Now I have that positivity out of the way, I might indulge in a few criticisms, if I may. I concede the Liberal Party won the recent state election, but in doing so the Liberal Party allowed vested interests to fund its campaign and write its electronic gaming policy. It has tarnished the reputation of the Liberal Party and its leaders and it will be remembered for years to come. I make no apologies for that statement because the same vested interest has had a significant social and economic impact on the community in the northern suburbs of Hobart. I see it almost daily. There are few pubs in my electorate without gaming machines. The main road through the Glenorchy municipality is often referred to as the 'golden mile'.

Whatever members in this place or the broader public think about the way the election was fought, the election has been run and won. The Liberal Party now has a right to govern and we, as members of the Legislative Council, have a duty under the Westminster system to review legislation and provide checks and balances on executive government. As a member of the Opposition, it is also my responsibility to hold the Government to account, but I will speak to that in more detail later.

I welcome the new members of the Parliament, including the new member for Prosser, Madam Speaker in the other place, and my six new colleagues in the Labor Caucus - Ella Haddad, Alison Standen, David O'Byrne, Jen Houston, Jen Butler and Anita Dow. They have strengthened our team in numbers. They have a broad range of life experiences and qualifications and their recent elections have strengthened our resolve. All members of parliament want to make a difference, no matter their politics, and we meet here to robustly debate reforms to make Tasmania a better place. We represent our communities because they have put their trust in us to listen, work hard and do the best we can.

The goodwill of the public may sometimes be fleeting and for those who lost their seats at the last election, I offer my commiserations. I hope my former Labor colleague Madeleine Ogilvie, as well as Nic Street, Joan Rylah and Andrea Dawkins continue to use their skills in contributing to the community. Life is a journey, not a destination. It is my firm belief that we are better placed for the experience, good or bad, if we are reflective and remember what is important.

The beginning of the Forty-Ninth Parliament provides an opportunity to reflect on the last term of government and to consider what may lie ahead for the Hodgman Liberal Government. The Government has released its policy agenda, some of it after the election, but claims a mandate for all of it. There has been much discussion on the term 'mandate' and what the definition entails, including in this debate. Given the level of interest, I will look at the differing sides of the debate.

According to the dictionary - I know the member for Windermere referred to this definition in his commentary - a mandate is 'the authority to carry out a policy, regarded as given by the electorate to a party or candidate that wins an election'. At face value, that is a political interpretation to give meaning to elections. It is an interpretation often used by politicians of both sides of politics, but what that definition fails to consider is the constitutional, legal or parliamentary prescription. I looked at the Australian Parliament website and I came across this paper called *Mandate: Australia's Current Debate in Context*, and I thought this definition was interesting -

Mandate is a political idea in two senses. Mandate doctrine derives from the politics of responsible government on a democratic basis. It does not derive from constitutional, legal or parliamentary prescription. Moreover, a mandate is not a substitute for prescribed constitutional, legal or parliamentary procedures, though it may influence the workings of such procedures.

In a more simplistic definition, parties of whatever persuasion will put their agenda out to the community in the hope they will win the election to govern, and that is fair enough. What the simplistic version does not consider in this political construct is the structure of the parliament. In a Westminster parliament - a bicameral parliament in this instance - executive government has checks and balances. The executive government has won the election and it has a right to put its agenda to the parliament. That is the structure we have. This simplistic definition does not consider the structure already in place which has been in place for hundreds of years.

If we consider those implications under the Westminster system, the Government in the Forty-Ninth Parliament has a mandate to table its agenda. Under this system the Opposition will naturally hold the Government to account where there are opportunities to do so. When an elected government releases 200 policies after an election, our job becomes very important. This means we will work constructively with the Government when it introduces good bills to the parliament - that is, bills developed in consultation with stakeholders, bills that have the support of the community and are informed by evidence. We have demonstrated in the past that we will work for bills that fit this description.

Events on the first day of parliament have certainly changed the dynamic for this term of the Government. I anticipate the parliament to be a more democratic, open and accountable parliament. Hopefully this will result in better constructed and drafted legislation reaching this House, because the Government cannot take the parliament for granted - 'a big, bold, brave and accountable government' is a promising statement made by a member of the Government, and provides foundation for positive change during this term of government or parliament.

It would be a huge leap for democracy in Tasmania if state-based campaign disclosure laws were improved, ideally with cross-party support. In the aftermath of the recent election, Tasmanians are crying out to see comprehensive, state-based donation disclosure laws so they can see who is buying influence in the political process. Another area the statement 'big, bold, brave and accountable government' includes is right to information requests, and the culture of secrecy in the public service led by the Liberal Government. Recently, a *Mercury* editorial covered both those issues. In the editorial on 9 April 2018, the editor of the *Mercury*, Chris Jones, said -

Mr Hodgman should hold ... a press conference today to publicly declare his commitment to open government and set a time frame for all ministerial staff and the public service to implement new policies in support of this goal. This should include a commitment to release all relevant data alongside any media releases spinning government performance.

And the Premier should commit to bringing before Parliament, within 90 days, legislation to deliver real political donations reform as a concrete example of his own commitment to this goal. Without these steps - or similar ones that reflect the same goal - it will be difficult for this second Hodgman Government to escape the perception that it is secretive.

I certainly agree with those sentiments. It is the responsibility of the Government to govern for all Tasmanians, and to support and protect all people from inequity. In my job representing the people of Elwick, there is one area of government that particularly provides example after example of the inequity in our community: healthcare and the state of our public health system. Health will continue to remain a prominent issue in our communities when a vitally essential service, such as healthcare, continues to be neglected. During the campaign, the Government counted federal funding in its policy and tried to pass it off as its own. It profiled funding over six years, which is beyond the term of this Government; without clarifying where the bulk of the funding will be delivered, there will be nothing to address the immediate need.

The Government's health policy was simply about politics in the campaign, not about future good governance and good outcomes in the Health portfolio.

While I am talking about this area, and she is not in the Chamber at the moment, I must congratulate my colleague in this place, the member for Rumney on her appointment as shadow health minister. For the record, I think she will do a great job holding the Government to account. The member for Rumney has already demonstrated her capacity to listen to the community and stakeholders, and develop good policy.

Mr President, the stories and experiences of the health system can be raw and confronting, whether it is waiting for 48 hours in an emergency department, ambulance ramping, outpatient appointments, waiting for desperately needed surgery or the denial of terminations in the public health system. It is certainly an emotionally taxing job for Government and Opposition spokespeople and their staff, including their hardworking electorate officers.

Housing and homelessness has been brought into sharp focus this year with the state facing high areas of stress in an unfolding crisis. Southern Tasmania is facing an unprecedented 0.3 per cent vacancy rate and almost daily we are seeing stories of hardship in the media. People like Scott Gadd and the people at the showgrounds have become the visible face of the issue, but it is important to note this is not just an issue for the south. There are areas of housing stress and significant levels of homelessness right around the state.

This issue is a longstanding one, but it has certainly been felt more acutely under this Government. Policy settings and a lack of investment have accelerated the problems. There have been funding cuts of some \$45.6 million from the Housing budget and a decline in the number of social housing properties available - 506 dwellings, to be exact. That is despite demand for public and social housing increasing. The Government is behind on many of the key performance indicators in its latest quarterly housing report, with many of the progress graphs looking like hockey sticks. This was covered well in the other place yesterday. For honourable members' benefit, the graph that was much discussed yesterday for 2015 to 2019 says 'provide 430 new social house dwellings by 2018-19' and says it is on track. From 2015 to 2018, the progress has been 37. By 2019, they are expected to get to 430, and that is what the progress graph looks like. You can see that there is a significant amount of work to be done this year to reach that target.

This is also informed by the ABS data, which says that public housing sector approvals - that is, approvals for new houses - under the current Government is 40 per cent down on previous governments' approvals. We are failing to build the new houses and at the same time we have other factors in play. We have discussed short-stay accommodation in this place. There is an increase in UTAS enrolments, and that is a good thing, but it needs to be planned for. There is a population growth strategy that has failed to consider the housing or infrastructure requirements for the extra population that will arrive in Tasmania.

Mr President, in this area, Labor developed a housing policy before the election, in consultation with the sector, which was well received by many stakeholders. One example of support was from Ms Goodes of TasCOSS, stating who said that the Labor plan is strong and evidence-based, and has been developed through community consultation.

That policy contained an expansion of home ownership initiatives, private rental security tenure, a big injection of capital spending on public housing, and funding for support services that help facilitate successful tenancies. Our policy was costed and profiled for each initiative.

I am happy to admit that our headline figure was beaten by the Liberal announcement some three or four days later. In hindsight, they were waiting for us to go first. They had not done the

consultation and they were looking for a campaign edge - good politics, not good policy. Once the announcements had subsided and the \$125 million figure had been printed in newspapers, it became apparent the Government's policy was just a bucket of money for the politics of the campaign.

I encourage honourable members in this place to have a look at the two policies. I do not have it here with me, but one is a flimsy four-page document. It contains endorsement quotes from 2015. It is 2018. There are no new initiatives in this policy document. It was clearly designed as a political construct. Our policy was widely consulted and well received by stakeholders. It contains a heap of new initiatives that give a policy direction for an incoming government. In the media I have been open and said the Government could adopt a number of our initiatives as a matter of urgency and hit the ground running. We did the work and it is supported by the community sector and others. They could easily be picked up and provide some direction.

In comparison, we have a new Minister for Housing who does not have a sound foundation of policy development behind him - that is not his fault; he inherited it - and who is trying to figure out what to do with the money. This means people are sleeping rough and waiting longer while the Government works out what it is doing. Average wait times have blown out for public housing from 43 weeks to 63 weeks in only 12 months. Factor in short-stay accommodation growth through policy settings, a significant increase in UTAS students and a population growth strategy with no planning for infrastructure or how people will be housed, and there are many challenges across many fronts. There is awareness in the community on this issue. They are putting forward solutions, whether they be short-, medium- or long-term. Some of these opportunities have been missed.

The member for Derwent and I recently toured Carinya in New Norfolk at the Derwent Valley Council's invitation. It is a facility owned by the Government. The lease with the Derwent Valley Council has come to an end. It has had smoke alarms, extinguishers and other safety issues updated in the last year. It has had university students from the mainland stay there. Is it the Hotel Carlton or some other ritzy accommodation? It is not, but there is a challenge at the moment. We need to take up every opportunity for short-term, emergency and temporary accommodation while we work on medium- to long-term accommodation.

I know from the many people around the state who are contacting my office that they are incredibly frustrated by the lack of action when these opportunities have been put forward by the community. They have been ignored or information has not been provided on why it is not a good option. We have had no update on that. That is a little bit disappointing. It was good to see a council putting forward a positive solution in that instance.

Over the Christmas period there was an auction of the old primary school land in Bellerive - I believe it was prime real estate. In total, the blocks for residential housing went for nearly \$5 million and there were not many of them. I wrote to the Premier and asked if this had been considered for affordable housing. It took two attempts to gain a response. I do not know whether he is playing on my former career as a teacher, that I will let it go because the money is being reinvested into education. In his email response to me, he said that government agencies were advised, including Housing Tasmania, of the availability of surplus land on 26 June 2017 and were given 21 days to register their interest in acquiring that land for alternative government requirements. Given the housing shortage, I would have thought that would have been at the top of mind, across departments; that land is close to services -

Ms Forrest - Mr President, having housing is an imperative to considering improvements to education. If you do not have a house, you cannot access that. They all link together.

Mr WILLIE - It is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It is a basic right to have shelter. You cannot self-actualise unless you have that basic foundation for your life.

Ms Forrest - The Government could have directed that.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. The underinvestment in housing is going to impact on other government departments, so it is dumb social policy and it is dumb economics, too. We know that picking up the cost later is far more expensive for government, whether it is in the health system or the Department of Justice. I think we are at a watershed moment across Australia. This is not just an issue defined in Tasmania. We are at a watershed moment because we are a rich country but we are still struggling with homelessness.

That is because housing has been commodified in Australia and it has locked out, and will continue - unless government policy settings change - to lock out a whole generation of have-nots. This issue will politicise younger Australians and Tasmanians who cannot get a foothold in the market. The member for Pembroke talked about that. This issue is incredibly important to the Labor movement, being a member of the Labor Party, because part of our ideology is to care about these sorts of things. It is an opportunity at both federal and state levels for us to connect with younger voters and provide a better future and a more secure future to them so that they can live happy and productive lives.

I think this will be a big issue that will play out in the approaching federal campaign; I hope it will be. It should be treated seriously. We do not even have a federal housing minister at the moment - that is how seriously the current federal government is taking it. It is not prepared to do some of the hard decision-making and look at negative gearing and capital gains tax. It controls the income levers for the states, too.

Under previous federal governments we saw billions of dollars funnelled into social housing. It really is a matter of priority for government. There can be a better future when it comes to housing and this issue will continue to play out for many years to come.

Labor has a constructive role to play as Opposition in the Housing portfolio. I openly encourage the Government to engage with me. I have written to the Minister for Housing, Mr Roger Jaensch, offering to establish a Joint House select committee into housing. This House had an inquiry in 2009 - I think it was - into housing affordability.

Ms Rattray - It is a long time ago now.

Mr WILLIE - It is a while ago. An inquiry right now is not going to address immediate needs. I make no illusions about that. I did offer to sit down with the Housing minister to develop some terms of reference around the idea that we could have a look at public and community housing, private housing affordability, and residential and tenancy issues. The idea would be to allow stakeholders to put their thoughts on the public record, engage with the community and, importantly, develop a framework for future policy in budget decisions regardless of whether Labor or Liberal is in government. I was extending an olive branch so that we could sit down and look at this for the next 10 or 15 years and find some common goals. We could put this framework in place

and no matter what colour the government, there would be a framework there, especially for the policy in the budget decisions into the future.

I received a response to that letter on the first day of parliament. I wrote to the Housing minister - it does not have the date on there. I was waiting a little while. The first day of parliament, there was a bit of panic that the Opposition might have raised this in the other place, but we were trying to engage constructively and had not had a response. For the context, my letter read -

Dear Minister Jaensch

We all have a responsibility to ensure Tasmanians have access to safe and secure housing.

Labor has a constructive role to play when it comes to housing policy and I offer a bipartisan approach to investigate the issue, provide a forum for stakeholders to put their statements on the public record, and develop a framework for future policy and budget decisions.

With cross party support, I encourage the State Government to initiate a Joint House Parliamentary Inquiry into public and community housing, private housing affordability and residential and tenancy issues.

I would be pleased to meet with you at the earliest opportunity to negotiate the terms of reference.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

In response on the first day of parliament - I think this was just covering bases - Mr Jaensch wrote -

Dear Mr Willie

Thank you for your correspondence regarding Tasmania's housing policy.

As you would be aware, all participants at the Housing Summit convened in March engaged in constructive discussions to develop practical actions to provide assistance to Tasmanians in need.

Along with the Government's Affordable Housing Strategy, the Summit identified a number of solutions with the broad support of who attended, including the Labor Party. These nine solutions were focussed on an overarching intent to increase the supply of social and affordable housing as well as increase the affordable rental stock.

All actions from the Summit are underway and I look forward to engaging constructively with Summit participants as we prioritise actions to assist Tasmanians to find an affordable home.

Accordingly, draft legislation has been released today for consultation that will allow the Government to fast track zoning changes for government land identified

as suitable for residential development that will add to the supply of affordable housing.

In that context, what about the Bellerive land? The letter continues -

I look forward to working constructively with you to progress this important piece of legislation to boost the supply of homes available throughout the state.

Rest assured, we are getting on with the job, and reducing housing stress and homelessness will continue to be my top priority as Minister.

That was the response I received to my letter suggesting a parliamentary inquiry. There is no mention of parliamentary inquiry, no acknowledgment of my offer of bipartisanship. I decided to write to the minister again. I wrote another letter along similar lines and I am still yet to hear back. The Government is not interested in working with the Opposition on this issue, even though we are willing to do so.

Ms Rattray - Were you part of the summit? Do you think it has been a successful process?

Mr WILLIE - As the shadow minister for housing, I committed to the summit during the campaign. The Government did not; it committed to it after the campaign. Rebecca White went on behalf of the Labor Party.

Ms Rattray - Did you find there was a successful outcome?

Mr WILLIE - There are a lot of questions and a lot of detail still to be released. We are willing to work constructively on that and some of the nine points addressed at the Housing Summit. A bill will come before this House, probably in the next sitting, to fast-track the zoning of crown land.

I wanted to highlight that because it is not an obstructionist approach. I am willing to sit down with the minister and look at how we can improve things in future -

Mr Valentine - As long as politics is not played; that is the problem. I think the offer is great; I applaud you for that and it is a great move. It is important politics is not played with it if you want them to respond positively to you. That is all I am saying.

Mr WILLIE - How long do you wait, member for Hobart? At some point you need engagement from the other side.

Mr Valentine - It would be interesting to hear the response.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. As the member for Pembroke highlighted, homelessness, youth homelessness in particular, has increased dramatically over the past decade. Many young people are, and will continue to be, locked out of home ownership. In Tasmania, the rough figures off the top of my head are 1600 people are homeless on any given night while around 8000 people are in rental stress. Housing is a significant issue in Tasmania and will continue to play out as this Government's term unfolds, and no doubt those of future governments. That is probably enough on housing.

Ms Rattray - The inquiry held in 2009 was to address some of the issues you have raised today. It is not a new issue, but the figures are increasing, not decreasing.

Mr Valentine - It is important to have the inquiry.

Mr WILLIE - Member for Hobart, would you be supportive if I were to bring a motion to this House?

