



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Thursday 3 March 2022

REVISED EDITION

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Thursday 3 March 2022

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

QUESTIONS

Jane Howlett MLC - Resignation

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.01 a.m.]

Two different statements were put out about Jane Howlett's resignation. One, put out by your media unit in Jane Howlett's name began by saying:

Yesterday afternoon I spoke to the Premier and tendered my resignation from the Cabinet. This was an incredibly difficult decision to make but the correct one for my family and myself following the loss of my dear brother last week.

Another, posted by Jane Howlett on her Facebook page, said:

Yesterday afternoon I spoke to the Premier and tendered my resignation from the Cabinet. This was an incredibly difficult decision to make but the correct one for the Government, myself and my family.

Premier, how do you explain the difference?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. What is apparent is that the week is going to finish as it began. The Government is focused on building houses, investing record amounts into health, being aspirational. On the other side of the House you remain in the gutter. They are now wordsmithing and looking at the words that are included in one statement that we put out. What Ms Howlett puts on her own Facebook is a matter for Ms Howlett. Ms Howlett is going through a very distressing period. Mrs Petrusma yesterday summed it up better than anybody this week in this parliament. What you have engaged in this week is the worst case of emotional violence against a woman in this place that I have ever witnessed.

Jane Howlett MLC - Presence of Simon Brookhouse

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.03 a.m.]

Yesterday you misled this parliament when you claimed that Mr Brookhouse was in the Legislative Council late at night to specifically meet with the member for Elwick. This is categorically untrue. Mr Brookhouse was already in the building in the company of

Ms Howlett before speaking with the member for Elwick. Will you correct the record for the false claims that you made yesterday?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. The advice that I received is what I provided to the parliament yesterday. I have nothing more to say on it.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Government Spending Priorities

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.05 a.m.]

This week you announced a \$750 million stadium to be built within five years and \$1.5 billion for housing to be built in 10 years. Why do you consider a stadium a more urgent need than housing? Why are you spending the same amount each year on a fancy stadium with a retractable roof as you are on homes during a housing crisis? Why is it going to take twice as long to build homes for Tasmanians who desperately need them than it is a massive stadium that if it is ever built will be empty for most of the year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Greens for that question. Your question does not surprise me. You have taken a view on super cars. You have taken a view on football in the past. This is one time that I hoped that you could have been aspirational, that you could have acknowledged that on one hand early this week the Government announced the most significant -

Mr SPEAKER - Premier, if you could through the Chair. I am trying to make it so Ms O'Connor is not incited into making some interjections.

Mr GUTWEIN - That has ruined my strategy then, Mr Speaker. It was a light-hearted comment.

Through you, Mr Speaker, I hoped that the member could have acknowledged that we made the most significant announcement on social and affordable housing that has ever been made in this state; that we laid down a longer term plan to address both the need to build more social and affordable housing and, at the same time, how we were going to provide people with the opportunity to get their first step into the property market with the Housing Market Entry program. The Government will take significant equity to provide young Tasmanians the opportunity to get off the rental roundabout and into a home of their own. That equity will need to be returned to the state Government as it currently is with the HomeShare program. It is a fantastic opportunity to break the cycle. In a state of this size, scale can be against us. In this instance we had the opportunity that some of the larger jurisdictions do not have.

Regarding the stadium announcement, the facts that the member walks past are that:

- (1) the construction of that stadium will provide significant job opportunities;
- (2) the construction of that stadium will provide significant economic opportunities; and
- (3) it will provide for young Tasmanians, boys and girls, men and women, the opportunity to be aspirational. As the stadium is subject to gaining an AFL licence, it will provide the opportunity for young Tasmanians, regardless of who they are or where they live to have the same opportunities that other kids in other states have.

I would have thought that was something the member for Clark and the Leader of the Greens could have supported.

This is about putting a flag on top of the hill, as Clarko said. What will happen is that we will broaden and strengthen the base socially, economically and in sport, community sport as well. This provides us with an opportunity to provide for our people the same opportunities that others have in other states while, as I announced on Monday, delivering the most significant program of social and affordable housing builds this state has ever seen, providing the greatest opportunity for young Tasmanians to get off the rental roundabout and get into a property of their own.

At the same time - the member walked past it - we announced a 10-year vision for health. More than \$1 billion will be spent on health facilities around the state to ensure that Tasmanians can get the care that they need when they need it in fit for purpose facilities across the state.

Government's Aspirational Policies

Mr ELLIS question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.10 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on feedback received from the Tasmanian Government's aspirational policies which were released this week? Are you aware of any alternative policies released this week?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Ellis, the member for Braddon, for that question and his interest in this matter. I do not shy away from the fact that we are an aspirational government.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, we want Tasmania to be as good as it possibly can be. We want to lift our eyes not just to the horizon but past it.

As to that side of the parliament - and you can hear them chip in, Mr Speaker - we have seen them in action before, the two of them, Dr Doom and his little mate. I encourage them to get on board and stop talking the state down, which is what we hear from Dr Broad all the time.

We have spent the last few days outlining our strong plan. We know what the other side has been doing. We have been outlining our very strong, \$1.5 billion plan to build 10 000 homes. TasCOSS said that they are:

... is pleased to see the Tasmanian Government announce a substantial funding commitment to get on top of the social housing wait list and end the housing limbo for thousands of Tasmanian families ... the Government's revised social housing pledge of 10 000 new dwellings by 2032, alongside the extension of the number of other positive initiatives, is most welcome news for Tasmanians in need.

Matthew Pollock, the CEO of Master Builders Tasmania, has backed the plan in as well:

The Government's targets are undoubtedly ambitious -

and I agree with him, we are going to be an ambitious government:

but if we work together to create the high vis army, we will be able to build thousands more homes each year, Mr Pollock said. The announcement gives the industry certainty and a clear pipeline of work for the next decade that means builders can plan for their future, invest in capacity and training.

What he did not go on to say is that what it underpins is jobs for Tasmanians. We will have to provide training and ensure that we can give people an opportunity.

Regarding the pathway to the new stadium, obviously there are some stakeholders that we need to engage with. RSL Tasmania said that they would like to thank us for the state Government's early engagement for the AFL stadium:

The RSL will discuss the plans with its members and the wider SO communities. The RSL is committed to working with the Government on behalf of veterans and their families.

I thank them for that because it is important that what is built at Regatta Point is built in a way that is sympathetic to what I would call the sacred ground of the Cenotaph, and we will ensure that that is the case.

Royal Hobart Regatta Association President David Skeggs confirmed his organisation willing to work with the Government to see this vision realised, saying that he thinks it can happen, and I do too. I was pleased to see the editorial from the *Mercury*, which said:

It is a facility that will be a game-changer for Hobart and for the state for decades to come.

That is spot on.

Jack Riewoldt, one of Tasmania's favourite sons, said:

A roof stadium in the CBD. Can you imagine what that is going to do for Tasmanian football, for the economy, for jobs in Tasmania, for all sorts of sports and music and arts and everything like that?

He went on to say, 'It is going to provide opportunity', and I agree entirely with him.

Alastair Clarkson, one of the best football minds and a key member of our team, says he is excited by the vision and that the Government is showing strong leadership, and if anybody knows anything about strong leadership it is Clarko.

Luke Martin said:

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to do something bold and transformative for Tasmania. You do not have to look far to see the impact these types of stadium developments have had on the visitor economies and vibrancy of other Australian cities.

That is spot on.

Mr Speaker, we are ambitious. We will lift our gaze above the horizon. What did we see yesterday from the Leader of the Opposition? It must have been hard work writing a 40-minute speech that did not have one positive initiative in it. It must have been an extraordinarily difficult speech to write. In fact, the only thing I think that the Labor Leader got right yesterday was the comment that Labor was not at its best in 2021. That is the art of the understatement.