Mr Valentine - I probably would. The important thing a lot of people do not understand is the difference between affordable housing and social housing. There is the issue of how affordable housing is maintained in future, with government land being dealt with. It is affordable today but it may not be tomorrow because of the way it is dealt with. There are some good things that should be dealt with in an inquiry.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, that is right. Housing is a continuum. Public and community housing, housing affordability, and the private rental market are all interconnected. Wherever there is pressure on the continuum, people will be bumped up and down the continuum. At the moment, working families and people with good jobs are renting substandard rental accommodation in private rentals that would have gone to low income earners at some stage. The rental increases have been significantly inflated the last few years. So along the continuum there are various pressures and at the bottom end we have people falling out of the housing market, for whatever reason, and areas of the sector under pressure.

Mr Valentine - Local government needs to be involved.

Mr WILLIE - That is one of the complicating factors. You have the interface between the three levels of government becoming more and more sophisticated. The federal government is controlling the income levers, the taxation arrangements and partnership agreements; state governments have various levers, then in the local government area, you have them as the planning authority and that can have various influences on -

Mr Valentine - Then you have the housing debt to the federal government -

Mr WILLIE - Then there is a significant legacy housing debt. Half our partnership money goes back to the federal government each year to pay the debt, and year on year that is significant. With \$15 million to public housing every year, year on year that is a significant investment we are missing out on.

In the education space, I have been critical about the Government and the secrecy around TasTAFE. I believe in question time today, the skills and training minister may have released the TasTAFE audit, but I will have to double check that. This was kept under wraps purely for political reasons - we had an election on the horizon. Now, after the election the Government is willing to share that information. I know, from my former role as the shadow minister for skills and training, that staff, members of the public and other people who really believe in the institution of TAFE wanted to know the ramifications of the scandals. They wanted to be able to be included in the change and they could not understand the secrecy. Here we are on the other side of the election and promises that the information is going to be shared. I did have 4 June locked in my diary because I was expecting the release then, but maybe I can do some digging in the *Hansard* of the other place, and I might find it has been tabled.

Tasmania has lost 1900 apprentices and training places under the current Government. This is despite our youth unemployment remaining among the highest in the country. The skills and training pathway should be a great pathway to meaningful secure work. In the context of those statistics there is a problem with this pathway and that needs to be investigated further.

Going back to housing, that provides a good example of the lack of skilled workers. TasTAFE and skills and training will be absolutely vital to Tasmania's future prosperity and being able to deliver the services we all enjoy. The housing industry is a great example. At the moment, we have nearly record high approvals in the housing market, but commencements and completions are significantly lower than those approvals. That is because there is a shortage of skilled builders and construction workers to build the houses. We have commercial developments happening here in Hobart in the city. Many of those workers have been redirected to those developments. That means that the housing market, despite the need, has stalled.

Skills and training is certainly an important aspect of government. It needs to be prioritised. Statistics show people who go through a skills and training pathway are more likely to end up in a field of their training. They are more likely to end up on a higher salary when they graduate than a university student. They are more likely to have secure employment. I will check those figures.

Mr Finch - I do not mind you talking off the top of your head because it could be worse.

Mr WILLIE - You could call it something else, but it might be unparliamentary.

Ms Rattray - A paper was released last week with the list of skills shortages and identifying those areas in Tasmania. I had it tagged but must have overlooked it among my papers yesterday.

Mr WILLIE - On that point, I would be very excited if there were a future federal Labor government, because federal Labor has committed to waiving the fees on in-demand courses. If Labor is elected, this will hopefully have a beneficial impact on Tasmania.

Ms Rattray - I would like to think that any government, no matter what colour, would prioritise skills.

Mr WILLIE - Other countries do it really well. It is elevated in the language community leaders use around skills and training.

I welcome the employment of more teachers and specialists in our schools. The ratios have been too high for too long. I remember teaching a class of 33 grade 5/6s, which included high-needs kids with minimal support. Imagine being in a room with 33 11-year-olds, some with high needs, every single day, mostly on your own.

Mr Valentine - I had a conversation with a person who supplies wood to me, and he said he was in a class of 56.

Mr WILLIE - There was very strong discipline then.

Mr Valentine - That was in the Huon.

Mr WILLIE - With modern teaching practices, I do not think you could handle a class of 50 on your own and deliver good outcomes. It is not possible. It is incredibly hard to do in a class of 30 - to know each kid's story, to build a relationships with the parents, to track the children's

learning. It is very demanding of your time. Teachers work incredibly long hours, despite what some others may think. In a job like ours, there are highly stressful times of the year, particularly around reporting times, when you work extremely long hours. I am pleased there will be more teachers in our school system. I am happy to acknowledge the Government's actions in this regard.

We made significant commitments in that area. However, a recent Australian Education Union report highlighted some of the specialist ratios: one school psychologist to 927 students - tell me how they get round to 927 students if they need to; one social worker to 879 students; and one speech pathologist to 1270 students. Speech pathologists do amazing work in our schools. Often early intervention is so important in that age bracket, to help those kids be successful in their schooling. I have met kids who did not get early intervention and they start to disengage with school, probably by years 4, 5 and 6. Once they are on the pathway, it is very difficult to turn them around.

We need to invest in specialists in the early years to set kids up to be successful. We do them a disservice by not doing this. I am pleased the Government is recognising the fantastic work of Child and Family Centres and the work they are doing in our communities in early years education. They might have re-badged the name to 'early learning hubs', but the commitment is finally there to continue the rollout. Since my election, I have consistently raised this matter with the education minister, and while he recognised the outstanding work they do in our communities, there was never any commitment across the forward Estimates to build more.

I am encouraged the Government and the education minister have decided to make the commitment and I encourage the Government and the Education department to look at the child and Family Centre report and at the evidence presented to the committee, so that these new centres can continue to improve what is already a very good model. Education reform has proved difficult for both colours of government.

Mrs Hiscutt - Did you say your committee has finished the report?

Mr WILLIE - Yes, I tabled it last year and we had a debate.

Mr Valentine - It has been lost?

Mr WILLIE - It is probably, because I chaired it and they went 'No'.

Ms Rattray - You had a good team with you.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, we made some good recommendations. It would be useful to the Government in the rollout of those early learning hubs. Governments put a different spin on things, and it will have education and care attached to it, but so do some of the Child and Family Centres like the one at Beaconsfield. That is an education and care service.

Mr Finch - I continue to be more and more impressed with the Beaconsfield Child and Family Centre. Stewart Bell has been put into the role of CEO and he is going gangbusters. The people involved keep taking that to the next level, every step of the way. It is super for a community.

Mr WILLIE - It is. That report is important to the Government, I would assume, and you can take away the fact that I was the chair of that committee. Some good recommendations were developed from stakeholders' evidence. They highlight all through the report how wonderful they

are and some of the things that could be improved to ensure we are reaching as many families as possible.

Educational reform has proven difficult for both colours of government. Top-down structural reforms have run into trouble. I strongly believe we need to carefully consider the process when we are talking about educational reform. We need to work with students, parents and educators to create a framework of change. The member for Mersey talked about lowering the school age. Had the process been carefully designed, we could have achieved a good outcome, whatever that might have been. It might not have been lowering the school age; it might have looked different. The framework could have been created along the lines that play-based learning is advantageous to children's development. How do we provide that opportunity to more of the population?

Ms Forrest - It should have been in there. The amendment I put in did that to the bill.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. We could have had a discussion with the Tasmanian community and there could have been submissions. One of those submissions may have gained traction with stakeholders and community members and started to build consensus. If you build that sort of support around a reform, rather than trying to impose it from the top down without listening to educators, parents and students, people will stay the course throughout the reform even if it becomes difficult. What we have seen, and history has shown, is that if you impose reforms on the education system and you do not have that support, they fall over as soon as it becomes tough.

I was deeply concerned that was going to happen in the debate on lowering the school age. I talked to the education minister about it during budget Estimates and other occasions. I am glad he made the decision he did. On reflection, had he looked at the process before he had mentioned anything publicly, saying, 'Here is the problem, here is the solution', we could have gone on an exciting journey and may have ended up with fantastic reform. We need to think carefully about the framework before we consider reforms in education. That is where both governments have run into trouble. It is a bit self-deprecating of me to admit that.

The year 11 and 12 extensions will continue to play out during this term of government, but has this Government taken the Tasmanian people with them? It is time to evaluate the model and its impact on retention rates and attainment. The Government should be open and transparent about the data instead of selectively releasing favourable data. I know there are good stories in regional areas where schools have been extended. Let us not hide the critical data because it does a disservice to the reform. Parents, students and the Tasmanian public want to understand the implications and the positives, and they want to make informed decisions and choices.

It is also important to consider the sustainability of colleges under the future extensions of urban high schools. The Government has not made a convincing case that the colleges have a future under its model or will be viable. Tasmania spends some of the highest dollars per student in the country and many of our outcome-based indicators lag behind. There are significant questions about the proposed model.

Mr Dean - One of the colleges in Launceston is temporary - you are right; I agree with your comments. The numbers have dropped and they are not sure -

Ms Rattray - The numbers are increasing.

Mr WILLIE - Let us evaluate it. Release the data. No doubt there are some good stories to tell but there is probably some critical stuff there, too.

I will be watching with interest the capital expenditure on Cosgrove High School in my electorate and whether that has an impact on student numbers and the school's reputation. As an educator, I know schools are more than just buildings. They are about people and there needs to be a significant investment in this area, too.

In summary, there are some good initiatives from the Government, which I am happy to acknowledge, but over this term of government I will not be afraid to hold the Government to account for some of its poorer decisions.

[12.50 p.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, I first congratulate the new member for Prosser on her campaign. I imagine it is the fulfilment of a journey for you to be a member of parliament and to serve your community and Tasmania. Congratulations on being dogged and persistent in wanting to be here and having your dreams fulfilled. This is the place to be. As you can tell, it is very welcoming. It is an opportunity to make that contribution to Tasmanian society which I think you will grasp with both hands, so I wish you well with your career.

To you, 'Mr Hobart', congratulations, Rob. For me, as I told you, it was never in doubt because I think of the calibre of the person you are, as has been witnessed through -

Mr Valentine - Would you like to outline that?

Mr FINCH - What did you write here? As you have exhibited through your life the type of person you are and being lord mayor of Hobart for 12-and-a-half years, it does not happen by accident. It does not happen by political manipulation. It happens because of the quality of the person you are and we are very lucky to have you here in this House. Over the past six years you have given us that wisdom, observation, research and checking and the desire to do the right thing. We have enjoyed that.

I have appreciated your contributions. It is interesting that we are pretty much on the same wavelength while still being in silos. He never phones me; he never writes; he never calls - 'What is your opinion?' Why does that not happen?

Mr Valentine - What are you doing for lunch?

Mr FINCH - Do you have something to talk to me about? What you were saying yesterday was quite right. Certainly for you and me, we do not communicate on an issues level; it is purely as friends. I appreciate the fact that your community has decided to send you back for another six years and you do not get that unless you have done the job. You certainly had competition that could have offered people the opportunity to vote differently and to say, 'What a load of rubbish - out with that, let's try somebody new'. They did not do that; they sent you back for another six years, so congratulations, Rob - well done.

Mr Valentine - Thank you very much; I appreciate it.

Mr FINCH - To the Leader, on your appointment, well done - onward and upward. It has been a terrific journey in this place, to have been given the opportunity because of a tragedy.

However, you have grasped it with both hands and you are serving us well and looking to be the sort of leader who can get the results for what the Legislative Council is here to do. I wish you well with that. Best of luck.

Blessed we are with the skills we have here. To you, our new Chair of Committees, congratulations. My understanding is you will bring to the job what is needed in that position. I look forward to supporting you in that role. We have had the member for Western Tiers holding down the fort and doing a terrific job. I think you will be a really good successor to him in that role.

The Governor's speech was very strong on rosy promises. I approve of many of them. The promise to continue investment in flagship industries such as tourism, agriculture, fisheries and resources is a no-brainer. It would be a dire situation if that investment did not continue.

On tourism, it is worth noting the latest international visitor survey results for Australia. Tasmania's growth in international visitor numbers stands at 31 per cent, quite fantastic. We can salute MONA in a lot of ways for that international visitation and putting us on the map overseas. The other opportunities here - Cradle Mountain, Port Arthur and where we are in the mind's eye of people overseas as to what they might experience in Tasmania - are what brings them here. Most other states of Australia show increases of only 10 per cent. If you look at Queensland, which is a magnet for Tasmanians to visit during the winter, it had an increase in international visitation of only 4 per cent. We are doing well. Tourism in Tasmania is in a particularly healthy state.

The Government and tourism industry must be careful not to do anything that might jeopardise Tasmania's international image. A few days ago we saw reports of leaked government documents suggesting the World Heritage Management Plan was being manipulated to allow tourism developments ahead of wilderness values. The minutes from 2015 meetings refer to proposed luxury accommodation on Halls Island at Lake Malbena in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, with customers arriving by seaplane or helicopter. It would seem the Government has changed the World Heritage Management Plan to allow the development. I stress: the eyes of would-be international visitors are firmly on Tasmania.

I say again, Mr President: the Government and the tourism industry must be careful not to do anything which might jeopardise Tasmania's international image. We must be careful not to kill the goose that lays the golden tourism egg. I am only expressing a word of caution. As you know, I am a great supporter of the tourism industry, and have been for decades. I also genuflect toward what we have here that is driving people to come to visit us. It is that balance.

I signal to this present Government, to all governments of Tasmania, to all people involved: we have to be careful how we handle those changes to what we do and the developments we offer. It is important in these sorts of constructs that we take people with us. We have to listen to what people say about the opportunities that might be proposed. I hark immediately to this protest action against the development on kunanyi/Mount Wellington. It is the people's right to protest, to have their opinions heard. If you ask me now where I stand as a member, I grew up on Mount Wellington. I know it; I know kunanyi.

Ms Forrest - We have heard the stories, don't you worry about that.

Mr FINCH - You are saying, 'Send a copy of my previous speeches to you'?

I know the mountain intrinsically and I am also a supporter of tourism. If we go down the path that I need to make a decision, it is going to be a very interesting debate for me. Part of my thinking will be, 'Okay, do people want this to occur? Will people be damaged by this in future? Will they accept this will be a good development if it goes ahead?' People have to be listened to. You have to listen to what Tasmanians are saying about these ideas. If the end result is not going to move us forward as a population, if there is not going to be agreement - and you cannot always agree with everything - we need to be careful about that decision we make.

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

QUESTIONS

Marine Farming - Illness, Mortality and Disease Management

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

[2.31 p.m.]

Regarding the regulation of marine farming as noted in correspondence received from the Minister for Primary Industries and Water on 3 May 2018, marine farming licence conditions require operators to report mortalities exceeding 0.25 per cent per day for three consecutive days in any 10. Notification of any significant illness, mortality or disease presenting in the fish species authorised under a marine farming licence is required and cages are monitored on a daily or more frequent basis with the removal of mortalities a high priority as part of routine farm hygiene practice, and disposal of carcasses according to approved waste management methods.

- (1) What are the reported significant illnesses, mortality and/or disease rates in fish farms in Macquarie Harbour over the last five years?
- (2) What are the reported significant illnesses, mortality and/or disease rates in fish farms in any other area of Tasmania where fish farming occurs?
- (3) Where a mortality event occurs -
 - (a) what are the specific routine hygiene practices used, and
 - (b) what are the approved waste management methods used to dispose of the carcasses in each case reported in questions (1) and (2)?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for her question.

(1) and (2)

The department advises it is satisfied that salmonid aquaculture companies undertaking sea cage aquaculture activities in Tasmania are operating in accordance with marine farming

licence requirements relating to reporting disease, disease-related mortality and fish mortality events more generally.

The trigger for notifying the department of suspected or known incidences of disease has been set at a rate exceeding 0.25 per cent of fish per day for three consecutive days in any individual cage.

This represents a conservative threshold above which the department, including the Chief Veterinary Officer, needs information at a cage-specific regional (Macquarie Harbour) and statewide scale.

This is critical when considering an appropriate regulatory response to mortality events in Tasmania, whether it be to manage appropriate disposal of dead fish or management of an emergency potential disease threat.

Reports of mortality events or suspected disease are provided to the department in a number of forms including email, text and phone calls.

Typical events which trigger notification include mortality events related to Pilchard Orthomyxovirus, commonly known as POMV, gill necrosis associated with amoebic gill disease and significant weather events such as the documented turnover events in Macquarie Harbour.

Data qualifying rates of illness, mortality and disease in farm fish is commercially sensitive to individual companies and is provided in confidence to the department for the purposes outlined above. For this reason this information is not correlated or made publicly available by the department. While reports of mortality events associated with gill necrosis are restricted to the south-east region, mortality events associated with POMV have been reported from both Macquarie Harbour and the south-east region.

- (3) All aquaculture companies regularly inspect their cages to detect and remove any mortalities. Dead fish are required to be disposed of in an approved method. Dead fish are routinely moved from cages and disposed of in approved mortality pits operated by the company, commercial domestic landfill facilities or processed through rendering or composting facilities.

Electoral Act - Proposed Review

Mr WILLIE question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.36 p.m.]

Just days after the election the Premier committed to electoral donation reform. In a statement to the *Mercury*, he said, 'We should always look at how we can improve our laws.' Leader, what are the changes the Government is considering and when will they be introduced to the parliament? In the interim, will the Government disclose how much the Liberal Party received from the gaming lobby in the lead-up to the March election?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Elwick for his question. On 3 May 2018 the Premier outlined the Government's plan with respect to the Electoral Act. I refer the member to the statement issued by the Premier at that time, which reads -

The Government will conduct a review into Tasmania's Electoral Act and associated election laws. This is a responsible action following any State Election and will ensure our democratic processes are contemporary and in-line with changing in community expectations. The Department of Justice together with the Department of Premier and Cabinet will conduct the review, with an interim report expected within six months of the review commencing and a final report in 12 months.

The review will receive written submissions, giving every Tasmanian - political parties, organisations and the broader community - a chance to have their say. The review will be guided by two governing principles; protecting freedom of speech with note to Constitutional implications, and minimal cost to the taxpayer.

The Terms of Reference are:

- Modernising the current Tasmanian Electoral Act with specific examination of sections including 191(1)(b), 196(1) and 198(1)(b).
- Whether state-based disclosure rules should be introduced, and if so, what they should include.
- The level of regulation of third parties, including unions, during Election campaigns.

The Election highlighted that some provisions in the Electoral Act and associated election laws have failed to keep pace with rapid changes in technology, social media and community expectations.

It is important that we take this opportunity to listen to Tasmanians and ensure we have a robust, democratic and fair electoral system that reflects Tasmania today. (OK)

Department of Justice - Annual Report 2016-17 - Release

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

[2.39 p.m.]

The end of this financial year is fast approaching, and under the requirements of the Right to Information Act 2009, section 53, the secretary of the Department of Justice must, as soon as practical after the end of each financial year, prepare a report on the administration of the Right to Information Act, with this report being tabled by the relevant minister within 10 days of receipt from the secretary.

The last report listed on the website is the 2015-16 report, with the 2016-17 report not yet released.

- (1) When will the 2016-17 report be finalised, tabled in parliament and publicly released?
- (2) Will the Government action and support an amendment to the RTI act to place a definite time frame on the collation and release of the annual RTI report in the interest of transparency and community confidence?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for McIntyre for her question.

- (1) The *Right to Information Annual Report 2016-17* was recently submitted to the Minister for Justice. Its transmission to the minister was delayed by the state election and consequent caretaker period. It must be tabled in both Houses of parliament within 10 sitting days of its receipt. This year's reporting template for public authorities was significantly amended to remove and resolve some inconsistencies of past processes. Some additional time was required by some authorities to complete their returns due to this.
- (2) The objective of greater transparency is best served by allowing sufficient time for thorough and comprehensive consideration of this important information. Collation of figures for inclusion in the annual report is a complex task and involves liaison with a large number of public authorities. It is important not to rush such a task and to allow for proper consideration of all public authorities' returns.

Greenhouse Gas-Free Aluminium Process - Bell Bay - Possible Trial

Mr FINCH question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

Given the owner of the Bell Bay Aluminium smelter, Rio Tinto, plans with Alcoa to introduce the world's first greenhouse gas-free aluminium production process in Canada, did the Tasmanian Government try to trial the process at Bell Bay using Tasmania's clean hydroelectric power?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Rosevears for his question. The Rio Tinto announcement on this matter states that the technology developed by Alcoa represents the culmination of decades' worth of research and development involving a host of patents and intellectual property. The Government's energy policy unit is not aware of any approach from Rio Tinto or Alcoa concerning their technology.

Ombudsman's Office - Outstanding Reviews - Increased Resources

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

I am reliably informed the Ombudsman's Office has a backlog of matters not receiving the necessary attention. Does the Government intend to increase resources at the Ombudsman's Office

to deal with the ever-increasing workload that is resulting in some applications not being reviewed for at least a year?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member McIntyre for her question. The Government acknowledges the Ombudsman's Office has a volume of outstanding external reviews currently before it. Any request for additional resources is considered in the regular budget cycle. It is highlighted that the number of external review applications made in any year is difficult to forecast, which makes it difficult to accurately predict resourcing requirements.

Ombudsman's Office - Ravenswood Power Outages

Mr DEAN question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

I have had a matter with the Ombudsman for 12 months and it is not yet resolved.

Some time ago, the transmission of power to part of Ravenswood was moved from the Newstead Substation to the Mowbray substation. As a result of this change, the residents of Ravenswood have experienced an increasing number of unplanned supply outages.

- (1) How many unplanned power supply outages have occurred in the Ravenswood and Mowbray TasNetworks areas in the financial years 2015-16 and 2016-17, and the year to date?
- (2) What has been the cause of the unplanned power supply outages in this area?
- (3) What is the average duration of the unplanned power supply outages experienced?
- (4) What live-wire maintenance procedures or remedial work has TasNetworks undertaken to prevent further unplanned supply interruptions in the Ravenswood and Mowbray areas.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his questions.

- (1) I have here a group figure of 26, the total I have for those financial years. Would you like me to further investigate and break it down for you?

Mr Dean - The public is concerned and people have been on radio announcing their frustration.

Mrs HISCUTT - Without a doubt. Would you like the answer of 26 broken down?

Mr Dean - If it could be, because they are saying it is increasing, not decreasing, and it might help.

Mrs HISCUTT - I shall further undertake to clarify 26 divided by those years.

- (2) There has been a range of causes, including unknown, severe weather, bird strikes, transformer faults, lightning strikes, faulty switch gear and connection failure.

- (3) The average duration is 1 hour and 12 minutes.
- (4) Currently there are no targeted projects to improve reliability on Mowbray feeder 62006.

Recognition of Visitors

Taiwanese Delegation

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, I welcome a delegation from Taiwan to the Chamber. Ms Elaine Choong - hopefully I have pronounced it fairly well - and her male colleagues have come from Melbourne. This is their first time to Tasmania and we welcome them to the Legislative Council.

Members - Hear, hear.

Housing Tasmania Program - Property Sales

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

[2.46 p.m.]

Under the Housing Tasmania program, can the Leader provide answers to the following questions -

- (1) In 2010-14, how many properties were sold?
- (2) How many were sold to low-income earners through HomeShare and Streets Ahead?
- (3) What was the total sales value invested back into the Housing capital investment program?
- (4) In 2014-18, how many properties were sold?
- (5) How many were sold to low-income earners through HomeShare and Streets Ahead?
- (6) What was the total sales value invested back into the Housing capital investment program?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Pembroke for her question. Former public housing properties are sold when the property is no longer useful for meeting current housing needs. This has been a longstanding practice. Since 2014, the Hodgman Liberal Government has sold less property than under the previous Labor-Greens government. Of those properties sold, more have been delivered to low- and middle-income earners. In many cases the properties sold are old stock in locations of low demand and require considerable expense to make them suitable for older people or people living with disability.

These properties are often purchased as affordable housing through Streets Ahead and HomeShare. Properties not purchased under these programs are sold on the open market. All proceeds listed were invested into the Housing capital investment program so specific answers to questions are -

- (1) 364.
- (2) 133.
- (3) \$46.4 million.
- (4) 348.
- (5) 210.
- (6) \$53.3 million.

Coroners Prevention Unit, Victoria - Tasmanian Equivalent

**Mr FINCH question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,
Mrs HISCUTT**

[2.48 p.m.]

Given the vital role of coroners in reducing preventable deaths in Tasmania -

- (1) Does Tasmania have an equivalent of Victoria's Coroners Prevention Unit - CPU? As the minister is no doubt aware, Victoria's unit brings the work of coroners' teams together to look at fatal trends and recommends ways to alleviate them.
- (2) If Tasmania does not have the equivalent of Victoria's Coroners Prevention Unit, how is the important work of coroners given maximum effect?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Rosevears for his question.

- (1) Tasmania does not have an equivalent of Victoria's Coroners Protection Unit; however, it is clear coroners play a vital role in reducing preventable deaths in Tasmania.
- (2) The equivalent functions of the CPU are undertaken by staff of the Coronial Division at the direction of the Coroner. Through the important work of the coroners themselves, the member would be aware that where the Coroner makes findings and recommendations that pertain to government functions in Tasmania, the Government will carefully consider any such findings and recommendations and implement changes accordingly.

As an example, I draw the honourable member's attention to the findings handed down by the Coroner on 30 June 2017 in relation to the deaths of three people in the custody of the Tasmania Prison Service in 2015. After the Coroner's report was handed down, careful consideration was given to the Coroner's findings and recommendations, with all 10 recommendations relating directly to the TPS being supported in principle. Three of the recommendations have been fully implemented by the TPS, while the other seven are in progress and are being treated as a high priority.

Action was promptly taken; for example, to improve the management of suicide and self-harm risk during prisoner transport through a review of the seatbelts used in the prisoner escort vehicles, and subsequent replacement of the seatbelts in Hobart and Launceston escort vehicles.

Bail and Offences

**Mr DEAN question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,
Mrs HISCUTT**

[2.51 p.m.]

My question relates to offenders subject to bail.

- (1) What are the numbers of persons charged with crimes, offences while on bail from both the Criminal Court and the Magistrates Court for the financial years 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17?
- (2) What are the numbers of breaches of bail for the similar financial years?
- (3) Will electronic monitoring be considered or used as a condition of bail in some cases?
- (4) If it is, where are we at with that? Is it miles away or going to happen quickly?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his question.

- (1) A fulsome response to this question would require coordination and data matching of data extracted from information systems maintained by the Supreme Court, the Magistrates Court and Tasmania Police. This process is likely to take some time, so to this end the member would be welcome to put the question on the Notice Paper or work with the Attorney-General's Office to possibly refine the request of the data that he is looking for.

Mr Dean - It is normally in the annual report. It is not in this one.

Mrs HISCUTT - I will leave question (2) until last.

- (3) Legislative amendments to allow electronic monitoring as a condition of bail are being considered as part of the Government's commitment to overhaul Tasmanian bail laws. The member may be aware that a review of bail laws in Tasmania was announced by the Government in March 2017. The intention of the Government is to reform the Bail Act 1994 to ensure that community safety is the primary consideration when bail is considered, and that there is greater transparency in bail decisions. The Government will move to introduce a clear statutory framework of what the court will consider when granting bail, as has been done in other Australian jurisdictions.

A position paper making a range of proposals for the reform of bail law was released in January this year. Proposal 11 in the position paper is that the Bail Act 1994 should include -

A non-exhaustive list of the conditions that might be imposed on an accused person who is admitted to bail. One condition to be included in this list is electronic monitoring.

- (4) If amendments are made to the Bail Act 1994 to admit electronic monitoring as a condition of bail, the Government will ensure that infrastructure and resources are in place to ensure

appropriate monitoring. Resources and infrastructure are already being developed in Tasmania to electronically monitor family violence perpetrators and offenders subject to home detention orders.

- (2) The answer to this question contains a lot of graph information. Mr President, I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Table incorporated as follows -

Act Name	Act Section	Financial Year			Total
		2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	
Bail Act 1994	Section 9 - Breach of bail	1515	2248	2195	5958
	Section 9 - Breach of bail conditions	26	23	29	78
	Section 5(4) - Fail to Appear	578	791	765	2134
	Section 5(4) - Contravene conditions of a Notice	262	412	399	1073
	Section 11(1)(b) - Supreme Court Warrant of Arrest	68	43	28	139
	Section 24C - Relevant Contravention - No Offence		1		1
Total		2449	3518	3416	9383

Tables shows Magistrates Court number of defendants convicted of charges in ANZSOC Group 1523: Breach of Bail

Count	Financial Year			Total
	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	
Unique defendants	1086	1403	1379	3868

The table above identifies the number of charges of breach of bail, breaches police bail (contravention of a notice), and also identifies a number of individual defendants convicted of charges of breaching bail, in the Magistrates Court.

Roadworks - Tasman A3 Highway

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

[2.54 p.m.]

I indicated yesterday that I would continue to follow up this issue.

What is the current status of the roadworks and signage on the initially identified lay-by areas of the Tasman A3 Highway, including - and particularly - the east coast and Great Eastern Drive, to facilitate safe overtaking areas for all road users?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for McIntyre for her question.

The first projects to upgrade Great Eastern Drive are scheduled for delivery over the next two construction seasons, with construction of the Cherry Tree Hill passing lane at Glen Gala and junction improvements between Dianas Basin and St Helens scheduled to commence this year, the 2018-19 financial year.

During the state election campaign early this year, the Hodgman Liberal Government also committed a further \$1 million over the next five years for further upgrades to Great Eastern Drive. Planning and development for this work will be undertaken in consultation with stakeholders, including local members of parliament, to determine the best locations for future improvements.

TASMANIAN HEALTH SERVICE BILL 2018 (No. 3)

The House of Assembly advised that it had agreed to the Legislative Council amendment.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from above.

[2.57 p.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, before the break, I was talking about tourism, and about killing the goose that lays the golden tourism egg. One of the pleasing aspects of what the Government has done, and continues to do, is to have the Premier as the Minister for Tourism. Recently we had the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania conference in Launceston - perhaps it was held there because of its central location. In talking to the delegates, I noted how their confidence and sense of worth and pride in their industry is boosted by knowing that the Premier is the Minister for Tourism and that their industry is given that importance within Cabinet because he holds that portfolio. In his new Cabinet, the Premier reappointed himself to that position, and some would say, 'Why wouldn't you, because it is very much a positive element of what the Government does.' Apart from that, just the fact the Premier is there as their representative in Cabinet is very important to the tourism industry, and they appreciate that.

They are also appreciative of the way in which the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania conducted the conference, with wonderful speakers over a couple of days. There is a lot of training. The delegates can come together and it is very important for the industry to have that focus for what it is doing and achieving - not so much dealing with the past but looking forward. There was a lot of positivity in that gathering and a great opportunity for networking within the industry as well. That strengthens their sense of being in this together.

It is a big industry. Although they work in little silos in whatever aspect of tourism they are working in, here they can come together and see that they are part of a bigger picture that benefits

not only them but their state and the industry generally. I salute the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania. I have put the report of its recent survey on the Notice Paper. I intend to call that on 12 June 2018 when we resume to have that debate about tourism and the figures that came out in that survey result. I think everybody has a copy of that report and I know that the new Chair of Committees would have read it twice.

Ms Forrest - I don't recall getting a copy.

Mr FINCH - If it is not there yet, it is coming. I refer to something that occurred over lunch. We went to the latest report of the Auditor-General. Members of the upper House were there, seven of us in attendance, and I am sure those who were there will correct me if I stray from the facts of the matter. I, as do other honourable members, salute the work of the Auditor-General's Office, and what it represents in our system of processes that keep the departments and agencies up to par and its help in scrutinising departments on behalf of the Tasmanian taxpayer. This one today was of concern.

It was a follow-up on the security of information and communications technology infrastructure, and they chose four departments to refer back to. The objective of the audit was to form conclusions on the extent to which recommendations made in those four reports had been implemented, and the appropriateness of the rationale or evidence to support non-implementation. Interestingly they have come up with a new method of highlighting those aspects of their recommendations. Although it is a small frame I am showing you, it is colour-coded: green represents full implementation of the recommendations; blue represents partial implementation, 75 per cent or greater; orange represents partially implemented, below 75 per cent; and red, not implemented.

A couple of areas were not implemented so they are in the red colour zone - DPIPWE and the Department of Health and Human Services. That is of crucial concern to some honourable members. You are dealing with medical records and all sorts of private information.

Ms Forrest - Not only that, they had not adopted any of the recommendations in full, and none even partially. They were all less than 75 per cent, or not implemented at all.

Mr Valentine - They did it partially.

Ms Forrest - Some were less than 75 per cent. There was real concern about cyber security.

Mr FINCH - That is tomorrow's headline. The Auditor-General's conclusion is that ICT security is a critical risk, the impacts of which have been played out regularly in the media. He also said that they expected state entities to place a high priority on addressing this risk and leading the way in the implementation of risk mitigation strategies.

This is of great concern. The Auditor-General's work is carried out independently. It behoves the departments given these recommendations to take them seriously. It is in support of the work they are doing. It is an independent assessment. When you are in the system, you become used to what is happening and say, 'We are getting by, that is okay', but when somebody comes in and says, 'It is not okay, you are not doing what you are supposed to', you have to take that very seriously.

Ms Forrest - The other concerning thing about this was the original report was done back in 2015. When the Auditor-General undertook the audit, he did not publish it straightaway because it

would have exposed those departments to significant risk of cyber attack. He delayed it until they were able to fix some of the problems they had. It increases the level of concern to have these recommendations and have one department in particular not to have implemented any of them.

Mr FINCH - Here we are three years later and they are in the red. In anybody's terms it is not good. It is a negative, but I will highlight how positively we regard the work of the Auditor-General's Office and how well it completes and presents its reports to us.

Mr Dean - It would be interesting to know if there were any breaches within DHHS in the meantime, in this period from 2015 until now.

Mr FINCH - Yes. That might be a question to come from the media to the Auditor-General.

Turning to training: the promise to address Tasmania's shortage of skilled labour by ensuring young people have the opportunity to undertake apprenticeships or traineeships is most welcome. Those of us who are a bit long in the tooth hark back to those times when apprenticeships were a focus and part of what the future might represent for young people coming through the education system. To a certain extent it is paid lip service, but it does not have the fulsome approach it had when we were younger.

I look forward to seeing further details on these proposed centres of excellence that are going to occur in agriculture, the trades, water and hospitality. I am not sure if trades and water are combined. That is the way it was written.

Mr Willie - Trades and water are together.

Mr FINCH - You only had to see the tents on the parliamentary lawn a few weeks ago to realise Tasmania has a housing crisis. The Government's plans go some way to address this, but not far enough.

I talked to a group this morning that is allowing a homeless man to sleep in a toilet block in their building because he has nowhere to go. The system is not caring for him. The person allowing him to do that is knocking down doors trying to find some support for this person and it is not forthcoming. This person sleeps on cold concrete outside their building and due to the extreme weather we had on Monday night, they allowed him to sleep in their toilet block. It would be the most comfortable shelter he has had in many a long day, except when he was in prison. That is another story. The point is, that to me is -

Ms Forrest - It is a sad indictment on our restorative justice system if that is where he ends up when he comes out.

Mr FINCH - Who picks these people up? The system will tell us, 'You go to this, you go to that'. This bloke has been duckshoved. The person who is advocating for him is being duckshoved. As it is, with all her efforts he is no further down the track. He is sleeping in the toilet because the system will not care for him.

Mr Dean - There are some people you cannot help at all.

Mr FINCH - I realise that.

Mr Dean - There are those who want to be homeless and the police can tell you that. They do not want the system. They do not want help. That is their life.