I encourage the Opposition to not only challenge the Government on matters but to come up with some ideas of their own. There should be a battle of ideas in this place, not a torrent of negativity from the other side.

I make this point in finishing: I have said on many occasions -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, under standing order 48. The Premier has been on his feet for six minutes on a Dorothy Dix question. I ask you to ask him to wind up. please.

Mr SPEAKER - Premier, if you could wind up.

Mr GUTWEIN - I was about to finish and I will, Mr Speaker. Over the last couple of years, I have said ad nauseam that complaining is not a policy, whingeing is not a policy platform. What we heard yesterday was simply more of that. I have been saying that to encourage you to do more. You do not have set those two statements as a goal.

Jane Howlett MLC - Presence of Simon Brookhouse

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.17 a.m.]

Your attempts to cover up the chaos in your Cabinet with distractions and deceit has been exposed. You did mislead the parliament yesterday. Did the information you falsely relied on to try to explain why Mr Brookhouse was in the parliament so late at night last year come from Mr Brookhouse, or did it come from Ms Howlett?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. My advice is that the information was provided by Mr Brookhouse.

Empty House Tax

Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.18 a.m.]

The Tenants' Union of Tasmania recently released data from TasWater that showed there are 192 residential properties across the Hobart City Council municipality that had a high chance of vacancy, 115 in the neighbouring Glenorchy City Council municipality, and 256 in the Launceston City Council municipality. These properties have used less than 10 per cent of the average household water consumption for three consecutive years. That is 563 inner-city residential properties that sat empty during a housing crisis. If you were to extrapolate conservatively these numbers across the state, there are potentially almost 2000 properties sitting empty.

In Vancouver and Melbourne, homes left empty for more than six months without a reasonable excuse, such as significant renovations, selling or holidays, are charged 1 per cent of the value of the property. Do you recognise that there are thousands of Tasmanians sleeping rough every night right now, and will you introduce an empty house tax as one way of incentivising an immediate increase to supply?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her question. Once again, I will make our position very clear on this: we will not be imposing an empty homes tax. Our priority is to address the long-term issue of housing affordability. That is why we announced this week the most significant investment into social and affordable housing, as well as a range of other measures to encourage property owners in terms of taking on tenants, in terms of assisting young people, especially, to get their first step onto the property ladder and out of the rental cycle. We also provide significant supports to those who are homeless. A range of options are made available and have remained uncapped since the beginning of the pandemic, since I became Premier and so, no, we will not be looking to introduce an empty homes tax.

Securing Tasmania's Future - Sports and Entertainment

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for SPORT and RECREATION, Mr STREET

[10.20 a.m.]

I welcome you as a new minister, and this is your first question in this Chamber.

Can you please update the House on Tasmania's majority Liberal Government's strong plan to secure Tasmania's sporting and entertainment future?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for his question and also for his election to the Deputy Speaker's position. They are massive shoes to fill but I am sure he will step up to the challenge.

Our Government believes that every Tasmanian deserves the opportunity to lead an active and healthy lifestyle and we will do everything we can to encourage and support them to achieve this. We want more Tasmanians to get active and dream big, no matter where they live, what their age or their circumstances.

Elite-level sport is great entertainment for Tasmanians to enjoy. It also provides pathways for men, women and children to aspire to. We know the positive impacts this has at a community and grassroots level.

For an aspiring young Tasmanian cricketer, being recently given the chance to watch some of the world's best players and England competing in an historic Ashes Test match on their home soil was the opportunity of a lifetime. We want to create that opportunity for young Tasmanians across all sporting codes.

We will never apologise for being an ambitious government. That is why I support a women's and men's AFL team for Tasmania. A Tasmanian AFL team will help to ensure that our footballers have the same pathways as young players from every other state. Why should a young Tasmanian Auskicker not have the opportunity to aspire to play for a Tasmanian team in the AFL? As Minister for Sport and Recreation, I will make certain that a Tasmanian AFL club is one that gives back to the community, has a culture of inclusiveness, and encourages grassroots participation at every opportunity.

It is not just the playing side that we want to promote with these teams. Initiatives such as Essendon Football Club's Purple Bombers supporter group aims to create safe and inclusive environments by encouraging diversity and acceptance within the sporting community. Current AFL premiers, Melbourne, run the community and grassroots programs which are all about supporting healthy lifestyles and enhancing community spirit. The West Coast Eagles run the Eagles Rock My School program - a values-based program that has delivered key messages of respect and striving to achieve your best for kindergarten to year 6 primary students all over Western Australia. These are the sort of community initiatives I am passionate about and this is what I want from Tasmanian teams in the AFL, AFLW and other Tasmanian teams in national sporting competitions.

To achieve all of this we need the infrastructure. We want every region of Tasmania to benefit from our ambitious but achievable sporting infrastructure plan. That is why we will continue to invest in further development of the Dial Regional Sports Complex in the north-west. This vital piece of sporting infrastructure will help to support the community and aspirations of young people in the north-west. To put it simply, it will help them to dream big. The complex is being designed to AFL specifications and when we have secured our own men's and women's AFL and A-League teams, we want games to be played on the north-west coast, just as we took the NBL Blitz there last year.

In the north of the state we have big plans for UTAS Stadium and it will remain the major stadium in the north. The plan includes redevelopment over the next three to five years, increasing the capacity of the ground while also providing retractable seating to enable rectangular configuration and an indoor sporting arena capable of holding basketball, netball and other sports and entertainment events, future-proofing the stadium for decades to come.

Our vision for our sporting and entertainment future also includes a plan to develop a multi-purpose stadium at Regatta Point that will deliver significant social and economic outcomes for the entire state and create a spectacular and iconic entry into Hobart. It says we are serious and unlocks the potential for a whole host of events, performances, concerts and functions to help drive economic outcomes across Tasmania.

Yesterday, as the Premier said, we saw some of Tasmania's best exports to the AFL, including Richmond's Jack Riewoldt and Brisbane Lions champion, Mitch Robinson expressing their support for the vision, with Robinson tweeting: 'Build it and the AFL will come. This will be epic.' While the new stadium will be epic, it all means nothing unless the Tasmanian teams that play there are giving back to the communities around the state that support them. As Minister for Sport and Recreation, that is my strong focus and my commitment to those communities across Tasmania.

Disappointingly, Labor is yet to support this infrastructure program. They seemingly want to play politics and risk this opportunity. We are committed to leading an aspirational state and we reject the relentless negativity from Labor. On Tuesday, the Premier announced a 10-year vision for Tasmania, a long-term plan for health and housing worth more than \$2.5 billion. However, we also need to build the job-creating infrastructure that is going to drive the Tasmanian economy forward and secure Tasmania's future, and that is exactly what we plan to do.

Jane Howlett MLC - Presence of Simon Brookhouse

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.25 a.m.]

You were misled by Mr Brookhouse about the reason why he was in the parliament late at night last year. The information he gave you led you to mislead this parliament, a very serious offence. What else about this matter have you been misled about? Mr Brookhouse was in this parliament yesterday. Did you meet with him?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. It is obvious that on that side of the House they have run out of questions on this. Regarding Mr Brookhouse, no, I did not meet with him yesterday. I am not sure who he was here to meet but it certainly was not me. This just demonstrates the depths to which they will plummet to try to assassinate people's characters in this place, the emotional violence that we have seen where they are using this place to smear reputations, to peddle rumours and to focus on innuendo.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker. It goes to standing order 45, relevance. The question was directly in relation to the fact that the Premier has misled the House. He has not yet corrected the record for the misleading of the House. The question goes to what other information he has relied on misleading him.