Mr FINCH - I understand that. I realise I am touching on an individual case and I am suggesting the system is failing when they have probably tried. The person who is advocating is befuddled about the system not taking care of this chap because it does not have anything in place to take on this chap and his concerns.

I know this myself from advocating for a person in respect of Housing Tasmania. I have dealt with it at budget Estimates and found the system wanting. He is getting better support, but it took quite a journey to get there.

Mr Dean - You have a number in Launceston doing everything; you see them around, but they sleep out.

Mr FINCH - The particular case I am talking about is with Housing Tasmania, and being dealt with appropriately. Anglicare's recent report on rental affordability is probably a dismal snapshot of our sorry situation. A summary of Anglicare's report noted that in keeping with the trend findings across recent years, the 2018 snapshot highlights both decreasing affordability, and an overall contraction in the private rental market. The lack of affordable rental options is particularly stark in the southern region of the state where it was found that half, of the 14 low income household types examined were no longer affordable rental options amongst all properties advertised in the south of the state on the weekend of the 24th and 25th of March this year. The situation, as depicted in the snapshot reflects what Anglicare's observes in its housing and other services throughout the state.

The summary went on to say that too many Tasmanian families are now entirely excluded from the security of an affordable home. The impact, that not just felt at a personal level, but will increasingly become a barrier to our state achieving positive outcomes in the range of other areas such as health, employment, education and justice.

That was the point the member for Elwick was making earlier: the foundation must be there to help the other situations build on that and the last sentence points out the negative effect of the shortage of affordable homes on the health, the employment, the education and the justice. It is highly significant, Mr President. Education and health services are also listed as a priority. On education I quote our Tasmanian economist, Saul Eslake, in a report entitled *Saul Eslake's vision for Tasmania in 2050*, where he points out that we are on the bottom rung of the ladder of Australian states and territories ranked by economic performance. This seems in stark contrast with the glowing impression of Tasmania's situation in the Governors speech. In the last financial year Mr Eslake says Tasmanian household disposable income averaged just over \$41 000 a person. Almost \$7000 or 14% below the national average. Tasmanians are the poorest people in the nation, because of our longstanding poor economic performance. Gross state product is 22% below the national average, and the lowest of any state or territory.

Just to counter any tendency for despair from those figures, quoting another two paragraphs from Saul Eslake's 'vision', it doesn't have to be like that -

We can make choices, today, that will enable a higher proportion of our population, of any age, to find employment. We can make choices which will ultimately lead to a higher proportion of the jobs which we do have, being full,

rather than part-time. And we can make choices which will eventually enable those Tasmanians who do have jobs to produce more value for each hour that they work ... and thus earn higher wages and salaries. A lot of those choices are about how much education we want our young people to have, and how we provide it to them, or about how we make up for the inadequate education we've provided to Tasmanians who aren't so young anymore.

Like many others, Mr President -

Ms Forrest - I would add one more thing he has not mentioned - that would be facilitating the return of women to the workforce. That is well documented. If it can increase women's participation, it will improve as well.

Mr FINCH - I have not finished what I was saying, but I will leave that now.

Saul Eslake sees education as the key to Tasmania's economic future. It is apparent that the Government agrees, and the Governor said in her speech -

There will be more support for the early years, which are so critical to a child's development, and greater mental health support in our schools.

For the first time, we will progressively remove school principals from staffing formulas, enabling principals to focus more on school leadership, with extra teachers in the classroom to allow this to happen, starting in schools with the greatest need.

New schools will be built, and other schools significantly redeveloped, in key regions of growth and demand.

My Government will also continue its plan to extend all high schools to Year 12, ending once and for all the notion that school ends at Year 10, and giving students and families choice and the best chance to get ahead in life ...

Mr President, let us hope that is a core promise.

I note also the promise on health services, particularly increasing funding for frontline services, but any mention of the key to Tasmania's health problems - preventive health to keep people out of frontline services - is conspicuously absent.

This Government demonstrates a strong awareness of Tasmania's history as a penal colony. Instead of trying to reduce our prison population, it is intent on making the provision to increase it despite a falling crime rate. There are good arguments for a northern prison - not a problem: to enable closer contact between northern prisoners and families, and of course that gives us a greater rehabilitation factor. I have no argument with that whatsoever. I do have an argument with this conservative Government seemingly obsessed with law and order. This was demonstrated in the last parliament with the failed attempts to bypass our judiciary and pursue mandatory sentencing. I just hope that has gone away. We are getting signals that it is going to come back. I think it will get the same treatment as it got last time.

Mr Dean - There's nothing wrong with making the state safer, is there?

Mr Willie - It might not even get here yet.

Mr FINCH - No, that is why I will not indulge in an argument with the member for Windermere because I am hoping you are right - it will not get here. The message has come from us loud and clear. To trot it out again, to bash up the Legislative Council again, or the 'Labor bloc' again is going to be demeaning for our House - fruitless. Please get the message: we moderates and progressives are saying, 'Leave it out of here; we have had the debate, we don't like it'. Eight of us do not like it.

Conservative governments often use law and order. They use the scares to gain votes but I believe that does not work these days.

Building more prison capacity is all well and good. Of course we need to confine dangerous people away from our communities, but we need to realise that people who do not really need to be confined are just being put into a training facility for further criminality. There are plenty of other penalties that can be applied and it is time we realised that rehabilitation back into communities is by far the cheaper and more productive alternative. I have no problem with stronger bail laws or with criminal declaration laws to ensure that dangerous criminals are not released if they are considered too dangerous to re-enter society. This system is working in other countries, but obviously this system must be administered fairly with adequate safeguards.

I return to my earlier argument. The prison system must be designed to confine only those who are a danger to society. Other law-breakers can be penalised in other ways and the stress must be on bringing them back as productive members of society. That is more just and it is a lot cheaper. I do not see how releasing prisoners by remission is an outdated practice. Given that the emphasis of our justice system should be focused on rehabilitation, as I suggest, and bringing those who have broken the law back into the community as responsible citizens, it seems to me this Government is confused over punishment, deterrents and rehabilitation, let alone creating a situation where crime is prevented in the first place. It could also be argued that the 4000 prison building jobs the Government is promising could be perhaps be better spent on building or improving schools.

As we are a small state with a small population, most of our community has a good relationship with police officers. We know them, we are related to them and we live alongside them. The Government should be doing more to enhance that connection. We have the opportunity to be a low crime state. That is where the emphasis should be with government justice policies. It would enhance Tasmania's international image, too. We are a former penal colony, but let us forget it.

I am probably blessed with my area of the West Tamar. We have been able to develop with the number of police officers we have - seven - a zone and we are really pleased with the way vandalism, theft and criminality is countered. We have a close community; it is similar to Neighbourhood Watch. It is working in our community and we are protective of our community. It is working and we have a very low crime rate. When anything occurs, it is pretty much solved straightaway.

Moving to energy and climate, most recent polls ask voters about their main concerns and they put jobs, health and education at the top of the list. Climate change concerns used to be up there but many people have given up because they see little government action or coordination. However, there is one highly significant paragraph in the Governor's speech -

Over the next four years, my Government has targets and plans to:

ensure zero net emissions, make Tasmania 100 per cent energy self-sufficient and break links with the National Electricity Market to ensure Tasmania has the lowest regulated electricity prices in the country.

Tasmania is way ahead with hydro-electricity, wind and solar farms progressing, and the increasing profusion of solar panels on our home roofs. Fantastic. I put 40 panels on my house, on the one roof. An island with zero net emissions is another plus in how the world and international visitors will view us.

I believe we are doing well in a world beset by climate change. However, Tasmania seems to be increasingly affected by extreme weather events. There is not much we can do about these except to manage them as best we can. We seem to be able to handle that. I salute the SES, police and emergency services people who respond when we have these dramatic events in our community. They do a fantastic job. A lot of them are volunteers and we appreciate their work.

Given our progress in non-carbon emitting energy, we need to plan to use it more wisely. Perhaps there should be government support for electric vehicles, especially because a lot of us would have vague memories of the trolley buses and electric trams we used to have. Members may remember the bus going down to Sandy Bay, always in Macquarie Street, on the corner as they pulled out of their bus stop. The driver would have to step out and reconnect the things for the powerlines.

Mr Willie - If you ever want to see one again, there are some in the Glenorchy Transport Museum.

Mr FINCH - I saw those when we had an electric tour some time ago. Did you take us there?

Mr Willie - That might have been the previous member for Elwick.

Mr Valentine - There is one buried at Creek Road as well.

Mr FINCH - Yes, I think you are right. I suggest government support to steer visitors into electric or hybrid hire vehicles; there is another point. That would enhance our international image.

I come to gun laws. They need to be under constant revision as the situation changes, but not without full consultation and public discussion. That is why the member for Windermere has his inquiry underway and that can only be a good thing. No government would float ill-considered changes to gun laws on the eve of an election when the Port Arthur massacre is still a haunting memory for a lot of people. If there are to be changes, let them be carefully considered. At least have informed knowledge about firearms. Was the Government talking about Rimfire Semiautomatics or the type of centrefire rifles used by Martin Bryant? There is a vast difference. The Port Arthur massacre was horrific and traumatising. Any talk of gun law changes has to take that into account. It still resonates with the Tasmanian population.

The Governor's speech mentions a growing problem with traffic congestion in Tasmanian. It is a real and growing problem in Hobart at certain times of the day, but it is also a problem in my electorate at Rosevears. You think we live the good life up there but we know traffic congestion. I have 9000 voters in the Launceston City Council area but the rest are in the West Tamar. The council is concerned about congestion on the West Tamar Highway between Legana and

Launceston city. At one point, going home in the evening, a car passes by a house each second. That is a lot of traffic heading home.

The West Tamar Council wants to study and seek solutions. Those could range from major road improvements, more public transport or even a second bridge across the Tamar, which has been mentioned by the Government. The first step, the West Tamar Council suggests, is a comprehensive study seeking solutions to the current and forecast congestion problems on the West Tamar Highway between Legana and Launceston city. The estimated cost of that study would be about \$250 000. I do not want to say it is small beer, but it is money that will be invested wisely in giving us an understanding of the traffic problems we have now and how we can ameliorate those in the future. That is what we have to think about.

What is going to happen? We keep attracting people to west Tamar. They are coming there to live and energise and to enjoy a great lifestyle. More and more are moving to the west Tamar, particularly people from interstate. It means more traffic on the roads. Legana has a population of about 2500 now and that is projected to reach 10 000 in the near future. The council is doing a lot to develop that area.

A lot of the West Tamar Council's wish list comes in under \$500 000 dollars. They include stage 1 of a recreation corridor from Launceston city to Legana. Connectivity already exists between the city and Tailrace Park, and between the Windsor Community Precinct and Tamar Highway. That ability to walk, run and cycle separated from the West Tamar Highway will bring enormous community benefit. Many years ago, I talked about having that opportunity to start walking in Launceston and make your way, unimpeded by traffic on the West Tamar Highway, to Bass Strait, up to Greens Beach through the bush. There are opportunities to do that, and while it sounds a bit pie in the sky, it would be a fantastic situation to have this walk for people to enjoy their recreation.

The council also wants a roundabout built at the intersection of the West Tamar Highway and at Glen Ard Mohr Road at Exeter. That intersection is heavily used by students, parents and staff of the Exeter primary and high schools. So it is very busy at school times, coming and going.

Mr Armstrong - And Nigel's Butchery.

Mr FINCH - Nigel's Butchery is up the road, with people pulling in to get those beautiful sausages.

Their priorities include a problem with land stability on a section of the West Tamar Highway between Rosevears Drive and McEwan's Road at Legana. The final project on the council's under-\$500,000 wish list is the extension of the Glen Ard Mohr Road in Exeter to create a link to Gravelly Beach Road. Rather than going out of Exeter, going down Blackwall and then doubling back into Gravelly Beach, the road would go past the school to Gravelly Beach. It is nothing, about a kilometre. For people at Gravelly Beach, shopping and egress and ingress from school would be made much easier. This is no-brainer, but of course it has to be funded and provided for.

But there are another two more expensive projects. The duplication of the West Tamar Highway near Legana and the upgrade of the highway through Lanena, which the council says is substandard and dangerous for pedestrians. In previous speeches I have banged on about this particular location often enough. It is very narrow and I am surprised more rear-vision mirrors are not knocked off by passing buses and trucks. Young families in the area are pushing their prams

along a gravel sidewalk about a metre from fast-moving trucks, including log trucks. A bizarre situation.

Over on the other side, there is a ditch as deep as the table here, on the side of the road with no walkway in between. If you slip off the side of the road, down you go into a big ditch. I hope this is on the radar and will be progressed. That is at Lanena, just before Exeter.

To GST funding: it has been suggested that government employees in Tasmania are paid less than in any other state or territory. It has been reported over six years that the total cost to Tasmania in lost GST because of lower public sector wages is \$816 million. It has also been suggested the Tasmanian Government's 2 per cent wages cap delivers no benefit to the budget, but invokes a substantial hit, not only to workers' incomes, but also to the economy as a whole.

On jobs: it seems the situation is not as rosy as the Government's speech suggests. Tasmania is shedding jobs overall, but full-time jobs in relation to part-time ones are increasing. Tasmania lost 300 jobs in March and April. Job figures are a nonsense to many people, because you only have to work a few hours a week to be classed as employed. But encouragingly, full-time jobs seem to be on the increase - however, if you look at youth unemployment, particularly in the north-west, you become despondent again.

Mrs HISCUTT - In Burnie, the figures used to be around 20 per cent youth unemployment, but have dropped to 11. Though they are still high, they are certainly not as high as they used to be.

Mr FINCH - Some aspect of the Tasmanian economy give us hope. Money may not be everything, but let us not forget Tasmanians are the poorest people in the nation, with a gross state product 22 per cent below the national average and household disposable income 14 per cent below the national average.

Unless we stuff it up, we Tasmanians have a beautiful natural environment. Our environment and our small population allow us the best natural recreational opportunities in the country. Money may not be everything, and we may not need as much as those who live in the big mainland cities, but we need to create jobs for our young people, low-cost housing, a better health system and eliminate poverty in Tasmania. Above all the strongest message from what I have said is that we need to give our young people the best education possible in Australia.

I have enjoyed debates with the minister, Mr Rockliff. I look forward to those debates and opportunities for us to offer advice and bring our communities' feelings to the minister, his advisors and the Government so we can help with some guidance.

I would like to salute the Gravelly Beach Foreshore Committee in my area. Barry Blenkhorn has a committee called the Gravelly Beach Foreshore Reclamation and Beautification Committee. Reclamation is another word thrown in, making this an elaborate description, but they have and are looking to improve even more of the Gravelly Beach foreshore. They want to open the area up and make it more accessible to the public; it is a lovely recreation spot for the Tasmanian community.

The improvement committees in my area sponsored by the West Tamar Council are at Beauty Point, Exeter and Beaconsfield. There are others - the council is very proactive in supporting the beautification of our electorate. Beauty Point received a cruise ship visit recently, and this was a great experience for the community and gave it focus. I went to a meeting in preparation for the

cruise ship and at least 50 people turned up to lend their weight. I offered my support for the visit, but they said, 'We will call you', so I appreciate the community not calling on me to bring my tremendous amount of influence to what was happening. It turned out to be a huge success.

Speaking about Exeter, the services club there is being refurbished. This used to be the RSL club but is now the community centre, which is being refurbished. Federal government money was coming into the community to refurbish it. It is shut down until November, but it will be a fantastic community facility when reopened.

I have an important message for members to hear. Once I have your attention, I will proceed with my advice -

Mrs Hiscutt - I never stopped listening.

Mr FINCH - It is okay, because before the election promises were made to community groups - offers of money to those community groups if the Government were re-elected. I hope those promises are not complicated or truncated and are fulfilled by the Government. If they are not, the Government will suffer harshly in people's estimation of its honesty with those promises. I know in my area money was offered, but now there is some doubt about the size of the offer. There was an offer here, one there, and they have to be brought together, so it will perhaps only be the one offer, which will be a little bit lower than we were expecting. If those promises do not come to fruition for the communities, it will be a black mark against the Government. I tell the Government: you made the promises in good faith, the community expects them to be honoured - please honour them.

Mr Willie - Anecdotally, in my electorate a lot of promises were made to different organisations so I will be watching that closely too.

Mr FINCH - It is important for the parliamentary system and for the Government. If they go to the election with promises and offers of money, those promises and offers should be honoured.

There is one thing that the members for Windermere and for Launceston will be interested in. Our offices are close to the changes taking place in Civic Square in Launceston. LINC is very closely connected to that area and it has been clearly indicated to LINC Tasmania that incorporation of the word 'library' in the name is going to be important and will make it far clearer for all people, locals and visitors alike. It will be consistent with all institutions around the world. When they come to Tasmania and are looking for a library, people scratch their heads - 'You have to go to the LINC.' LINC does not mean anything to visitors. The refurbishment in Launceston follows redevelopment at the LINC in 2015. Since reopening the library, its visits have increased, different to the general trend across Tasmania and globally. Within the building, the staff have observed changed behaviour. People have moved from just borrowing or just researching to using other activities that are available and, of course, it is a prime place for social meeting.

Mr Dean - And for a cup of coffee.

Mr FINCH - Anecdotally, people are taking the opportunity to go to the cafe there, but also accessing the services and attending the programs and holiday events that occur there. This is traditionally a cohort that is most difficult to attract into a library, but in Launceston they are able to do it.

Mr Dean - I think the opening of Civic Square and the change to that will probably bring more people there as well.

Mr Valentine - They can meet their local members not far from there, too.

Mr FINCH - We appreciate visits but on a rostered basis.

Mr Dean - In fact we will be closer because we will be downstairs soon.

Mr FINCH - There are coffee spaces and meeting rooms which previously had little or no interaction. Room hire revenue at the library has tripled. I look forward to the change of name. We have had the refurbishment so away we go. Things look bright on that front.

Thank you, honourable members, for your attention.

[3.43 p.m.]

Mr ARMSTRONG (Huon) - Mr President, I first congratulate the member for Hobart on his re-election and the member for Prosser on her election. Welcome to you, Jane, and well done, Rob.

Today I have listened to many issues raised both in support of the Government and not so supportive of it. Overall I believe the state is much better placed now than it was four years ago, but there is still a lot of work for the Government to do.

It was pleasing to see some money being promised for infrastructure in my electorate of Huon during the election. The Huon electorate contributes so much to this state's economy from industries such as aquaculture, forestry, tourism and agriculture, but our infrastructure has not grown with these industries.

The last time I remember any significant amount of money being spent in the Huon electorate was by the previous Labor government, and that was only after lobbying from residents, industry and the council. That was only about \$8 million, if my memory is correct. Before that, I think it was the Lennon Labor government that upgraded Glen Huon Road as part of the Southwood development.

The aquaculture industry is an industry going ahead in leaps and bounds, although there has been some objection to it on the east coast. If not for this industry in my electorate, we would have a higher rate of unemployment. It is a good industry and the Government and Opposition, from what I have seen, have been supportive of it. We heard the member for Rosevears speak about people moving to his area. The aquaculture industry is bringing people to the Huon Valley to work and live, which is good for the community.

Mr Dean - How many people work in the aquaculture industry in the Huon area?

Mr ARMSTRONG - I am not sure; it varies because Huon Aquaculture moved its processing plant to Parramatta Creek. Tassal has a fluctuation of employees during busy times of the year for its processing plant in Huonville.

When I say that our infrastructure is not growing with our industries, our roads are still in need of major repairs. This includes both the Huon and Channel highways. They are, I believe, substandard for the traffic they carry for these industries and residents. When the Tahune Airwalk was built by Forestry in 2001, 150 000 visitors visited that facility when it was opened. I believe

over 50 000 people visit it annually. A little work was done by the previous Labor government but those highways need major upgrades. They are substandard for the amount of traffic they carry.

Focusing on our stone fruit industry and strawberry farms, the other week I met with a strawberry farmer and he told me he had over \$1 million-worth of fruit drop on the ground because he could not find pickers. A cherry farmer down the road had the same problem. When a farmer has fruit ready to harvest and then it drops on the ground, it is gut-wrenching. The federal government has been down and talked to him, but it was over \$1 million-worth of fruit. He had the orders sitting on the desk ready to fill, but he could not find the fruit pickers so he could harvest it.

Mr Dean - It is sad when you look at the unemployment we have.

Mr ARMSTRONG - I visited Tim Reid's packing shed for cherries from the Derwent Valley and the Huon, and he has up to 800 staff working at one time. You could imagine what the wages were. Without backpackers, it would not be harvested.

Mr Finch - Mr President, in the member for Windermere's area there is a fruit growing opportunity for strawberries, blueberries et cetera. The grower has developed a relationship with Tonga. He has been there and developed a relationship with a community in Tonga. Those people come every year for about five or six months. He has them on their best behaviour; he brings in the ones who are workers, they come and develop that opportunity to earn money and take it back to their country.

I will sow this seed with you. Some months ago I had a request at a CPA gathering in Sydney from a delegate from Vanuatu who was interested in the same sort of arrangement. I am happy to progress that idea with you. A relationship could be developed between your grower and the community in Vanuatu, along similar lines. They could cover the area that needs to be covered, where you cannot find your local employees.

Mr ARMSTRONG - This grower is talking about planting less fruit. What is the use of planting it if you cannot find pickers to harvest it? He has talked to different people to develop it, and been on the internet doing advertising. They just do not come.

Mr Finch - This might be a way to develop a relationship outside the normal way of recruiting people.

Mr ARMSTRONG - One reason we might have this problem is the backpackers tax fiasco a couple of years ago. We were told that year it would not affect us but it could be a year or two down the track. I understand the state Government and Opposition have their hands tied as far as backpackers' taxation and visas are concerned, but some serious lobbying of their federal colleagues might be helpful in alleviating the problem. I am not too sure. Perhaps the tax rates could be advertised overseas in the countries affected or whatever else might be possible.

A loading facility for wood fibre at Dover is another other area of concern. It has been on the books for a long time that we need a facility in southern Tasmania to load wood fibre. We already have a group of people from Dover and surrounding areas coming out against it before the application has been lodged with the council. They do not even know what the development is. I imagine it is going to come to the council in the next few months and hopefully it will receive approval. From what I understand, it is only for plantation timber.

I am a believer in majority government, whether it be Liberal or Labor. Over the years we have seen the party that has not been in a minority government coalition enjoying the support of the majority of Tasmanians at the following election, and that is the case now. I have heard about governments being open and transparent, and this seems to happen when we have a majority government. This is possibly because the senior party does not have to appease its minority partners. That is my observation; I might be completely wrong. The previous forestry deal was a perfect example of that. Nobody could get the true information regarding it and if you did, it was leaked through some source. That is history now. Let us hope we do not see a minority government again. I suppose it will happen, but both parties have said they will not be a part of it. Let us hope they stick to their word.

Mr Dean - The TFA was a real shemozzle. It created many problems.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Moving to Bruny Island, perhaps members have read about or heard about the car park at the observation area at the Neck. I heard people saying on the radio that it spoiled the natural beauty of the area, so I made it my business to talk to some people from Bruny Island. They said it was the best thing that ever happened. People, the tourists, used to park all along the side of the road, which cut the road back to one lane - and I am talking about a long distance. The residents said it has made it a lot safer for pedestrians and vehicles, and they could not understand what all the fuss was about.

There was a big picture in the *Mercury*, and I heard people talking about it on one of the radio stations. Interestingly, a resident from Bruny Island called in and more or less told the radio announcer he did not know what he was talking about. He said he was a long-term resident on Bruny Island and the situation at the Neck was so dangerous somebody was going to be killed there.

As I stated, I believe the reason the economy is going okay is because we have majority government. It has been asked whether we need to increase the number of members and change from the current Hare-Clark system and electorate boundaries to achieve majority governments in the future. That is questionable. At the same time, this Chamber could also come into scrutiny regarding election cycles and boundaries, but that is a question for another time. I thank members for giving me their time.

[3.55 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, I was either the forward scout or the tail-end Charlie while I was in the military, and here I am once again as tail-end Charlie.

I believe I have welcomed and congratulated most on attaining their positions and all those retaining their positions in the Chamber. I look forward to working with them during the next period.

First, as many of you know, I have recently returned from the Frank MacDonald Memorial Prize. I thank the Government for supporting me in representing the Parliament of Tasmania on the Frank MacDonald Memorial Prize trip. It was a wonderful trip; it is eye-opening and emotional for everybody who attends. We had a wonderful group of six students. Also, for returned servicemen, it brings back a little bit of what they have been through themselves - especially when you look at the Western Front - so it becomes very emotional. I had some difficulties at certain times during this trip. I tried for 14 years to get on the trip, and I was successful with the Government's help last year.

There are a few points or comments some people have made. The funding is right and I thank the member for Rosevears and his comments. Where the Government has said during the campaign to the groups that there will be funding for certain things, it has to stand up and deliver. If it does not, its credibility will become wanting; it has been questioned and it is not to its best benefit. In my view, the Government needs to deliver. As the member for Elwick said, we will be watching it very closely. Having said that, a promise was made.

Ms Rattray - I have every election commitment in this red folder.

Mr DEAN - Well done. I need to get it as well. There was a promise made for funding of the RSL at George Town to buy their own premises. As people might recall, they had to sell off their RSL building in George Town because of financial issues and moved into a part of the Memorial Hall. The local government there was excellent in accommodating the RSL sub branch office. Now the RSL has bought a building across the road and the Government is honouring that promise as we speak. That is one campaign statement that has been honoured already.

Ms Rattray - What has happened with the old RSL building?

Mr DEAN - It has been purchased by a private individual or company, I am not sure, I believe from Sydney. At this stage it is still vacant and nothing has been done to it for a long time. I am not sure what is planned there.

Ms Rattray - It is a prime location.

Mr DEAN - You are right. The member for Mersey referred to the amount of legislation supported through this place in the past four-year period. We are talking about the time of the Liberal Government. Of course the majority of legislation will go through this place, and a lot of it goes through fairly quickly after we have looked at it. Most of that legislation is relatively minor or it is not controversial in any way and it gets through. The greater part of the legislation coming into this place fits into those categories - probably 80 or 90 per cent of it.

It is the remaining percentage of legislation that comes here that creates concerns and ruffles feathers. Mainly that is legislation that has been campaigned on, in the greater majority heavily, by in this case the Liberal Party, during and just prior to its election to its first term of government four years ago. It is that legislation that has created the concerns. When you look at what has happened in 16 years of Labor government and a Labor-Greens-led government, we saw only two bills introduced by Labor and the Labor-Greens government that were knocked out.

One of those that was knocked out was the same-sex marriage bill, from memory. I could be wrong. We did not have jurisdiction, in my view, to satisfy that matter, which was later proven by the High Court when it ruled that the ACT did not have the right to proceed on its own. If you look at that -

Ms Forrest - That is rubbish.

Mr Gaffney - Are you saying two over those 16 years?

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Mr Gaffney - That is not the information I have from Parliamentary Research.

Mr DEAN - I did the research. There were four matters referred to in the research I got back. I do not have it here. but I think one related to a private member's bill that was defeated. Have a look at those in the Parliamentary Library. You have that but check further.

Mr Willie - Bills rejected under the Labor government were one, two, three, four, five.

Mr DEAN - Let me tell you that document is not right.

Mr Willie - It is from the Parliamentary Research Service.

Mr DEAN - I went back to the Parliamentary Library because from my memory, when I read that I thought, 'This is not absolutely right, there is something wrong here.' I went back to the Parliamentary Library through Dr Stait to have those figures looked at and checked again, and the documentation I now have, in my office, identifies there were six bills during the four-year reign of the Liberal Party that were knocked out in this place.

Ms Forrest - In the 14 years, you are saying?

Mr DEAN - No, I am saying that in the Liberals' four-year reign in this place six bills were knocked out while in the 16 years of the Labor and the Labor-Greens government, two bills were knocked out. Other bills -

Mr Willie - How did you vote in that period? When Labor was in government, do you know how you voted on division?

Mr DEAN - I am in a position of supporting the government of the day.

Mr Willie - I have done some research into your voting patterns. On divisions you actually voted against the government 62.5 per cent of the time. More often than not, you voted against the government of the day.

Mr DEAN - It was probably necessary in the circumstances. I do not know. What we are looking at is the amount of legislation that this place has tossed out. I have referred to that, and the member for Mersey might want to check that as well.

Mr Gaffney - There were eight bills actually in 2014-18, not six.

Ms Forrest - How many of those related to the one policy position?

Mr DEAN - You have to make sure that private members' bills are not reflected in that as well. When I had the first report back on the Labor Party time, there were four bills, but when you look closer at that, one was a private member's bill and I am not sure what the other one was.

Mr Gaffney - I can tell you the bills if you want. It is up-to-date research by Parliamentary Research Service. There are eight and they are all there.

Mr DEAN - Member for Elwick, I would need to check those figures.

Mr Willie - You can check the figures all you like. Some might have called you a blocker in previous governments.

Mr DEAN - We are talking about the whole 16-year period. I went against them during a Labor-Greens period because I was not satisfied with a lot of the legislation coming through. I had concerns. I need to look at the remaining period to see how I went. I will check that.

Mr Finch - The figures are distorted. The Council votes are only counted on the divisions. You can vote at other times in support of the government's legislation but that support of the government is not registered. That is where distortion comes in, which is unfair on the numbers.

Mr DEAN - That is why I would need to check these numbers. The suggestion of around 60 per cent might be on the divisions and I suspect it is.

Mr Willie - It is. I said that 62.5 per cent of the time, under previous governments, you voted against the government.

Mr DEAN - I would like to know how many divisions there were during that time. If you look at 62 per cent, it is a huge number. If you look at the number of divisions during that time, it might have only been 20 divisions, I do not know. That is why I need to check those figures. They mean nothing in the way they have been presented at this time.

Other points were raised by honourable members. The member for Launceston mentioned the roundabouts. Members talked about the Mowbray Roundabout, the connector off the East Tamar Highway and the Alanvale Connector off the East Tamar Highway. In answers to questions provided to me, the Government said it is looking at putting traffic lights at that intersection at Mowbray. I am not supportive of traffic lights. While traffic lights probably decrease the danger to some degree, they do not extinguish it at all. Sadly, we have many accidents at traffic-controlled intersections and junctions, and that is a junction there. It is not the best way to go. I urge the Department of State Growth to have another look. I am not sure what stage they are at.

Mr Finch - What is this one?

Mr DEAN - A large roundabout was suggested, and I suspect they have had problems obtaining the land because of the Grammar rowing sheds. They are probably hard-pressed to find sufficient land to do that and that could be a problem. I would have thought a roundabout was much better because that area is subject to heavy fogs, not that Launceston has many fogs. It is a fairly dangerous intersection and we need to make it as safe as can be in all circumstances.

Mr Finch - When you come out of Mowbray and you want to turn right -

Mr DEAN - That is out at Alanvale.

Mr Finch - No, this is at the Grammar boatsheds, where you come out of Mowbray and want to turn right -

Mr DEAN - It is horrendous, you are right. Traffic lights will improve that manoeuvre. It is not the best way to go.

I had a meeting with the taxi industry this morning. The taxi industry is in dire trouble. It is time the Department of State Growth and the Government had a good look at what is going on. When you look at Uber, I was told this morning - and I will check these figures as well - there are 700 registered Uber drivers in Hobart. They are impacting on the taxi industry. They are earning

a salary. If the facts and figures given to me this morning are correct, they are earning a pitiful salary, not as much as they would receive from Centrelink. I asked them why on earth they are working. I suggested they line up on the Centrelink dole lines with everybody else and they will have more money. They agree with that.

Mrs Hiscutt - There are eight on call at the moment. The 700 are not there all the time.

Mr DEAN - The taxi personnel said this morning there are 685, or thereabouts, registered Uber drivers. I have not checked it. I took their word at this stage.

Mr Valentine - Taxi drivers register as Uber drivers, too.

Mr DEAN - Some may well do, but they are having a very bad time. I indicated to them that, once again, I will give them some support. It was indicated by the Government when we discussed the bill that it would monitor this closely. I raised the issue of compensation because Tasmania is probably the only state where compensation has not been offered to the taxi fraternity. Victoria and New South Wales have given reasonable compensation. Queensland has, to my knowledge. I am not sure of the others, but most have given them reasonable compensation to buy back some of the licences and to assist and support them. They are in trouble.

Mr Finch - That was about their superannuation.

Mr DEAN - They do not receive superannuation.

Mr Finch - No, but I am speaking about those owners who made the investment in their taxis to secure their future. That has all been blown away with their licences -

Mr DEAN - The value of their licence has fallen apart. One gentleman was telling me this morning he bought his taxi licence for \$150 000 and it is now worth very little. It is no wonder they are screaming out. They are an industry. They said they have had no support from the Liberal Party or the Labor Party whatsoever. Those are the statements made to me this morning, and they are upset about what has happened.

Housing has been mentioned a lot today. My area, and we have the figures on this, has more affordable housing properties than any other electorate in this state. A lot of my work is around finding housing for people who need it, people who are struggling. There are people, and the member for Rosevears mentioned this, out there who really do not want help and would be in a position to find other accommodation if they wanted to. They must be on Centrelink payments. I need to be a bit careful here. One family who were in a tent at the showgrounds came down from Queensland after they were forced out of their accommodation. They came here without accommodation, without a job and wanting immediate help and support. They jumped the queue, as it were.

You have my area. I have the figures here but I will not mention it now because they are probably not up to date. I had many people on what used to be termed the 'Category 1 list' for a long period of time. Why should those people be put off longer for somebody who arrives in this state without accommodation, without a job, without anything else, expecting to be helped before those people? A family came to me the other day and said they have been on the list for so many months trying to find accommodation. Tongue-in-cheek, I told them to put their tent on the showgrounds in Hobart or at some other public place in Launceston and they will receive priority

status for accommodation. That is the way to do it. That is how it seems to me. We need to be careful. We would like to know more about the circumstances of all these people.

Mr Armstrong - One of the people looking for a home had five dogs.

Mr DEAN - Is that right? The full facts at times do not come out and that is pretty disappointing.

I want to mention about a news item last night about bowel cancer screening. I raise this because it is a health issue. When bowel cancer screening messages are sent out to mature people - 50 and over - a lot of people ignore them. I cannot believe people would ignore that message.

I am happy to put my own position forward. I received the package, did the examination and provided the poop necessary. This is the problem - people are too embarrassed. I provided it as required a number of years ago. I then received a priority letter, 'Please see your doctor'. That is all I received. I attended my doctor to be told I had a positive test and needed to see the professional doctors and do what was necessary.

As a result, I had a colonoscopy and a number of polyps removed, one of which would have become cancerous within a fairly short time. That was the result of me undertaking the test. Since then I have had one every four years. It was quite an experience to go through, but it is worth the embarrassment.

When I went in on the first occasion to register at the hospital to have tests done, there was a young lady at the counter. Something happened, and she said, 'Oh, that gives me the SHIs'. I said, 'Should you mention that here? It's affected me all night long'. She then apologised for her comment.

Mr PRESIDENT - There is a special Australia-wide promotion coming soon; the same as a couple of people went to last year.

Mr DEAN - The health department needs to make very strong pleas to people to do the tests sent to them and probably give some examples as to why they should. There are many examples of people who would not be living had they not taken the test.

Mr Valentine - Sometimes the issue is people may have just had a colonoscopy and they have received the package and know everything is okay. So they do not go through with it, as happened to me. You then wait for the next one to come. There is a percentage where that might happen.