Mr SPEAKER - Points of order are not an opportunity to restate the question or to expand the question. You have made a point of order about relevance. The Premier has answered the question and has an opportunity when you go to a certain question of using several minutes to answer. He actually went to the point but he has an opportunity now to speak to the question. You went there; the Premier has to have the opportunity to answer it in full. Thank you, Premier.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, I provided the advice that I understood to be factual to the parliament when I did so. To be frank, I would pay scant regard to anything the Leader of the Opposition says in this place.

TWWHA Cultural Assessment

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for PARKS, Mrs PETRUSMA

[10.28 a.m.]

A damning decision by UNESCO in 2021 into the state of conservation of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area was quietly published on DPIPWE's website on 3 February this year. Decision 44, paragraph 7 of that report urges the state party, that is Tasmania, to avoid any development of the property before the detailed plan for comprehensive cultural assessment is implemented.

The detailed plan is missing and the cultural assessment is not done, yet the Government ploughs ahead with its divisive EOI process to turn the TWWHA into a property developer's free-for-all in places like Lake Malbena and the South Coast Track, running roughshod over the wishes of UNESCO and any spirit of consensus with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

The report is full of motherhood statements about respect and inclusion but it has failed on this crucial component of managing our wilderness world heritage area. Would this be because the Government is anticipating that any advice in a cultural heritage assessment be that no private development should occur within the TWWHA?

Where is this assessment? How can the Government truly enter into a treaty process and truth-telling with the palawa/pakana when such an important response has failed to deliver guidelines to conform to international best practice?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question. We are well aware of UNESCO's decision in regard to the State Party Report that was adopted at the 44th session in China. We welcomed the fact that they acknowledged our progress towards implementing the requests of the World Heritage Centre for the TWWHA, including the recommendations of the 2015 reactive monitoring mission of the property.

Some elements of the draft decision required clarification from the Australian Government as to how the decisions would be implemented. The concerns expressed were about the Tourism Master Plan in the draft decision and how that related to previous decisions of the TMP.

We clarified this decision with the World Heritage Centre. The State Party referred this to the World Heritage Centre in relation to development in the TWWHA. We checked with them in regards to the decision as worded by the World Heritage Centre to "avoid any development at the property" before the detailed plan for a comprehensive cultural assessment of the Tasmanian World Heritage area is implemented. The wording of that decision was confusing and both us and the Commonwealth Government expressed concerns that the decision could be interpreted to imply that all development was to be halted until the assessment is completed.

The World Heritage Centre has since clarified this matter in a letter to the Australian Government dated 6 October 2021, noting that any development should be interpreted in the spirit of paragraph 172 of the operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. That is, it was only intended to apply to major restorations or new constructions which may affect the outstanding universal value of the property. The advice further states that any essential maintenance or activities that are consistent with the 2016 management plan and support the property's outstanding universal value would be considered acceptable.

The state's impact assessment process is being continued to be applied as they always have and if a project is found to have a significant impact on the outstanding universal values, it will be referred in accordance with the Commonwealth's Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 with the State Party determining which development proposals will be referred to the World Heritage Centre and advisory bodies.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 45 to relevance. Could the minister please let the Tasmanian Aboriginal people know where the cultural heritage assessment is at?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I was getting to that, Ms O'Connor, thank you.

We were commended for the work done to deliver a comprehensive cultural assessment for the 2013 extension areas in the TWWHA. The Tasmanian Government is fully committed

to the implementation of the detailed plan, but it is a multi-year plan that is to be carried out in stages over the 10-year duration of the 2016 management plan for the property.

As the State Party already reports to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre on projects that may cause a significant impact to World Heritage properties, such as the TWWHA, this fulfils the requirements of the World Heritage Centre.

The Tasmanian and Australian governments preside over robust system of development assessment which is subject to rigorous scrutiny under local, state and commonwealth assessment processes. We have a management plan that was approved by the World Heritage Centre which requires comprehensive assessments of cultural values for any development.

Our Tourism Master Plan, which I released last year, has raised the bar on these assessments by requiring early engagement with Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania and the Aboriginal Heritage Council.

To suggest that the State Party avoid all development until all cultural assessments for the entire TWWHA is complete is impractical and unnecessary.

Jane Howlett MLC - Presence of Simon Brookhouse

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.34 a.m.]

You have confirmed that Mr Brookhouse gave you the information which led you to mislead this house. This means that your office or you must have been in contact with him after the MPI on Tuesday. Mr Brookhouse was seen in this building again yesterday. Can you confirm who he met with and whether he met with anyone from your office?

Mr FERGUSON - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I ask you to guide the Leader of the Opposition in future when she makes the claim on misleading, which she is not entitled to do without a substantive motion. Mr Speaker, I bring that to your attention.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. My point is that questions asked have to do with the dealings of Government and the operation of the Government, not who is in and out of the building every day.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. Are you absolutely certain that Mr Brookhouse was in the parliament yesterday?

Ms White - Are you certain that he was not? It is my understanding that he was.

Mr GUTWEIN - Because I am not sure that he was. I will leave that up to you to explain.

Ms White - Can you confirm if he met with your office or not? You should know who meets with your office, Premier.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Renewable Energy and Irrigated Agriculture Potential

Mr ELLIS question to MINISTER for ENERGY and EMISSIONS REDUCTION, Mr BARNETT

[10.36 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on how the Tasmanian majority Liberal Government is delivering our aspirational plans to grow renewable energy and upsize Tasmania's irrigated agriculture potential?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his considerable interest in these important matters. The Government is leading Australia in securing our future in renewable energy, green hydrogen and irrigation.

In the state of the state address, the Premier outlined a clear vision, aspiration, to achieve our potential in renewable energy, green hydrogen and irrigation. It is exciting because we can say thank you for a century of hard work, innovation and effort on behalf of past Tasmanians who have invested to ensure that we have been 100 per cent fully self-sufficient in clean electricity and zero net emissions for six of the last seven years.

We have now legislated to go from 100 per cent to 200 per cent fully self-sufficient in renewable energy. I note with great delight that President Joe Biden in the State of the Union address yesterday announced his intention on behalf of the US to double their renewable energy production, clearly following Tasmania's lead. Tasmania is a global leader. We have the affordable, reliable, 100 per cent clean energy. We have green hydrogen production opportunities. We have made our funding application to the Australian Government for the green hydrogen hub at Bell Bay. We are feeling very confident about that. The Bell Bay green hydrogen hub is bolstered by Marinus Link and our Battery of the Nation plans.

We have \$100 000 in our Budget to consider the removal of fossil fuel from the Government's boilers. We have 60 government-owned fossil fuel boilers that we are looking at removing and replacing with renewable energy, including bioenergy. The Premier has made it clear we now can progress with \$10 million over four years to replace the ageing fossil fuel boilers in our state schools, in our hospitals and in our correctional facilities. We will be replacing those with renewable energy alternatives, including bioenergy, wood residue.

It is very exciting, with 10 to 15 boilers to be replaced. My department is doing the assessment now. I am very grateful for the injection of confidence the Premier announced just a few days ago. When it comes to water it is a comparative advantage in Tasmania.

Mr Speaker, I have said it before and I will say it again, water is liquid gold. It is delivering thousands of more jobs all across Tasmania, all the nooks and crannies of Tasmania, particularly those rural and regional areas, and millions are injected into the economy.

We can see the benefits of irrigation and water just driving along the highway with wine grapes in double digit production in terms of growth. We have seen it with the fruit and vegetables. It is on the up, it is growing across Australia - 0.4 per cent agricultural production in Tasmania to 14 per cent, thanks to water and our enterprising farmers. We have set a new record sustainably delivering more than 920 000 megalitres of high surety irrigation water, 51 000 megalitres on the previous year in addition. Water and irrigation is a game-changer.