Mr DEAN - Roads is the other matter mentioned by Her Excellency the Governor and other members. With works happening on the Midland Highway, the frustrations of driving will be worth it, because already it is a much improved highway.

The works now occurring at Mangalore were originally going to extend from the Commonwealth building - the previous refugee centre - to go straight through and come out the other end of Bagdad. It seems that is now off the radar and the new highway is going to go through Mangalore, as it already does. I will put it on the Notice Paper if I cannot get an answer. People have asked me the question and say the new highway around Bridgewater does not save a lot of time because of where it travels. But, as I said, the new highway was supposed to extend from the Commonwealth -

Mr Farrell - It was planned to, but the money was moved to the Breadalbane area - from one end of the state to the other.

Mr Valentine - It also may have a heritage issue with the Shene Estate.

Mr DEAN - You were on the heritage inquiry, as chair of course. When we had some advice from them, they were concerned about where it was going to go.

Mr Farrell - It was surveyed?

Mr Valentine - It might have been.

Mr DEAN - I was interested in an opinion piece by the honourable Brian Wightman, a former Labor government minister. In an opinion piece in the *Examiner* or the *Mercury*, he made some good comments such as, 'Parliament and parliamentarians should be held in high regard. This is clearly not the case. Why?' That is one of his comments and he is right. I was disappointed when I came out of the police department into this place. I had a fairly high status level in the police service, and I came to this place and found myself below the bottom rung. It disappoints me - we are there, and we ought to pick our game up. More honesty and openness would help.

Brian Wightman also rightly pointed out that politics is not a game - 'It should be taken as an important function required and carried out seriously'. He is absolutely right. I have the greatest admiration for Brian Wightman and always did when he was a minister, albeit we clashed a little on the fox program, but we were always able to talk to one another and accepted each other's position. I admired Brian Wightman

Ms Rattray - When he was the minister, he nearly always came into the Chamber to listen to the debate about bills he had put forward. That was always welcomed.

Mr DEAN - I asked Brian Wightman at the time of the election, 'Why have you not put your hand up?'

Ms Rattray - Because he is probably held in much higher esteem now.

Mr DEAN - More a family situation and he is a great man. I went to Agfest this year, like many others. I was probably glad to leave Agfest, because all I got there were the shemozzles people saw in the parliament. A number of people talked to me about that. The more I tried to convince them we had nothing to do with it in this place, the deeper the water became for me. I had a fist shaken at me about the gun laws and was told politely not to weaken those laws in any way. My wife actually saw it and said, 'Did you see and hear that person?' I said I did, but I was ignoring them. That is about all I got. When you live in the area and are known to a few people, it is bound to happen, so I was glad to leave at about one o'clock in the afternoon.

I want to congratulate the Clerk and his staff for opening day. It was extremely well done with the high professional standards we expect in this place. I congratulate all involved. Many people here on the day mentioned to me that it was a great event to be a part of. The afternoon tea was particularly next to none. It was a brilliant display of the standard we expect and receive from our catering staff. Her Excellency started with the re-election of the Liberal Government and referred to the current economic position of the state. When you consider the time elapsed, it was back in the 1970s that a political party received more than 50 per cent of the primary vote in consecutive elections. It is a milestone - and it is almost half a century. The percentage of primary votes this

time for the Liberal Party was 50.26 per cent - it was slightly higher last time - and the Labor percentage on this occasion was 32.63 per cent. They are to be congratulated on what they achieved and the way in which they conducted themselves during the campaign. I thought it was well done. That is not to say the Labor Party did not do it as well. I thought the campaign was reasonably well conducted by both sides.

Her Excellency also spoke about the current economic position of this state, that it is in a strong economic position and leading the nation in business confidence, export growth, building approvals and international tourism. That list was not inclusive of all areas of success. Clearly, these successes or accomplishments were reflected in the strong vote received by the Government. You might recall that four years ago, at the time of the previous election, things were not going so well, and that is why the Labor Party did not do well in that election. There has been a big changearound. Some people have said a lot of it has been simply good luck and because of things that have happened to help them. That might be so, but what also goes with that, in my view, is management and the way the affairs of the state are being conducted. It is fair to say that it was a combination of things as to why that has probably happened. To say it was all good luck and everything fell right is not the vision I would accept.

The fact there are now more women than men in the House of Assembly was raised also by Her Excellency, and that is a milestone. I need to be careful with what I say.

Members interjecting.

Mr DEAN - It is not about this place having all women or all men or 50:50. If it can be 50:50, that is great, but it is about having the right people, the best people, the people with the required knowledge, capacity and ability to be in this place. That is what it should come down to. I have always said, as I used to say in the police department, if all is equal and there is this imbalance, we should have positive discrimination. I do not have a problem with that; in other words, it falls in favour of the persons to balance the position - normally it was towards females in the police department and that is the policy they had. It was a good policy.

When you look at where people are employed, what emphasis is placed on the area of nursing, for instance? I do not know what the percentage is but I suggest it would be 80:20, probably more 90:10 per cent of women to men in nursing. If you look at teaching, I reckon that would be about 90:10 per cent as well - it is very high for women. What are we doing to get more males into those areas? There is no talk about it; it is never raised.

Ms Lovell - It absolutely is raised.

Mr DEAN - When?

Ms Lovell - There are always campaigns to encourage more men into those professions, and equal pay.

Mr DEAN - Principals do not say they need more men in the area.

Ms Lovell - They should pay the role appropriately for the work they do and they might attract some more men.

Mr DEAN - What are you saying? Are you saying that the women are not paid as much as the men?

Ms Lovell - The gender wage gap is probably not a debate we can have by way of interjection.

Mr DEAN - There is no difference in the pay. A woman teacher and a man teacher in exactly the same level get exactly the same salary.

Ms Lovell - Do you want me to touch on that in my contribution?

Mr DEAN - Absolutely, I do not know where there is any difference in the salary; if there is I would like to know because I wonder how they get away with it.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - Perhaps the member for Windermere could read some research on the gender pay gap and understand that because it is real. We will get back to the contribution.

Mr DEAN - My contribution is exactly on my mind, with the greatest respect, Madam Deputy President.

Teaching was mentioned by Her Excellency at some length, and I will talk more about a couple of issues there. As I understand it, teachers, depending on the level they are on, are given exactly the same salary whatever gender they might be. It does not make any difference.

Ms Armitage - If you want the figures from nursing, analysis of the current population survey data shows that total number of male RNs continues to increase, reaching over 350 000 in the two years to 2016.

Mr DEAN - That is for Australia?

Ms Armitage - They have increased in total numbers. The representation of male full-time equivalent RNs in the workforce has remained steady at 11 per cent over the past five years.

Mr DEAN - Eleven per cent. I said that; about 90:10 so it was not far away.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - If you consider the gender pay gap, the number of males who rise to senior positions, they must get paid more. That is the issue; that is what you need to understand.

Mrs Hiscutt - I believe you were talking about a male nurse being equal to a female nurse and the wage being the same? Is that what you are saying?

Mr DEAN - Yes, that is exactly what I am talking about. I guess people will twist this around to suit their position. That is the point I am making.

Mr Valentine - I think the issue is the fact that there are - or used to be; I do not know the current figure - far more male principals in a female-dominated role as teachers. That adds to the gender gap. It is not an individual position; they get paid the same. It is that broad -

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - The member for Windermere has the Floor, and I ask him to continue with his contribution.

Mr DEAN - That might well have been the case. I think you are probably right that at one stage most principals were male. That would have changed significantly now.

I want to pass on my commiserations to Madeleine Ogilvie, Joan Rylah, Andrea Dawkins and Nic Street for their defeat in the elections. I thought they were all hardworking and strong individuals who gave a lot to this parliament. In my view, they were all entitled to have been re-elected to this place. I congratulate the new members Anita Dow, Ella Haddad, Sue Hickey, David O'Byrne, Alison Standen, Jennifer Houston and Jen Butler on their success in the election and I wish them well in the future. I am sure those members will be good, strong members within the parliament.

Her Excellency talked about the cost of living and that Tasmanians want the Government to keep downward pressure on these costs. Her Excellency is absolutely right. I hear it constantly in my electorate, which has the largest quantity of social and community housing in this state. People are hurting and I am not sure how any of us will be able to continue to pay these water and sewerage and energy bills the way it is going. I have calls for help all the time, in particular about water and sewerage. People are saying they were told that when they had to split off water and sewerage from the councils, their rates bills probably would be higher, and that they would not be paying any more with the combined water, sewerage and rates than what they were paying in rates at that time. It is not true; it is not right at all. As they will tell you, their rates bills and their water and sewerage bills are extremely high. It has really got out of hand and they are struggling. I will be asking some questions in this place later about how many people are in difficulties with TasWater and not being able to pay their bills, or who are on time payment schedules to pay their bills and what is happening there, also with energy.

Some people have been able to put solar panels on and they are able to help themselves in that regard. They do not pay a great infrastructure cost in their energy bills. There is a cost there but it is not extremely high. With water and sewerage, it is absolutely ridiculous that the infrastructure cost far outweighs the resource cost - that is where people are hurting. I know of people and have an example of my own as I have a property where I provide my own water. I provide my own sewerage outlet, all at my cost and a huge capital cost for both. I have a silly water pipe running past the top end of my property and I have to pay the infrastructure costs. I do not want their service, I do not need it, but I still have to pay for it. I know I am not the only one in that position. I use that as an example. People are hurting with their water, sewerage and energy bills, and Her Excellency is right to raise that.

I hope we can see some control over those costs if the Government shares ownership of TasWater with local government. We will need to be guaranteed control for a long period, not only for the first two or three years. That is an issue we will all be looking at closely.

Jobseekers receiving allowances are continuing to increase in Tasmania. In 2012 it was near the 12 000 mark and now, in 2018, it is close to 16 000. That is jobseekers receiving allowances in this state. We know employment has improved but, sadly, we have that increase. I have a graph here to identify this and it is a little disappointing. When you look at people's incomes in this state, there is also a graph for that. I invite people to look at that because it tells a pretty sad story for this state. If you look at the states' and territories' total household characteristics, the proportion of households with characteristic main source of household income, employee income, the percentage in Tasmania is 51.6 per cent. The national figure is 60.7 per cent, almost 10 per cent better. We are very low.

If you look at own unincorporated business income, we are at 3.9 per cent in Tasmania. The national average is 4.3, so it is higher again. If you look at government pensions and allowances we have 35.8 per cent of people receiving these allowances. The national position is 24.2 per cent,

significantly lower than we are here. Tasmanians receive 8.2 per cent of other income and the national figure is 10.4 per cent. When you look at all of those figures, our financial position is fairly ordinary.

Business confidence is strong. While it is frustrating to wait months for a tradesman, builder, plumber or electrician, it is a good position to have because it shows there is plenty of work out there.

Mrs Hiscutt - I thought you were capable of doing your own stuff.

Mr DEAN - I do most of it myself.

In education, we all support record levels of funding invested in the education system. Once again, Her Excellency refers to some of this. My question is: what is UTAS doing to ensure or lift the quality of teachers? I hear stories from parents and teachers about the perceived poor quality of some teachers. I wonder what we are doing to lift the game for teachers. I am aware of a senior teacher on the north-west coast who was sent to a north-west coast school because it was not performing well. His end report in that relief position was that it was not the students. It was the teachers at fault, with their lackadaisical attitudes, their approach to teaching and the culture that existed at that school. He was extremely disappointed in what was going on and what was happening there.

An article in the *Mercury* on 10 May was a positive report on the year 12 extension program, with 688 students completing years 11 and 12 in these extended schools. That is good news. How many of the students in these schools are completing year 12? We have figures on that. How many are dropping out, and are these students dropping out being monitored to see they have worthwhile employment or further education, as per the Education Act requirements? They need to have other good employment to not complete years 11 and 12. What people are saying to me is that some identify good employment, hold that employment for three or four months and then disappear from the scene. I am not sure it is accurate, but I would like to know what policing occurs. If a student has a job and only stays for six months, do they have to come back into the education system and finish years 11 and 12? I do not know. It would be an interesting question also to ask.

Extending the schools in and around the existing colleges to cater for years 11 and 12 will impact negatively on student numbers at existing colleges. It has to, in my view. I cannot see any way around it. Newstead is only a dropkick from Queechy High School. Kings Meadows is probably two Richmond dropkicks away, with another football club a lot longer. If those schools extend to year 12 - we are told they are - it will have to impact on those local colleges. I cannot see anything other than that. It will be interesting to see what happens. Launceston has always had a very high enrolment rate, and apparently that is because of all the courses they can offer.

Ms Armitage - They have very good arts.

Mr DEAN - Very good arts, yes. They do. They have had good enrolment, LC, but I am not sure whether that will continue.

Mrs Hiscutt - You have to wonder about teaching staff if the high schools have to have appropriate teaching staff. How will we have that many qualified science and maths teachers - I thought we had a limit now - when we will need to have them in the colleges and in the schools?

Mr DEAN - There are good points and interesting issues as to what will happen in future. We asked the question and there are figures out. How many of these kids who have continued to years 11 and 12 go on to university, as it has been in place for a few years? What is the percentage continuing to university? What is the percentage of students gaining good employment at the end of their twelfth year at these country and regional high schools?

I briefly mentioned health a while ago. The issues we are dealing with regarding our hospitals are not unique. If you look around the country, the other states and territories are having similar problems. We are not on our own in this regard. You can go further than that and look at some other countries in the world. They are having similar problems. It is not a unique situation, but it is not to say that we cannot do more or do better.

Police officers were mentioned in the speech. We were told there would be 125 additional frontline police officers coming into the service over the next four-year period. What does this mean? The Leader might have the answer to this question. If we estimate by previous years, we will likely see close to 100 police officers exiting the force in the next four years. They may be exiting the service for a number of reasons - retirement, seeking other employment and all the other usual reasons. Will we see the 125 additional frontline police on top of about 100 who will resign in the same period of time?

Mrs Hiscutt - It is not common for replies to be given to the Address-in-Reply, so if you have a specific question you want answered, would you please put it in a formal way?

Mr DEAN - I will. Reading the 125 more additional police, one could say this is what it will be, additional on the current establishment number. On top of, without those resignations. It could in fact only be an extra 25 police if we take into account those who will exit the force in the meantime.

There has been reference to stronger bail conditions. Reversing the onus of proof onto offenders is interesting. Many on bail are committing offences, a job that has impacted heavily on police numbers and policing - trying to keep tabs on people on bail they know are going to offend. The police know who are going to offend. They know the people on bail who are going to offend, and hence keep a close eye on them. That should not have to happen. Electronic monitoring is one way. It is interesting we are going down that path. We have to do something, and if it is the way we need to go and it is going to help, then do it.

The member for Rosevears mentioned the new prison and it is great to see this has been agreed. The only thing now is to determine where it will go. Will it be in close proximity to the Ashley Youth Detention Centre? I do not know if it should. If it is close to Ashley, it will determine Ashley to be a prison. Maybe it will be on the Ashley centre property, which is a big property in the right place for a prison, and build a new premises for Ashley. Great costs would be incurred; Ashley is now not suitable, as has been said on a number of occasions, for young kids.

Ms Rattray - There needs to be a community conversation around the site.

Mr DEAN - There does, and the Government needs to be applauded for taking up the issues raised. This will allow people from the north easier access to their loved ones. It will provide safety for the custodial officers, and it an opportunity to separate prisoners causing a lot of the problems.

Interestingly, family violence was not touched on in any way. I thought with the scourge of family violence, and the levels of family violence in this state, it would have been mentioned in the speech, and would be an absolute priority area for any government. Look at the police figures and statistics, they are not decreasing. Family violence incidents are as high as they have been for many years. It is no good saying that more people are reporting the offence. It is not happening in greater numbers - more people are reporting it. It is high time people start to look and say it is increasing or not decreasing, and we need to do something.

Mandates were mentioned, and I will not mention too much because it is going to come up at other times. The member for Hobart raised it at the time of his election and his success talking about mandates. He said, and I quote - it has never been corrected so it would be 100 per cent right -

Mr Valentine - I will tell you if it is right.

Mr DEAN -

I wouldn't single any one particular piece of legislation out, except I would say that mandates are a very important matter and I don't think any government has a mandate to expect the Legislative Council to rubber stamp.

It's important that the Government are putting in their view, but we have to discover those unintended consequences.

It's a mandate to put it on the agenda, it's not a mandate to have it passed.

The member for Mersey said I want this place to be a rubber stamp or I am a rubber stamp. I am not quite sure what he said on the ABC, but let me say this: I have never been a rubber stamp. I have amended probably as much, if not more, legislation through this place than probably anybody else has in my time. I have probably been here the longest.

I have amended a lot of legislation. I closely look at most legislation and I scrutinise it closely with amendments, where I can see it should occur. To put me forward as a rubber stamp as the member for Mersey did was unfair. You make these throwaway statements, but if asked to provide the evidence to support them, of course you cannot. That is the way it happens and I understand. Somebody said the other day politics is a cruel game and is the way it goes.

Mr Valentine - You have to have a thick skin.

Mr DEAN - Yes, you are right. I pose this rhetorical question, but the member for Hobart might want to answer. I was wondering if the member for Hobart would agree it is our duty to deal with bills before us and, further, it is our role to review these bills but not to meddle with the government's strategic intent. Would you agree?

Mr Valentine - The government will not accept it if you try. If you try to meddle with the intent, you can only go within the certain boundary of what the bill handles. You cannot bring in new material or insert a different piece of policy into it - you will not get that. You only end up doing what the government allows you to do at the end of the day. If they do not accept your amendment, they are not going to push it through downstairs.

Mr DEAN - That is not quite right. The government brings its bills into this place, but this place determines what it is going to go and what is going to happen.

Mr Valentine - It does. I am saying in terms of amending a bill, it might be an amendment the government does not accept and stops the bill. I can appreciate what you are saying, but we do not actually expand it.