Let us be clear: what was announced in the Premier's Address was the business case development for the South-East Irrigation Scheme. This will be Tasmania's largest irrigation scheme in history and is expected to deliver more than 40 000 megalitres annually, a \$370 million project.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, under standing order 48. The minister has now been self-congratulating for more than five minutes. I ask for your guidance on the length of his answer.

Mr SPEAKER - I will not take your point of order because I am timing it and it has only been just on four minutes and I was about to ask the minister to start winding up. This interjection has allowed him another 15 or 20 seconds to continue.

Mr BARNETT - This is incredibly important. Tasmania's largest irrigation project, 40 000 megalitres, a \$370 million project, will support a further \$150 million in on-farm investment with the potential to create thousands of jobs. On top of that we have put forward a business case to the Australian Government for an estimated \$300 million Southern Midlands scheme which will deliver similar benefits for the Tasmanian community right in the heart of Tasmania. We are very excited about it.

Mr SPEAKER - If you could start to wind up, minister.

Mr BARNETT - In winding up, water is liquid gold. It is all about the wise, sustainable use of water. We are investing, we are going to create the future, we are aspirational, unlike the other side that have no policies, no plans - absolutely zippo.

Steven Shinn - Alleged Investigation by Australian Federal Police

Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms OGILVIE

[10.42 a.m.]

Can you confirm the Chief Steward of harness racing, Steve Shinn, has been stood down and is currently being investigated by the Australian Federal Police? What is the investigation in relation to and what do you think this says about the former minister's attention to matters of integrity?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member that question, which is a very important subject. There has been no government that takes the industry of racing more seriously or has been more supportive. The Office of Racing Integrity, with a staff of 21 permanent officers and 18 casual stewards, is responsible for maintaining the probity and integrity of the three racing codes in Tasmania.

It would be inappropriate for me to comment on matters that are operational in nature so I will not do that. As you will be aware, having just been sworn in this week, I do intend to spend some time speaking with stakeholders and receiving all the appropriate and necessary departmental briefings. As to the specifics of the member's question, of course we will seek some advice.

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The question was very specific; there is not a preamble. It is specifically in relation to the status of the Chief Steward, the person who is charge of integrity in harness racing. I am asking you to draw her attention to the question.

Mr SPEAKER - Again, the point of order is not upheld for the simple fact that the minister was explaining the circumstances and going to the answer. I will allow the minister to continue.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, Mr Speaker. What I can say is how deeply humbled and grateful I am to recently be appointed to the role of minister; it is quite an honour. As to the specifics of the member's question, of course we will seek some advice.

Animal Welfare Manager, Tasracing - Alleged Resignation

Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms OGILVIE

[10.45 a.m.]

Can you confirm that the animal welfare manager at Tasracing is leaving in a fortnight and has told other staff in the welfare department that, and I quote, 'the department will be moving in a new direction'? Can you elaborate on what this new direction is for the department to be taking and what has prompted the animal welfare manager to leave? Do you have concerns about animal welfare in racing? What direction will you be taking the department?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. It is, of course, a very important issue. The Government is a very strong supporter of the racing industry, which makes a vital contribution to our economy and employment, particularly in regional Tasmania.

Late last year, Tasracing released an independent report undertaken by IER that revealed that the racing industry contributes \$185 million per annum to the Tasmanian economy -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, on relevance. There have been two questions now which have been very straight and clear from Mr Winter and the minister is obliged to answer them.

Mr SPEAKER - On the point of order, with questions and answers, it has been the practice of this Chamber that a lot of leniency is given when asking a question. This one might have been more specific but that leniency is also given to the minister when answering. The minister is only 20-odd seconds into her answer so I cannot assume what she is going to say in the next two or three minutes. I will allow the minister to continue.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thirty-eight per cent of that spend directly benefits our regional communities, which is an important point. The report also identified that over 5800 people participate in the industry, including breeders, owners, trainers, racing club staff, jockeys and drivers. The industry sustains 1515 full-time equivalent jobs, with 65 per cent a direct result of racing industry activity -

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Mr Speaker, under standing order 45. My question was very simple. It is about the animal welfare manager resigning. The minister has indicated she is going nowhere near the question. If she does not know the answer, she should sit down and come back to the parliament with the answer.

Mr SPEAKER - I do not uphold the point of order because it had several parts to it. It also asked what the minister's thoughts were and her direction for the future. I cannot determine what that is until I listen to the answer. Interjections at this point are simply unparliamentary to continue to interrupt the minister.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Having asked an important question I would have thought that the other side would be interested in the answer. Nonetheless, we will continue.

Probity and integrity are critically important in the racing industry and they underpin confidence in racing across all three codes in the state. The integrity functions are defined in the Racing Regulation Act 2004 which has not been substantially reviewed since its inception. That is why the Tasmanian Government has commenced a review of the Racing Regulation Act 2004 so that is what will be happening going forward. It is an important thing.

The Government has appointed highly regarded racing administrator Mr Dale Monteith to undertake the review. The review of the act will look to strengthen and enhance integrity functions, as well as animal welfare. This review will be an important step to ensure that the governance and integrity model in Tasmania is effective in delivering probity and integrity with appropriate education, compliance and enforcement functions that are easily understood by participants and the community.

I will also say that the Tasmanian Government regards the welfare of animals as critically important and I am aware that the majority of racing industry participants provide good care to their animals.

Mr Speaker, as a new minister I could not be more pleased or proud to have joined the team -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, under standing order 45, relevance. There have been two questions now, very direct. The minister should just either confirm or deny the question that was asked. Why should we put up with this?

Mr SPEAKER - I do not accept the point of order in the sense that the minister has been answering the different parts of the question and she has that right to answer but remain relevant to the racing industry, and that is what I have heard.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Because there have been a few interjections, can I check how much time I have left?

Mr SPEAKER - There is no set time but you have been interrupted significantly and you have been going for about three minutes at this point in time, so if you could conclude.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Ferguson - You are a lot more polite than the others.

Ms OGILVIE - I try to be polite. Mr Speaker, late last year Tasracing released an independent report undertaken by IER that I have referred to previously. What I will say is that in matters of investigations, integrity, governance and those issues that might be under review by third parties, it would be inappropriate for me to comment. I will take advice and be happy to come back.

Securing Tasmania's Future - Ms Ogilvie's Portfolios

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for SMALL BUSINESS, Ms OGILVIE

[10.51 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on how the majority Liberal Government is delivering our strong plan to secure Tasmania's future in the areas of Small Business, Hospitality and Events, Disability Services, Women, and Racing?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. This Liberal Government is focused on delivery our strong plan to secure Tasmania's future in 2022 and as the Premier has said on many occasions, Tasmania remains one of the safest places in the world to live and our economy leads the nation on many indicators.

It is a great honour to join the Cabinet team and it is a task I do not take lightly. As minister across all my new portfolios, I am committed to doing everything I can to improve the lives of Tasmanians. In relation to Small Business, as a previous small business owner myself, I am thrilled to be taking on the portfolio and continuing the important work being done by our Government to support our small business sector as we now transition to living with COVID-19. Since the start of the pandemic our small businesses have received more than \$160 million in COVID-19-specific support programs.

In fact, during the height of the pandemic in 2020 our Government provided the highest level of support for businesses per capita of any jurisdiction in the country and, as we now transition to living with COVID-19, we are continuing to support those businesses that are facing challenges, most recently making funding available through a second tranche of our COVID-19 Business Impact Support Program. Whilst applications from round 1 are still being

finalised, I am pleased to report that so far more than \$1.8 million has been distributed to 938 applicants. Round 2 of the program only opened on 15 February and so far 470 businesses have received more than \$1 million and this program will remain open until 8 March 2022.

Also importantly, we have listened to what businesses around the state have been telling us and have simplified the application and approvals process. We have also doubled the maximum funding amount that is available to \$10 000. We will continue to listen to their new and fresh ideas as we move forward together. We will also recognise the benefits of events that celebrate our communities, that showcase our regions and promote artistic, cultural and sporting excellence and participation. I know the significant impact that COVID-19 has had on the sector and I will continue to be a voice for them.

In relation to Disability Services, I have always worked for fairness and equality, including the disability sector, and I am committed to supporting Tasmanians living with disability to access the best possible services and support they and their families need. This is why we took a strong plan to the 2021 election, including establishing the first ever Tasmanian Disability Services Commissioner. I care deeply about this sector and will take very seriously the responsibility placed in me to deliver this important measure. This builds on our earlier commitments to support Tasmanians living with disabilities, including a review of the Tasmanian Disability Services Act 2011. As a newly appointed minister, I am committed to engaging with Tasmanians with disability as we progress our commitments.

In relation to the Women portfolio, the Tasmanian Government is committed to ensuring that all Tasmanians have equal opportunities to participate in our social, political and cultural and economic life. Through the Tasmanian Women's Strategy, the Tasmanian Government has made significant progress in improving opportunities for women in our state, and I look forward to the launch of the next iteration of the Tasmanian Women's Strategy, which will build on our current work and with a renewed focus on achieving gender equality with women's leadership at the forefront to ensure that more women are supported to be leaders of tomorrow. Women's economic security is a key element of a fair society and I am excited about continuing my work to develop women's leadership opportunities.

In relation to Racing, Mr Speaker -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Again, we are just about to hit five minutes on a Dorothy Dix question. I ask for your guidance to ministers about the time they take to tell us how terrific they are.

Mr SPEAKER - Again, Ms O'Connor, I do not need your assistance in managing this House, thank you very much. As the minister is talking about her portfolios and it is the first time she has talked in general about them, I will allow some leniency in the time limit.

Ms OGILVIE - I appreciate that, Mr Speaker. Women is such an important portfolio and I was very pleased to lay all of that on the record.

In relation to Racing, as I have said this morning already, racing is a critical industry for Tasmania and the Tasmanian Liberal Government is a strong supporter of the industry. The Liberal Government is continuing to back Tasmania's racing industry with further investment, including an annual increase in stakes across all three codes. It is critical that the act under which the Tasmanian racing industry operates is modern and contemporary and that is why the

Tasmanian Government has commenced a review of the Racing Regulation Act 2004, which has not been substantially reviewed since its inception. It is time, Mr Speaker.

The Government is investing more money than ever before into greyhound and horse welfare and we know there is more to do. Of course there is more to do and I am committed to continuing to improve animal welfare outcomes in the racing industry. The Government has a strong plan to secure Tasmania's future in 2022 and I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to delivering on the plan across a range of important portfolios and I will continue to work hard for all Tasmanians.

COVID-19 - Vaccinations at Pharmacies for Children

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.58 a.m.]

Now that schools have returned it is going to be critically important that children aged five to 11 can get a coronavirus vaccine. In every other state and territory, based on medical advice, children in this age group can get the jab at their local participating pharmacy, except for Tasmania, where pharmacies are not allowed to give the vaccine to five to 11-year-olds. This is particularly problematic for families in regional Tasmania. Why have Tasmanian pharmacies been excluded from this critical part of the vaccine rollout? Is this a vote of no confidence by your Government in the state's pharmacists?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr O'Byrne for his second question this week. I again point out that he has demonstrated that he has an interest in matters that impact on our community, unlike what has been going on on this side all week.

We have seen the state announce an aspirational program in terms of what we are going to do in respect of building homes and hospitals and sporting infrastructure, putting Tasmania on the national stage, creating jobs, building on the fact that we have a world-leading economy, in terms of the view that people take on Tasmania at the moment. We are also influencing the American President, as we heard this morning. So they should listen. If we were our own country we would be in the top five in the world in our emissions profile and our progress towards renewable energy.

Laid bare today, we had the Leader of the Opposition making stuff up again, and it has been called out quite clearly -

Mr O'BYRNE - Point of order, Mr Speaker. This may be interesting to the Premier, but there is a pretty clear question around pharmacists and the vaccine rollout for young children in Tasmania. If the Premier is saying in his prelude that this an important question, could he answer it?

Mr SPEAKER - Thank you, you do not have to say it. Premier, if you could in among you answer address the question.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, I will. I was surprised by that. I thought you would be the last person to defend this lot after the way they went about dealing with you.

Setting that aside, the point I was making was that once again Mr O'Byrne asked a question that went to what our Tasmanian community is interested in. On the issue of pharmacies, we have worked very closely with our pharmacists, and we have worked very closely with our GPs, and what we are seeing across the state is record levels of vaccination. We still lead the states in vaccinations for our five- to 11-year-olds, as I understand it.

What we have asked our pharmacies to do, perfectly reasonably, is to focus on the booster, to ensure that we can get those levels up as quickly as we possibly can. I am thankful for the way we have worked with pharmacists, GPs and state-run clinics, where we had many health professionals, many public servants, who have been going above and beyond to ensure we have one of the highest vaccination rates, not just in this country, but in the world.

In finishing, you have been caught out yet again. You have focused on rumour and innuendo and the Leader of the Opposition has been called out for the fraud that she is.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Question time has now expired.

[11.03 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, I ask that given the conduct during question time that you would provide, and the Government would support immediately forthwith, the Leader of the Opposition being able to withdraw her false claim in relation to Mr Brookhouse.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Perhaps the Leader of Government Business could explain which standing order he is moving this under and what authority does he have to do this?

Mr FERGUSON - The Government would be prepared to suspend standing orders to provide an opportunity for Ms White to do so if that is required, unless she could do it with your indulgence forthwith.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - I can give the Leader of the Opposition the opportunity to respond to the Leader of the House's issue. Other than that, it is up to the House to decide with a motion to suspend.

Ms WHITE - Mr Speaker, I will, on indulgence, use the same defence that the Premier has used by coming into this House and misleading it, in that I was acting on the advice I was provided.

Mr SPEAKER - Question time has now concluded.

Time expired.

PETITION

Consistent Speed Limits - Channel Highway

[11.05 a.m.]

Mr Winter presented a petition from approximately 275 residents of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel region drawing the attention of the House to the need for a consistent speed limit of 50 kilometres per hour in towns located on the Channel Highway to improve road safety.

Petition read.

CONDOLENCE MOTION

Hillcrest Primary School Tragedy

[11.08 a.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Premier)(by leave) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Expresses its deep sadness at the deaths of Peter Dodt, Chace Harrison, Jalailah Jones, Zane Mellor, Jye Sheehan and Addison Stewart, whose lives were lost following the incident that took place at Hillcrest Primary School on 16 December 2021.
- (2) Acknowledges the children who were significantly injured during this incident, including Declean Brown and Beau Medcraft, and that we wish them a speedy recovery.
- (3) Respectfully tenders its heartfelt sympathies to the families and friends of these children in their bereavement, and extends our best wishes to the community.
- (4) Expresses its heartfelt thanks to the first responders, teachers and school-based staff, health professionals and all those who have been impacted by the incident that took place on 16 December 2021.
- (5) Acknowledges those who are continuing to support the families, friends and community as part of their ongoing recovery.

Mr Speaker, I know that those who have the opportunity to speak today will speak on behalf of all members in this place, united as one in our grief and our support for the Hillcrest families and their community.