Mr DEAN - I am not going to drag this out. My position is over 50 per cent of the Tasmanian public has given this Government the green light to introduce this legislation and in my opinion, have it passed - in particular legislation heavily campaigned on in two elections. Dr Kevin Bonham spoke on the matter and members would have seen what he said in relation to the point. Dr Bonham said -

I think it is good for the Upper House to at least be able to block bad laws until after a government has taken them to an election and been re-elected.

That is Dr Kevin Bonham's opinion.

Mr Willie - I would have to check, but he also said he finds it increasingly hard to complain about the upper House because it has knocked bad legislation out of the park.

Mr DEAN - He has said a lot of good comments about the upper House. I am not saying he has not; I am simply saying what he said about bills brought into this place by a government that has twice been elected on those issues, when those issues have been raised. That is the point I am making.

Ms Forrest - It has to pass the test to create a benefit and meet the policy position. It is still a test it has to pass regardless.

Mr DEAN - That was his position and it is my position as well. I never said that we rubberstamp it at all. We need to look at legislation closely; we need to scrutinise it and amend it if it needs to be amended - if we can make it better, we make it better. If it was flawed at law, of course we should throw it out as we cannot accept that. If there is a huge public backlash to legislation, we need to seriously consider that position as well. We are not going to have everybody agreeing with all legislation that comes through here. There is always going to be that difference. We need to weigh it up and look at what we think and know to be best for the state and look at the government. At the end of the day, the government has to answer to the people, not we.

Ms Forrest - We answer to the people when we are up for election.

Mr DEAN - We are not the government, we are not elected to govern this state and we should not be obstructionist. We are not or should not be a brick wall. The government should be able to expect this place to support its legislation - yes, improve it, amend it, throw it out if it has flaws in it or if there is a public outcry with the greatest majority of people opposed to it, toss it out as well.

Mr Valentine - If we are only blocking 2 per cent of the legislation that comes through, it is hardly being obstructionist.

Mr DEAN - I have talked about that. I am not going to go over it, I have covered it.

Mr PRESIDENT - We are starting to go over country that has been well trodden. Interestingly, the question of mandate has been argued for years. There was a good comment made about it - somebody said, 'Where you stand on mandate depends upon where you sit.'

Mr DEAN - The definition of mandate in the *Oxford Dictionary* is a position given to the government by the people. It is a mandate that people give to the government to do things.

I raised that first comment by the member for Hobart because on 26 September 2012, during the time of the Labor-Greens government, I think we were debating the same-sex marriage bill, he said this about mandates -

We will have our opinions as to how well this bill has been drafted, and there have been many observations made. What I personally find hard to accept is the notion the bill should be thrown out because it has no merit.

Do you remember saying that? You then went on to say -

It has been suggested that the Labor Party has no mandate. Regardless of that observation, it is our duty to deal with the bill that is before us and it is our role to review it and not to meddle with their strategic intent. It is for them to answer the people for that and I think that needs to be made clear.

I agree with that.

Mr Valentine - I made that very clear. We cannot add policy outside the boundaries of what the government is pushing.

Mr DEAN - Would you agree with the government bringing into this place bills and positions that it has campaigned heavily on? Let me use this as an example. If the Labor Party had been successful at this last election, would it have had a mandate to bring into this place, and have passed, legislation to remove poker machines from pubs and clubs? My view is that it very clearly would have done so because it strongly campaigned on that point. If the people had put it into government, they would be saying, 'We want poker machines removed from pubs and clubs'.

Mr PRESIDENT - Can I remind honourable members of standing order 99(5), which says you cannot really digress from the subject matter under discussion or comment upon expressions used by any other member in a previous debate.

Mr DEAN - I am being careful. I simply quoted what the honourable member said and so I am not commenting on it. I am aware of that.

Mr PRESIDENT - But it is commenting on it. It is expressing it and speaking about it.

Mr DEAN - I am aware of that.

Mr PRESIDENT - It is not just you I am talking to, I am talking to the whole Chamber. We have to refer back to the Standing Orders in relation to matters such as this.

Mr DEAN - Thank you, Mr President, for reminding me of that. I am aware of that; we have discussed it many times before. I was simply using that quote to see -

Mr Valentine - I agree with it.

Mr DEAN - So do I.

I said I would mention what Dr Kevin Bonham was saying on this. He talked about how the House could be reformed, but I will not go into that. That is about all I wanted to raise, Mr President.

Before I sit down, I know that there is a motion on the Notice Paper as well. The previous member for McIntyre, Greg Hall, was an important person in this place and I look forward to when that motion is brought on. As I said to the member for Prosser, she has some big boots to fill, and she has to become the practical joker as well. I said to somebody the other day that it is a pleasure to be able to put a book down now, turn around and be able to pick it up again.

[5.01 p.m.]

Ms LOVELL (Rumney) - Mr President, it is my pleasure to rise to speak today. I am looking forward very much to this term of government in this Chamber. I have missed being here. I enjoy our banter; I enjoy the more robust debates we have, but most of all I feel it is an enormous privilege we have to be elected to represent our communities here and to collaborate on delivering good legislation and good outcomes for Tasmanians. I thank those thousands of Tasmanians who voted for their Labor candidates and put their faith in us. I want to thank all candidates who put their hands up for Labor and put themselves out there. We all know how difficult that can be.

I congratulate my new colleagues in the House of Assembly: Ella Haddad, member for Denison; Alison Standen and David O'Byrne, members for Franklin; Jen Butler, member for Lyons; Jennifer Houston, member for Bass; and Anita Dow, member for Braddon. I also congratulate those who were re-elected to represent their electorate as part of the Labor team. What a team it is - I am so proud to be part of the only party that increased its number in the parliament at the last state election. Congratulations also to the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Sue Hickey, on her election to the seat of Denison and her election as Speaker of the House. I am confident that she will serve her electorate and the House well in both those roles. I also extend my congratulations to our new Deputy President, the member for Murchison, and the members for McIntyre, Mersey and Launceston for their appointments. I have already welcomed the member for Prosser and congratulated the member for Hobart.

Since the last time we sat in this Chamber, the 12-month anniversary of my term as the member for Rumney has passed. It feels like a lot longer. I thought this would be an opportune time to go back and look at my inaugural speech, my first contribution in this place, and to reflect on my priorities at the time and the commitments I made. At that time I spoke about my values: fairness, equality and dignity. I said I believed Tasmanians to be compassionate people who believe in community and want to help each other achieve great things. I said that as elected members, we have a responsibility to those who have elected us, to strengthen our wonderful state, and to govern with compassion, good sense and heart. I still believe this to be true, and I remind myself of this every morning as we stand and those who choose to recite prayers do. I am determined to continue with this commitment throughout this next term and hopefully for many years into the future.

I also spoke about how pleased I was that the Labor Party had achieved gender equality with my election, and the changing nature of the Tasmanian Parliament with respect to gender equality. I am thrilled to be part of the first Tasmanian Parliament to achieve equality, and to have more women than men in the lower House. I am a proud member of EMILY's List, an arm of the Labor Party that has driven this movement. It is difficult to capture how important this milestone is in the 30-second media grab or short social media post we most often have to communicate with the wider

public. Let us not underestimate how monumental this is. This is not only a positive change for women but for all Tasmanians. The member for Windermere commented on the priority being finding the right people for the right job. Everyone agrees with that. We all want the best people for the job in this place. It is about providing equality of opportunity and making sure all genders and all people from all backgrounds have equality of opportunity, the same opportunity to be elected in this place, and there can be many reasons why that is not the case.

You cannot be what you cannot see. I hope that now there will be a new generation of Tasmanians who may see themselves standing here one day. Let us not forget, as the member for Murchison mentioned, that our parliament still has a long way to go in terms of true diversity. I know from the many conversations I and my colleagues had across the state that the biggest priority for Tasmanians remains access to affordable health services, access to world-class education and secure, meaningful work and a safe place to call home. Sadly, right now Tasmania is failing in many of those areas.

Many commitments have been made by the Government, promises made during the election campaign, but as long as we have people sleeping in tents, on couches and in sheds, as long as we have patients being treated in corridors at the hospital or in ambulances on the ramp and people unable to access the healthcare they need in their communities, as long as we have Tasmanian workers being paid significantly less than the national average, and sliding downward, we cannot possibly call ourselves a success. We cannot call ourselves a state that cares about our most vulnerable people.

My priorities for this term remain the same as the last: to deliver the best outcomes we can for the people of Tasmania. There has been much speculation recently about the role and the relevance of the Legislative Council. I believe our role in this place is of the greatest importance, and I would say the same regardless of which colour government we have.

Our role is to scrutinise legislation, to ensure the legislation we are passing is in the best interests of Tasmania and to ensure the government of the day cannot take anything for granted. I have been disappointed in the conduct of some members of the Government and some of those who work, or perhaps worked, in those offices during the election campaign and towards the end of the last term of government. The completely inappropriate use of social media to troll members of the public during the state election campaign is unacceptable. It is dirty politics and it should be named as such.

Let us have debates. Let us have passion and conviction in our arguments here and in public. Let us not stoop to these lows. I would hope this has been made abundantly clear and that we will not see any continuation of that behaviour throughout this term. The Government has said, both through the honourable Leader here in the Chamber and through various ministers, that it wants to work collaboratively with the Legislative Council. I hope that intention is genuine. I suppose only time will tell.

I wish to speak about my electorate of Rumney. My electorate shrank somewhat in the redistribution last year and I lost the communities of Sorell and the Tasman Peninsula to the new member for Prosser - Dodges Ferry, Primrose Sands, Copping, Dunalley, Port Arthur, Nubeena and so many more beautiful parts of our state. These are wonderful communities. If you treat them well, they will embrace you and treat you as one their own. I was not their member for long but I was always welcomed with open arms and I am very sad to lose them, so to speak. I trust their new elected member will serve them well. I have welcomed Risdon Vale and Old Beach into my

electorate and have enjoyed getting to know my new constituents. My electorate of Rumney, from Old Beach to Richmond, to Midway Point, to Opossum Bay, is full to the brim with wonderful people. They are people who are active in their communities, who care about our state and who want to have a say in the decisions that affect them and their state. It has been an honour to be the member for Rumney for the last 12 months. I am looking forward to working with them over the remainder of my term, and hopefully into the future.

I will comment on some of the contributions made earlier around the question of mandate. This is my opinion only. I am not going to talk about definitions, dictionaries or any of the technicalities of the word, but I believe the question of a mandate is complicated. How can you know which policy people really believed in, if you want to claim a mandate? You cannot tell me every single person who voted for a particular party agrees with every single policy. We had 200 policies that were not revealed before the election. There were huge numbers of policies that were not costed before the election. As I said, the question of a mandate is a complicated one. It is not something I believe in entirely. I believe the Government has a right to bring its legislative agenda before the House but it is our role to scrutinise that agenda and to ensure it delivers good outcomes for our communities, for we, too, have been elected by our electorates to represent their interests.

The member for Windermere touched on the sharing economy we are seeing grow and spread throughout our state, with Uber and Uber Eats newly arriving. I am not sure if Airtasker has made its way to the state. This is an area where the member for Windermere and I are in strong agreement. Tasmanians are crying out for ongoing, secure and meaningful work. This is a growing trend. The sharing economy erodes work conditions and wages and that is a trend we simply cannot afford to encourage or see continuing.

An area in which I may not agree with the member for Windermere is the gender pay gap, which he touched on in his contribution. Again, this is a complicated matter and there is a common misunderstanding that the gender pay gap refers to the wage paid to a person for a particular job. The example used by the member for Windermere was teaching, that male teachers are paid the same as female teachers. That is true, but the gender wage gap is about much more than that. It is not about comparing one job with the same job, and two people in those roles at that level.

The gender pay gap does exist. It is real and it comes from a long history of professions seen as women's work, or which were seen as women's work and still are in a lot of quarters. They are roles such as nursing, teaching, early years education, aged care and contract cleaning. These are workforces dominated by women and these workforces are underpaid. The gender wage gap also comes from more men being elevated to senior roles within those industries and in all industries, and women not having access to those same opportunities.

There is much debate and many differing opinions about quotas and the merit of quotas. Quotas are not about elevating people when they do not have the skills or the qualifications to undertake a role, but it is about ensuring equity and opportunity. It is about making sure people have the same opportunity to be elevated to senior roles. It is to ensure they can apply and work in particular professions regardless of their background, their financial circumstances, their gender or their race. It is about ensuring there is more flexibility in workplaces and it is about encouraging a shift from the assumption it should always be women who put their ambitions on hold in circumstances where comprises need to be made. I encourage the member for Windermere and anyone else with questions about the gender wage gap, whether it exists and how it works, to research that further. I would be more than happy to have further conversations about that.

Mr Finch - Both he and I provided male teachers to the education system. It came to about four, I think. We provided four teachers between us, to the system.

Ms LOVELL - I am glad to hear that. That is a profession where there is absolutely a need for more men to enter into. Early childhood education is another area. My children are lucky to have two male educators in their centre, and one in particular has been both of their favourites throughout their entire time there.

Ms Forrest - There are still areas that are male-dominant. I was at the Engineers Australia event last night and there is a high percentage of males in engineering. It is changing, but these things all take time.

Ms LOVELL - There is a long way to go.

I have only been here 12 short months but my priorities remain the same - to live my values each and every day and to govern with compassion, good sense and heart. I support the motion.

[5.15 p.m.]

Mr FARRELL (Derwent) - Mr President, a lot of ground has been covered by other honourable members and I do not intend to overlap that for the sake of it. There are four honourable members from the Labor Party in the Chamber and a lot of the theme will be common. I acknowledge the contributions made by all other members. With most people's contributions, you can say, 'I agree with that' or 'I do not agree with that.' It is a good exercise to go through, even though it has been a fairly long couple of days, listening to different honourable members' opinions. It has created a fair bit of thought.

Ms Rattray - I did not think you listened to my contribution.

Mr FARRELL - I was. I may have been out working on mine but I came back in for all the Scottsdale mentions, anything to help the day move on. I am conscious that some people want to travel. I was going to keep it short until that interjection. I will add a few parts back in. I would like to talk about my electorate.

Ms Rattray - It is a pretty big one now.

Mr FARRELL - It is a big one now. It has moved into a bit of Elwick and into a bit of Western Tiers. We have all had a bit of a nip at Western Tiers and it now goes right up to Breona. It takes a bit of travel now; it was a little more compact before. I am going to the lovely town of Bothwell next week to see if the people there like me. I lost Brighton to the new member for Prosser. I congratulated the member for Prosser before and also acknowledge the member for Montgomery in her role as honourable Leader. It must be true because the photo is up. Her photo is on the board now, so it is true. Congratulations to the member for Murchison on her election to the position of Deputy President. Others have mentioned the newly elected people and those who were not elected. That is always something we all face. We can only imagine how disappointed they probably feel after giving a lot of time to the parliament and not being rewarded with re-election. We all live in that world and it might be something we face at sometime in future.

My area of Derwent has been through a bit lately with some floods. It is sad to see a lot of the destruction around the place. It was pretty amazing. It took some time for people to realise how bad the effects of the flood were. Hobart received all the media - fair enough, it was a fairly

catastrophic flood - but up through the Derwent Valley six bridges were lost from the Lachlan River. They all ended up further down the Derwent and several million dollars' worth of damage was done. That is something people up there have to live with.

We see these floods from time to time. I remember in my brief time working in the real estate industry - I try not to but I do - that you would see blocks of land selling on the lower parts of the old flood plains and think, 'That is going to be interesting if we get a flood again', and it was this last time. It is unfortunate. It must be a terrible thing to have your house underwater. The house I am in was flooded in the 1960 floods. Apparently that is not likely to happen again because of the river control through the Hydro schemes further up. Everyone seems to think is a fairly accurate statement of fact, apart from the insurance companies, which like to sting you a little extra because you built your house, or bought your house, and it has been flooded before.

Mr Armstrong - Did the flood go into New Norfolk?

Mr FARRELL - Tynwald Park, down on the waterfront. A lot were former hopfields which they used to flood-irrigate, and it was flood-irrigated. It served its purpose well - the playground was destroyed. It is one of the key attractions in New Norfolk as a lot of people travel up from the big smoke to play in the New Norfolk playgrounds.

Getting back to Her Excellency's speech, the recent election certainly was a convincing win to the Liberal Party. It is only a short term in government and it must be reassuring that they have extra time to implement their plans. A lot of plans are out there at the moment and a lot of money will be spent if those plans come to fruition. People still do not understand the difference between local government, the upper House, the lower House and the federal government, and think when there is an election everyone is up for election. Around my electorate everywhere I went in the last few months I would get the comment, 'We have had member x here and member x has promised this and that.' I said that I cannot actually promise those things but I think the town will be fairly prosperous if it receives it. There were promises ranging from security cameras to a \$60,000 deck for the bowls club, which was a nice decision. This is all part of the budget process. As people come to my office and ask, 'Can we have the deck now?', I am happy to pass that on. I might not be re-elected if we cannot get the deck that was promised by one of the members for Lyons, so I would ask the Government to honour that.

It was an interesting campaign from the sidelines, as when you are in the upper House you can sit back and watch it. I was fascinated by the underground bus station. I think bridges were promised across the Derwent and the Tamar and various other bits of infrastructure. That happens at election time; everyone gets a little bit excited. Some things are worth proceeding with, other things better off forgotten. A lot of things were started in the last government, but it is important the Government stays on top of them. There were plans and promises made four years ago to various groups. I appreciate it takes a longer period of time for things to progress through government. This is especially so in the area of infrastructure, which I have interest in.

The member for Mersey said I should just get up and talk about trains. There is a lot of concern with public transport, especially in outlying areas. At the moment in the Derwent Valley region, we have a fairly good operator who is providing good services, promised to be expanded. Not the same for areas like Sorell where it is very difficult to get public transport. I am not sure what the reason is for that. Maybe the members for that area will get on to the Government to get that. There is a lot of frustration with the irregular service. Of course the Government is facing some big issues with traffic management. Someone was talking about the bypass through the back of Mangalore?