On 16 December 2021, people right across the state, indeed the country and throughout the world, were deeply shocked by the tragic incident at Hillcrest Primary School. Hearts everywhere broke as the tragic circumstances became known. None of us, though, will ever

fully comprehend, nor we will ever fully understand, how the parents, carers, their broader families and loved ones felt, even though we share as best we can their pain and grief.

Today in this parliament we stand as one to honour the six young lives lost and the three children who were injured. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the families and the many people who have been deeply affected by this event. I am sure that I speak for all Tasmanians when I say that the events of that day have left our community with an incomprehensible sense of loss. These children who were taken from us far too soon will forever be remembered. They will never be forgotten. Their memory will live on and we will continue to provide whatever support we can to their families, friends and local community.

Our communities' common humanity has been laid bare for all to witness. Thousands of people, whether connected or not to the families who were impacted in the most severest of ways or to the Hillcrest school and community, reached out to provide whatever support they could, both as an immediate reaction and in the ongoing aftermath.

To those who offered support to the families or broader Hillcrest Primary School community, I offer my most heartfelt and sincere thanks.

To the families and carers of the six children who tragically passed away that day, this parliament provides its deepest and most sincere condolences for the loss of Peter Dodt, Chase Harrison, Jalailah Jones, Zane Mellor, Jye Sheehan and Addison Stewart.

To the families and carers of the three children injured, including Declean Brown and Beau Medcraft, we wish you all a speedy and full recovery from the terrible ordeal that you have been through.

I take a moment to acknowledge the first responders who were there, our police and ambulance officers, as well as our teachers and school-based staff, bystanders and neighbours, and our health professionals who all responded with compassion and bravery. These workers and community members provided care and comfort for those experiencing what can only be described as the most unimaginable trauma.

I say again to the Hillcrest community and, in particular, the families of the children who passed away or who were injured in this tragedy, it is our commitment that we will continue to provide you with whatever support we can. To the families, loved ones, students, staff and broader Hillcrest community, we stand with you today and every day. We send you our love, offer you our support and extend our deepest condolences for your loss.

[11.14 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise to join with the Premier to make a contribution on behalf of the parliamentary Labor Party. I will be joining with other members in this place, including both Labor members for Braddon, who will also speak as we convey our sympathies to all those impacted by the tragedy that occurred at Hillcrest Primary School.

I have thought about what to say on this condolence motion. I have written words then erased them because they all seem insignificant compared to the tragedy that occurred at Hillcrest Primary School. I cannot imagine how dramatically life has changed for all those who have been impacted by what occurred on that day, 16 December 2021. I cannot begin to

imagine the grief and the heartbreak but I want to take this opportunity to extend my love and heartfelt sympathies to those who lost their children. I, too, would like to speak their names in this place to honour them and to show my respect: Peter Dodt, Chace Harrison, Jalailah Jones, Zane Mellor, Jye Sheehan, Addison Stewart. I also extend my love to those children who were injured, including Declean Brown and Beau Medcraft. We wish them a speedy recovery.

I would also like to acknowledge that the tragic events of that day were felt by many people who were not connected to the school. I pay tribute to all of those who responded to help the children. Thank you.

No one ever imagines that something like this could ever occur. I can remember the feeling of disbelief and shock when I heard the news. It was truly one of the most devastating events ever to happen in our state. It was evident to me when I visited Hillcrest Primary School to pay my respects and lay flowers at the memorial that the outpouring of grief was widely shared across the Tasmanian community. We all stood together as one community on the occasion of such a terrible tragedy, just as we stand together as one in this parliament today to extend our love and support.

I know that words will never be enough but, with the words I share today and that we share in this place, I honour the lives of the children who were taken far too soon and pay my deepest respects to all who loved them.

[11.16 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, the English language is inadequate for times like this, inadequate to put the words around our bottomless sorrow for those families who have lost so much, to the Hillcrest school community at the loss of such brilliant sparks of light and promise. How do we grapple with that loss of life and potential on that warm December morning?

Most Tasmanians will remember where they were when they heard. The feeling across the island was one of utter disbelief and growing grief, the heartbreak, as this tragedy unfolded.

I too, want to name those beautiful children who lost their lives that day: Peter Dodt, Chace Harrison, Jalailah Jones, Zane Mellor, Jye Sheehan and Addison Stewart. I also want to acknowledge the injuries suffered by Declean Brown, Beau Medcraft and others.

What vast rivers of grief those six beautiful children have left behind. For their parents, it must be so raw and all we can do as a parliament is express our love, send our strength.

I acknowledge, as the Premier referred to, the strength of community and the common humanity, the way the Hillcrest school community and Devonport itself wrapped its arms around those grieving families. I had a look at Hillcrest Primary's Facebook page yesterday: the love that they are showing for those kids and those families, the school activities for children affected by the tragedy over summer. Skateboarding, lunches, Lego, junior martial arts - the school community sticking together, grieving together and finding strength together.

As we know, trauma ripples outwards. The trauma in that community is felt across the island. There will also be trauma experienced by the people who were there, who were first on the scene. On behalf of the Greens, I, too, thank the people who were standing there attending that event, the first responders, those who rushed to try to help. They, too, must be feeling very

raw. For those families, we cannot take away your pain but know that we know you suffer. We are here for you when and if you need us, not just a bunch of politicians but your fellow Tasmanians who grieve with you and stand with you.

I wanted to close with a statement that is on the Hillcrest Primary School website from the staff. It says:

The staff at Hillcrest Primary School extend their sincerest and deepest condolences to the families and friends of our 6 students tragically taken.

They will all be remembered for their unique contributions:

Addison, the quiet achiever;
Zane, the cheeky gamer;
Jye, the courageous one;
Peter, the helpful one;
Jalailah, the nurturing one; and
Chace, the sporty one.

The staff say:

Our hearts are broken that they will not grow to reach their full potential but we will always be grateful that we knew them.

'Hilly Kids' forever.

[11.21 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Deputy Premier) - Mr Speaker, I rise on the condolence motion with deep sadness at the tragic death of six much-loved children in a devastating incident at Hillcrest Primary School in Devonport on 16 December 2021. Our thoughts are also with the other children who were hospitalised and are now recovering and their families.

The deaths of Addison, Chace, Jalailah, Jye, Peter and Zane have touched us all. Their deaths and the ongoing effects of this tragedy will continue to be felt by many in the days, weeks, months and years to come, and felt by loved ones and family, friends, classmates, teachers and support staff, first responders, healthcare professionals and the broader community.

To lose a child just starting out on life's journey, full of possibilities, only to have their time and their dreams for the future cut short, is a time of immense grief and sadness. Each child was a precious individual and what I heard at their farewells will remain with me always. At each farewell every young life was celebrated. We heard of their unique personalities. For some, we learned about their favourite colours, their adored pets, the sports, activities, family and friendships that brought them enjoyment and happiness. They are qualities that made them special to the people close to them, but most of all we heard how much they were loved, how much they will always be loved and how incredibly missed they will be.

I would like to acknowledge, thank and pay tribute to all our first responders, bystanders, police, ambulance officers and health care workers who all worked so incredibly hard to save those previous lives. Thank you to the Hillcrest Primary School staff who care so much for

their students, which was clearly evident as I heard such beautiful tributes from teachers themselves at some of the students' farewells, and I know that their hearts are broken too.

To the parents and families of the children who passed away, my heart goes out to you. I am sincerely sorry. Your loss is felt so deeply and we are here for you in the days, weeks and years to come. You will never be alone in your grief. I know the words of those who are speaking today are also supported by all of us across this parliament. Addison, Chace, Jalailah, Jye, Peter and Zane, we will forever remember you.

Members - Hear, hear.

[11.25 a.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, there are moments when time stops and a tragedy occurs that has a profound impact, an impact that will last forever. The date of 16 December 2021 was one of those moments of great tragedy at Hillcrest Primary School. This moment in time had a deep impact on the Hillcrest families, school community and the wider Tasmanian, Australian and international communities.

It was a day when the school community was meant to be celebrating the end of their school year, but became a day and event that will be etched in the hearts and minds of all Tasmanians forever. Today I want to extend my deepest sympathy, strength, love and thoughts to the families and loved ones of Peter Dodt, Chace Harrison, Jalailah Jones, Zane Mellor, Jye Sheehan and Addison Stewart, who lost their lives following the Hillcrest tragedy. These families are forever in the hearts and minds of all Tasmanians and indeed Australians. I cannot begin to imagine what they continue to go through.

I also want to wish the children who were significantly injured during this incident, including Deaclan Brown and Beau Medcraft. I send my very best wishes for their ongoing recovery and acknowledge what they have been through and offer my ongoing love, thoughts and support to them and their families.

The young Tasmanians who lost their lives were loved and endearing members of their school community and our wider community. Our close-knit community on the north-west coast has wrapped its arms around these families and everybody impacted by this terrible tragedy. This community support will continue where and when required, no matter how much time lapses.

I also want to recognise the first responders, teachers and school-based staff, health professionals and all those who have been impacted by the incident that took place on that tragic day. For your efforts, we will be forever thankful, and I want to extend my love and thoughts to the Hillcrest school community ongoing.

The touching and heartfelt tribute at Hillcrest Primary, where thousands of people gathered to pay their respects, was emblematic of the way in which this tragedy has touched our community and how we as a community and parliament stand united with those affected. The emotion at the site was palpable on the occasions that I attended to pay my respects. Peter, Chace, Jalailah, Zane, Jye and Addison, you will be in our hearts and minds forever. Rest in peace.

Members - Hear, hear.

[11.28 a.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Education, Children and Youth) - Mr Speaker, I rise today to support the motion and to add my own message to the families of the children whose lives were lost or changed forever as a result of the tragic events at Hillcrest Primary School on 16 December last year.

My name is Roger Jaensch. I am a father and a north-west coaster. I am one of the many people who represent you in this parliament and I am now also the minister responsible for Tasmania's schools and children. In all of these capacities, I humbly offer you my sincere condolences and my deep sorrow for your pain and your loss.

I cannot imagine the depths of your grief, but I do know that thousands of your fellow Tasmanians are grieving with you. In the north-west in particular, people you have never met are mourning the loss and suffering of your children as members of our community, and through their thoughts and words and their gifts, they offer you their heartfelt support which will always be there for you. They will never forget that day, your children or you.

As the minister responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children in our schools, I promise you that we will learn everything we can about what happened on that day. We will do everything in our power to prevent anything like that ever happening again. We will support you and your school and your community through this tragedy. You are not alone.

[11.31 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, I rise to add to the condolence motion on the Hillcrest Primary School incident. I thank the parliament and the Premier for making this opportunity available and also for the words that have already been spoken.

I also wish to express my deepest sadness at the deaths of Peter Dodt, Chace Harrison, Jalailah Jones, Zane Mellor, Jye Sheehan and Addison Stewart whose lives were lost following the incident that took place at the Hillcrest Primary School.

It has already been expressed, but this is one of those moments where you will always remember where you were when you found out.

Grief is the price that we pay for love. It is quite obvious from the reaction of the community that these children and everybody involved in this incident were loved and are loved. The expression of grief we saw ripple throughout the community and at the site itself, with the spontaneous memorial that sprang up, and the grief that was expressed by the community during that whole period demonstrates the love that the community felt for these children and all those impacted by this terrible tragedy.

I also wish to acknowledge the children who were significantly injured during the incident, including Declean Brown and Beau Medcraft. I too wish them a speedy recovery.

I respectfully tender my heartfelt sympathies to the families and friends of these children in their bereavement. I know this extends to the rest of the community. You only had to witness the streets of Devonport and the numbness that overcame our community during that period.

I express my heartfelt thanks to the first responders, teachers and school-based staff, the health professionals and all those who have been impacted by this incident.

I acknowledge the continuing support of families, friends and the community as part of what is going to be a long and ongoing recovery. I especially recognise all those who did all they could for the children on that day.

We are united in grief in this parliament, as is our community. We are also united in our support and love for everyone impacted by this tragedy and we pledge our continuing support.

[11.33 a.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, today I join in one voice with my colleagues in this place to express my condolences to the families of those so tragically killed at Hillcrest Primary School on 16 December 2021.

It is scarcely possible for any parent to comprehend the suffering of the families of those beautiful children and what they are going through now and will go through into the future. It is not something that any parent should have to experience. While as a community we simply cannot understand their pain, we can nonetheless remain united in our desire to comfort them, to come alongside them in their darkest moments and support them over the coming months.

It was once observed that there is no grief like the grief that does not speak, so let us as a community and as a parliament never mistake their grief in silence for no longer needing to support them. The outpouring of grief expressed by the school community, and more broadly by the people of Devonport and all Tasmanians, I hope, will bring some comfort to the families of those young lives lost, no matter how insignificant compared to their pain. Let us hark back to the lament of Robert Burns:

So, fell the pride of all our hopes
My age's future shade

Rest in peace little angels.

Motion agreed to nemine contradicente.

Motion by **Mr Gutwein** agreed to -

That a copy of the foregoing resolution together with the transcript of the debate be forwarded to the families of the Hillcrest tragedy.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Preventing COVID Mass Infection

[11.37 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: preventing COVID mass infection.

Mr Speaker, there are many things that a government needs to do to protect its community, but surely very high on that list ought to be to prevent the mass infection in its community of a potentially deadly and disabling virus. We called this matter of public importance today to underscore the important reality that the COVID-19 pandemic is not over.

The pandemic is far from over internationally, in Australia and in Tasmania. We are seeing more deaths from Omicron, the newest version of the coronavirus, SARS-Cov-2, in January and February this year than we did in the whole preceding two years of the global pandemic in Australia. The Australian Bureau of Statistics confirms that those deaths were due to COVID-19 and were not incidental to COVID-19.

The pandemic is not over in Tasmania. Today we record that yesterday's case numbers were 1117 Tasmanians infected with COVID-19. We have 5411 with active disease and we have had 47 837 confirmed cases of the virus in Tasmania, almost all of those in the past two-and-a-half months.

The pandemic is not over globally. We are seeing wide-ranging outbreaks of infection. Hospitals are being overwhelmed in countries around the world today. We are seeing the majority of the world's population not having received a single dose let alone more than two and the required three doses of vaccine necessary to prevent symptomatic Omicron infection or hospitalisation and death.

We have the majority of the world unprotected from SARS-Cov-2 and therefore capable of passing infections and establishing outbreaks of new variants. We do not know if and when new variants will emerge but all of the evidence we have from our virologists and immunologists and people who study the history of pathogens and viral outbreaks shows it is 95 per cent likely new variants will emerge. There is no information to guide us on whether they will be more or less severe. It is certainly true that a new variant could emerge at any time that could be more deadly than the variants we have seen so far.

Mr Speaker, the pandemic is not over because vaccinations are not providing protection in the community. Three vaccine doses can provide substantial protection against serious hospitalisations, but they do not provide durable protection. We are expecting to see people who have had three doses of vaccine against coronavirus to have the effectiveness waning by April. We know that people respond differently to vaccines. For some people effectiveness starts waning after two weeks. We know that the vast majority of Tasmanians are not properly vaccinated. Even though waning effectiveness occurs, we get some measure of protection while we have the adequate number of doses, but only 65 per cent of Tasmanians have had a third dose. We do not know the numbers for third doses for children, but for five- to 11-year-olds, less than 1 per cent have had a second dose, while just 20 per cent of 12- to 15-year-olds are yet to receive a second dose. That means essentially that the majority of Tasmanians are unprotected.