Mr Valentine - Above Pontville.

Mr FARRELL - Yes, it was the member for Windermere. That is an example of where we fail as governments: there is a plan in place, everything is surveyed and that is where we are going, and then another government comes in and changes ideas. The Bowen Bridge is an example of that - a beautiful four-lane bridge that has two-lane roads at either end of it. That was a huge cost but I think the road was planned to go up over the Bowen Bridge and back through some other part of the state, then joining the Midland Highway. It is not something that is new, but it is something that we really need to start putting outside the political cycle. Others have mentioned health and education -

Ms Forrest - The long-term rolling infrastructure plan -

Mr FARRELL - I thought you might interject and bring that up. It is something that we seriously need to look at because this is a lot of money. When you look at some of the money spent on infrastructure that becomes redundant in a few short years after it is built, it is a bit of a crying shame. It is a tremendous waste of money that could be going to other services in health and education and even into better infrastructure. It has been interesting.

Ms Rattray - If you look at the amount of tar that has lifted around the Breadalbane area, and it is just ripped up and taken.

Ms Forrest - And the Illawarra Road.

Mr FARRELL - Back in the good old days when you had the public works department, it probably was not the most efficient structure but it employed a lot of people. It built good, solid roads. Nowadays when we contract out and everything is built to a price, that shows; when you have a road that is not even officially open and is already being lifted and repaired, it is not a good sign and there is obviously some failing there with the system. There needs to be a lot of work done in that area, making sure that contracts are properly costed and not just done to a low price.

On the Midland Highway there have been sections that have been opened then had to be closed, down to one lane and then back to two lanes. I nearly drive up the Great Eastern Drive rather than taking the Midland Highway on some days because I know that I am going to be held up for an hour. It is very poor management, very frustrating and I just wonder -

Mr Willie - Do you take the west coast road to Burnie?

Mr FARRELL - I do, I do enjoy driving but that is not the point.

There is great scope there; the honourable member for McIntyre was talking about the Great Eastern Drive. There is a lot of tourism potential if we do it right. It needs to be more than just putting up a sign. The road has to be safe, it has to be wide enough. There are some really good road trips around Tasmania from the west coast, there are a couple up the Midland Highway and of course the Great Eastern Drive - as long as we do it properly and not have potholes. It is dangerous, particularly when we have the number of tourists who tend to self-drive around the place; there have been some fairly horrific stories of near misses and accidents.

Ms Rattray - You will know there are no lay-by areas from Launceston to the Hobart side of Orford, not one.

Mr FARRELL - Heavy vehicles are often frustrated by the fact they cannot pull over and let traffic through. It creates -

Ms Rattray - Or they attempt to do it in an unsafe place.

Mr FARRELL - Yes, and you discussed moving overtaking lanes.

It is interesting to see the Government has put its proposal forward for a Derwent ferry. I remember the committee on integrated public transport we had a few years ago.

Ms Rattray - It is still relevant.

Mr FARRELL - It is still relevant and there is still a lot of important information in there I think the Government could find useful now it has decided to proceed. For any form of transport to work efficiently and properly, it needs to be properly integrated with other forms of transport. You cannot simply have these ideas, such as sticking a boat on the river and running it from this shore to that shore without having all the connections. You need to have common timetables, common ticketing -

Mr Valentine - Feeder services.

Mr FARRELL - Yes, feeder services. It is a much bigger picture. I would be more than happy to work with the new infrastructure minister on any future planning for that. There is some great scope to improve our transport in and around Hobart particularly. It will also have effects in other areas. We can free up buses, send them up to the west coast, north-west, Launceston and other places. There are several great options around Hobart but I will not pre-empt the legislation before us. One of the recommendations in the committee was to change Metro. The Labor policy was to create a central body more for the logistics, ticketing and planning process, and leave Metro as a bus operator. A lot of the feedback coming from the private bus operators is they are reluctant to share information and ticketing systems with a competitor, which they see Metro as. That step needs to be removed.

The other organisation that would work far more effectively if it were split into two, essentially an asset manager and an operator, is TasRail. We have had a lot of discussion about that. When you have GBEs that are both the umpire and playing on the field it makes it very difficult to have clear policy toward integration of other operators. There are also some great opportunities with our tourist and heritage railway. We had the strategic infrastructure corridor bill before us and that was going to open up opportunities for different groups to access the main line rail.

Ms Rattray - How is that going?

Mr FARRELL - From what I hear, there has not been the progress some of the groups would like. The Derwent Valley Railway is still stuck in the yard where it was, even though the intentions of the Government were to bring it out of the yard. I hope that is progressed. There is a new opportunity with a new infrastructure minister to look at that. There were certain, not with the minister as such, preconceived ideas on the benefits of tourist rail within the department. That may have changed but if the new minister is prepared to take it on, grab it and take charge, some really good things can be done. There are lots of examples around the rest of the country and in New Zealand where tourist rail is very beneficial to the areas in which it operates.

A lot of it is sitting there three-quarters done. It just needs the support from government, and that is where the policy I put together was going to have effect because they had someone in government to help those mainly volunteer groups work through the huge amounts of red tape, accreditation, and that type of thing. That is probably something else the Government might like to take a look at to help progress some of the issues the tourist and heritage railway people are going through.

When you look at disused assets, it is not just railway lines. Getting back to the floods in the Derwent Valley, I think the member for Elwick mentioned the Carinya Centre, which the council had been leasing as an emergency flood relief shelter. This was a high school hostel built in probably the 1970s -

Ms Siejka - Before that.

Mr FARRELL - Probably the 1960s.

Ms Siejka - Before that because it was there when my mum went to school.

Mr FARRELL - Right - built some time ago but well maintained, as government buildings were then. It may have been a solution, but it was decided not to use it for whatever reasons, and I will not go into that now.

I see it all the time, particularly through my electorate, places like the old Claremont school sitting there slowly getting vandalised. Many of the buildings within the Willow Court area were purchased by developers who were shonky and promised the world, but stripped the buildings for the good bits and left them. This has happened time and time again. I do not know how governments get on top of that and learn to manage these assets.

Ms Rattray - Put a bond on the sale until it's delivered.

Mr FARRELL - Yes. It seems that so many government buildings, and government land for that matter, is left for dead. It is a really bad look. There is nothing worse than seeing an old school being slowly vandalised. There are probably some in every member's electorate. These assets do have some value to someone but it needs to have -

Mr Armstrong - There is one in Queenstown, nearly in the centre of the town.

Mr FARRELL - That is another example. I do not know who is responsible for them but it seems that when they finish their useful life, they are left there to rot. I do not know why the school in Queenstown is still there.

Ms Forrest - It's just gone to rack and ruin.

Mr FARRELL - Is it still owned by the government?

Ms Forrest - As far as I know. That could be repurposed, it is right in the middle of town.

Mr FARRELL - New Norfolk is littered with former government buildings that are not being used. The Millbrook Rise facility is quite a stunning Art Deco-style building, furnished beautifully.

I know 10 Murray Street was handed over to developers; it was pretty sad looking at the areas around the old leader's office with the timber panelling being crunched up by the big machine.

Ms Forrest - They left that till last, you might note.

Mr FARRELL - Standing there like a monument to democracy. It was a beautiful thing. I think it was built to be bombproof.

Ms Forrest - They were hosing all the bad air that was coming out of it.

Mr FARRELL - The Carinya Centre at New Norfolk in particular and the old school buildings and the housing issue have been well publicised today. That is a real issue which other members have covered. It has a profound effect on those who are homeless. The member for Windermere said many people choose to be homeless. That may be the case, but there are many people who do not. A colleague of mine was in conversation with some of the homeless camped on the parliamentary lawns as you may remember for a couple of days. One of them wrote a poem I would like to read; it is only short but this is how this person felt about their situation -

You wake up in a bed, I wake on the street. You have a family, I had a family.
You HAVE dreams, I had dreams. You walk down the street, I walk the street.
You feel happy, I feel manic. You feel sad, I get depressed. You talk to someone,
I talk to myself. You hear a familiar voice, I hear voices. You have a social
drink, I get drunk. You said no to drugs, I said yes. You never gamble, I gambled
the lot and lost. You've never been used by someone, I was abused by someone.
You look at the bridge, I walk halfway across the bridge and look down. You go
out for the night, I vanish into the night.

That is sort of how it is with a lot of people.

Mr Dean - It would seem this is quite an intelligent person and I wish they would be receiving Centrelink money. Makes you wonder.

Mr FARRELL - It is just one of the many stories, and there are a lot of very sad stories, but this was one worth noting. Other have spoken of bandaids, I am not going to. We are probably going to have legislation returned to us that will cause us some debate, which is probably the best way of putting it in the near future. For quite a period of years, we were quite fortunate having the attorney-general as one of our own being as a member of the Legislative Council. She knew how to manage those tough issues in this Chamber and it is going to be a little bit different this time. The previous attorney-general did look out for us in ways. She stood up for the Legislative Council, and things changed when she was no longer with us. The treatment then was different.

It may have been because she was in Cabinet and had more say at the legislation process as to how things were going to be introduced to us. There were certainly avenues to consult about issues we had trouble with, such as mandatory sentencing. Things changed and I appreciate our new Leader is great, but there was a time when we were between leaders and it seemed then there was a bit of rough treatment going on and we had that bill come before us. At the time of the mandatory sentencing bill, comments were made in this Chamber that were taken quite out of context. It was disturbing for any member of this Chamber, and when I was the leader of the government, it was always that you did not single out any members, whether independent members or party members, for political gain or for playing the man rather than the ball.

Mrs Hiscutt - I totally agree.

Mr FARRELL - I understand and I have had the discussion with you. This goes back to the member for Windermere's comments on how politicians are perceived and in many way we are our own worst enemies. This is because of the adversarial system we have - we can probably express our differences a lot better than we do. It tends to become personal. If we are kicking each other in the head, then I suppose the general public thinks that is what it is all about. That has to be something we all need to keep in our mind when we deal with each other. It is probably different to a degree for those of us in parties compared to those of you who are independent.

I was singled out and comments I made were taken out of context. The media unit, and this is where government has to keep tight control on the backroom people, sent out press releases about what I had supposedly said, which was in answer to comments another member had said in general discussion. Fortunately, most of the mainstream media outlets did their research and decided that was not the context and there was nothing in the mainstream media. It was only, I suppose -

Mr Valentine - Two hundred-and-forty thousand other people.

Mr FARRELL - There was one, I suppose you could say, fairly right-wing radio station based in the north of the state that tried to make a deal out of it. There is another issue there and this probably relates to a debate we should have sometime on the independence of the ABC and mainstream media. Having worked in commercial media, it is all about ratings, the dollar, and that is how it attracts advertisers. That should not give it the right to put false information out and act in a way that is bullying and very unprofessional. I thought that style of radio disappeared in the 1980s, all that ranting and raving. I do not know why people would choose to listen to radio or any media that is purely negative. You must feel terrible at the end of the day. No wonder there is so much depression in the world, when people have to listen to how bad everything is, how everything is wrong, how people are idiots, and it is a pretty sad world. I do not think that is anything we can fix here. I am hopeful now - there have been changes in the Government media unit and I would ask this through the Leader and I know she will do her very best.

You expect a little bit of rubbish. I remember when I was first elected, there was a story in the local paper about how I kicked the hairdresser out of her salon so I could move my electorate office in. When I called that journalist to put my case, she said, 'Oh no, the story has already gone and that is it. I have been told otherwise.' I thought, 'All right, fine, there you go.' That was an early lesson. We probably all cop a bit of that from time to time. I am not trying to tramp over old ground but social media is a very antisocial platform. I know it is used a lot by the government media unit. The use of false identities on social media is particularly bad. We had the famous Alice Wood-Jones making posts on Facebook.

Mr Willie - We still do not know who Brent Smith is.

Mr FARRELL - I was going to say that Alice has gone back to fairytale land and it seems she has taken Gary Bogan and Brent Smith with her. These were people who were posting on Facebook and have since disappeared.

Mrs Hiscutt - I am not going to enter into an adversarial argument here.

Mr FARRELL - No, I know that but I just wanted to state that this is part of the issue that we really need to take a grip of and make sure -

Mrs Hiscutt - That it works on both sides.

Mr FARRELL - Absolutely. There have been dirty tricks in politics for years. It did not just happen in the last four years, Leader.

Mrs Hiscutt - I would just like to make that clear.

Mr FARRELL - I do not think it has really impacted the Legislative Council - and some members have been here much longer than I have.

I am very pleased that the Leader stated there will be better cooperation and open access to OPC. That was certainly how we had it, although I do wonder about the brilliance of the idea of allowing members open access to OPC like we had in the previous government. I remember the TFA, where everyone had open access to amendments and I think we had more amendments than bill in the end, but that is how well that works. That is a good thing to do but it has to be proper -

Ms Forrest - Still through the Leader's office.

Mr FARRELL - Through the Leader's office, as it was back then. I am not saying you can knock on OPC's door - the system that we had.

Another thing concerns me a little as a local member. It was interesting that the Leader had quotes from a couple of high school principals. You have to go through a process to get into a school and I understand that. That is a process we probably should do. I do not think I would have had any hope in hell of tabling a letter from a school principal as a member of the Labor Party and it would probably be the same in reverse.

Mrs Hiscutt - Most of it is on their website.

Ms Forrest - It wouldn't have been in their interest, I would have thought.

Mr FARRELL - No. Sometimes these things go too far. The other day, there was a morning tea to raise funds for cancer at Ouse in the Central Highlands Community Health Centre. I rang to say I would be coming up to Ouse and would like to give some money and have a cup of tea, et cetera. Then I got a phone call back from the centre saying they had to clear that through the minister. I said, do not worry, I will come again some other time. Whether that was the centre's interpretation or whether that is the way it is now, I was a little disappointed.

Ms Rattray - I think you will find with many schools that how welcome you are depends on who is the principal.

Mr Willie - Or sometimes the minister, too. Different ministers have different approaches to these things.

Mr Gaffney - On that, recently a lady came in who could not understand a land planning acquisition or some rating and wanted me to help her out because she could not understand the person on the other end of the phone. When I rang up saying she had given me permission, they could not speak to me; they had to go through the minister before I could help with the form. That is going to take three weeks to get a response from the minister and the form was a page and a half

that I could not help her with because of that protocol. If it is getting any worse, I think we need to say something.

Ms Forrest - The Leader might take that back and let us know.

Mr FARRELL - In lots of ways it is probably symptomatic of the times we live in, where everyone is extra careful and you cannot take risks with all sorts of things, but I think we need a little bit of latitude as local members to be able to move around. We are all working in the same sort of role as the Government.

Ms Forrest - We are representing those people.

Mr FARRELL - We are representing those people and all I wanted was a cup of tea and maybe a savoury scone. That was just a bit of a surprise. I am not sure if that is the same in other Neighbourhood Houses or whatever institutions. I am not sure where the cut-off is, whether you have to get clearance for child and family centres. It just makes it very difficult to do our job.

I take on board too that other members have said how great it is to be a member of the Legislative Council. I believe the new member will work out soon that it was a stroke of luck that you missed out on the seat of Lyons and you are now in the seat of Prosser. It is a good seat to be in. I look forward to working with the Government and working through its legislative agenda over the next term.

[5.56 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I thank all members for their contributions, many and varied. I am going to avoid these adversarial issues members are talking about. I am not going to comment on any member's contribution except to say thank you very much for sharing them with me, with the Government and the people of Tasmania. I will comment on access to OPC. It is not open access. It is access through the Leader's office. I have forwarded points around to all members as to how that will work.

I will close by saying a few things I mentioned in my original contribution. There is no right to expect the Legislative Council to rubberstamp every bill and measure before us. Anyone who assumes that is wrong. There is a degree of mandate, but that is equal with the degree of responsibility of this House. The role of the Legislative Council has not changed and it should continue to review legislation, taking into consideration the information put before it. I, as Leader, have committed to you all to work openly and constructively as possible as we tackle the tasks ahead.

I look forward, for at least the next year, to be working constructively with you all and I thank you very much for your contributions.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY - PRESENTATION

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I have to inform the Council that Her Excellency the Governor will receive the Address-In-Reply at Government House at 12.30 p.m. on Wednesday 13 June 2018. I move -

That the President, accompanied by the mover and the seconder and so many other honourable members as think proper to attend, present the Address-in-Reply to Her Excellency at the said time and place.

Motion agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION (SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION FOR 2017-18) BILL 2018 (No. 11)

First Reading

Bill received from the House of Assembly and read the first time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Council at its rising adjourn until 9 a.m. on Friday 25 May 2018.

Motion agreed to.

Member for Windermere - Personal Explanation

[6.00 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, I stand on this adjournment to articulate a point of personal explanation on a matter asserted against me in my second reading speech in the Address-in-Reply. During that speech the member for Elwick asserted I had voted against the Labor government and the Labor-Greens government 62 per cent of the time. During my 11 years, while there was a Labor and Labor-Greens Government, there were 24 divisions only and I voted 62 per cent of the time against those governments. That is about 14 times against and 10 times for the Labor and Labor-Greens governments.

To put the fact to me in the way it was - that I had voted 62 per cent of the time against Labor and the Labor-Greens governments - was cruel, misleading and grossly unfair. We talk about playing the man and not the ball, and those supporting the position should either seek to withdraw their comments, apologise or explain their position.

The statement as it stands is damaging to my credibility and reputation. The more I reflect on it, the more upset I get about it and the more disgusted and disappointed I am that only a part of the facts were put to the Chamber. It was disappointing at the time. I was caught unawares and to state the fact that way was disgraceful, in my opinion.

The Council adjourned at 6.02 p.m.