We have had a dangerous change in the narrative, and it started before the borders opened and it has not stopped. This Premier is responsible for refusing to acknowledge the gravity of the situation we are in, recognising the risks of long COVID, understanding that he made the choice to open Tasmania's borders when he did without waiting for the vaccines that were already foreshadowed to be approved by ATAGI to be made available in January to children in Tasmania. He has opened the borders. We have nearly 50 000 people in Tasmania who have been exposed to a virus that the scientists tell us 37 per cent of people may go on to

experience long COVID, which has potentially devastating, serious, disabling and ongoing consequences. We still do not know what they are properly because it is too soon.

What is very clear is that this is not the time to talk about removing masks. This is not the time to abandon testing, tracing, and surveillance systems. This is not the time to fail to talk about preparing for vaccination rollouts in the six-month to five-year-olds. Now is the time to be putting more effort into preparing us for what the future may hold - is very likely to hold - and that means putting the interests of Tasmanian people, the health and safety of vulnerable people first, above short-term business interests and the other pressures of tourism.

Time expired.

[11.43 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Health) - Mr Speaker, I thank the member, Dr Woodruff, for bringing the matter of public importance forward today. Indeed, it is a very important matter we are discussing. I assure the member that no-one across government believes that the pandemic is over. There is a long way to go when it comes to the pandemic. As we have navigated our way through over the last two years, there have been extraordinary efforts from everyone across Tasmania, particularly those at the front line of our health system, and those decision-makers, including, I have to say, very much the leadership of the Premier. We have always had at the forefront of our minds that number-one priority is to keep Tasmanians safe. It has been a very big challenge, nationally and internationally.

A member - Well you haven't done it.

Mr SPEAKER - Member for Franklin, order.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of clarification, Mr Speaker, but I beg your pardon, that was not me who made that comment.

Mr SPEAKER - My apologies but the masks do make it difficult to tell.

Dr Woodruff - Accepted.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It has been important that the Government and the decision-making processes have been guided by Public Health advice along the way. We have listened to that advice and have acted accordingly, and we will continue to do so. That Public Health advice has made us one of the safest jurisdictions not only in Australia but indeed across the globe as well -

Dr Woodruff - Past tense. Made us. Not any longer.

Mr SPEAKER - Member for Franklin, that is you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As we have stepped our way through COVID-19 cautiously and responsibly, we are also transitioning to living with COVID-19 in a very sensible and measured way. Our investment in hospital capacity has ensured our health system has been able to cope with the surge of COVID-19 cases in Tasmania. Our Public Health measures such as the vaccination and booster program, safeguards in our high-risk settings, the use of masks and

continued social distancing has helped us to avoid Omicron spreading uncontrollably throughout the state.

Vaccination, as we have said many times, is the leading defence against COVID-19. We have worked very hard across our state clinics, partnerships with GPs, partnerships with our pharmacies across Tasmania, meeting regularly as I have done to hear the feedback on the ground of the challenges that have been presented along the way and acting accordingly to ensure that everyone is in this together, working collaboratively to ensure that not only are we introducing measures to support the protection of Tasmanians but also particularly that incredible vaccination rate on which we continue to build.

Tasmania has been a leader in the delivery of vaccine per capita and we targeted and delivered 90 per cent of eligible people fully vaccinated before opening the borders. That is in clear distinction to other states. People made comparisons with Western Australia but their vaccination rates were nowhere near ours when we opened our borders on 15 December 2021.

We had an ambitious vaccination plan and we opened when safe and ready to do so and we have not stopped there. We have continued the vaccination program and for those 12 and above the first dose is over 99 per cent. Incredibly, everyone involved were just over 96.89 per cent second dose. For those 16 and above boosters are just under 60 per cent. For five- to 11-year-olds the first dose is over 61 per cent. The Premier has reflected many times, as have I, that we are leading the nation in terms of our vaccination of five- to 11-year-olds first dose, at 12 per cent above the national average.

Our health service was prepared and is successfully managing the Omicron wave. The strength of our health system over the course of the last challenging months is that we have been able to adapt, be flexible, measured and proactive for very clear reasons. We were prepared. Immense planning went into the borders reopening. That enabled us to be adaptable and flexible as the Omicron wave hit and the transmission of course was higher than expected. Also, there can be no doubt that Tasmania has the lowest rate per capita of COVID-19 hospitalisations and ICU of any state with an open border. Tasmania had the lowest rate between December 2021 and February 2022 of admitted patients for active COVID-19 cases. To all those involved with the COVID@home program, I take my hat off - a significant contributor to Tasmania having the lowest rate of hospital admissions as a proportion of active cases compared to other open states. This program has supported close to 4000 COVID-19-positive cases to safely recover at home since its inception. Again, I commend.

Our extensive planning and strength in emergency management enhanced our ability to flex and move. Undoubtedly, the Omicron wave hit faster than our previous modelling had indicated but in the majority of cases has been less severe. Detecting cases of COVID-19 is critical to controlling spread and preventing community transmission. Testing for COVID-19 is a key strategy to keep Tasmanians safe and is part of our preparedness planning. We planned, we were prepared, and that enabled us to be flexible and adaptable. We have also been guided by the very best of public health advice along the way, which you have ignored.

Time expired.

[11.51 a.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I thank Dr Woodruff for bringing on this matter of public importance this morning.

While I touched on a number of areas in relation to this very important matter in my state of the state response yesterday, I welcome the opportunity to talk about some of those important points today on the matter of public importance.

The last 18 months, prior to 15 December, Tasmanians' lives were largely unaltered by COVID-19. We did not have any COVID-19 cases in our community. That changed significantly for Tasmanians when the Government opened the borders on 15 December. It was a period of frenzy, concern for Tasmanians and so much uncertainty.

The point we made at the time and in the lead-up to that was all about our preparedness. Once the borders opened on 15 December we really began to see the flaws in the Government's plan and preparedness for reopening. In fact, the Delta shield came right down. There simply were not the resources to implement the key components. Those key parts of that plan, part of that shield to keep the community safe, were contact tracing and testing. What happened? We saw contact tracing fold. There were not the staff and resources to undertake the work required, even though the Government had committed to getting additional contact tracers from interstate to assist Tasmania. But it all happened at once, right around the country, and that additional resource was not available at that time. There were supposed to be an additional 200 contact tracers as part of the Delta shield plan. What happened to those people?

Testing: I had people contacting me who had driven for hours to get a test only to be turned away when the testing site was closing, to go home without a test.

Those key components of keeping the community safe, contact tracing, testing and vaccinations, which I will get to very soon, were the critical parts that needed to be adequately resourced by this Government in the community to make sure that people were not having to be admitted to hospital or to a COVID-19 care facility, if they had one operational in their local community, which was not the case in the north-west.

To get back to the testing, rapid antigen tests should have been free and widely available right across our communities. I hear from people in Circular Head and other rural and regional areas who are still having difficulty getting them. You could not find one for love nor money. Yet people were on their own, expected to be undertaking testing in their own home to keep themselves and their families safe and to stop the transmission of COVID-19, the speed it was being transmitted across our community. People simply did not have the resources or tools to do that.

That was a distinct change from a Government that had had the Tasmanian people's back right until that point. I have no qualms in saying that up until that point, the Government had managed COVID-19 very well in the community. Perhaps that is one of the things that they have done the best over the last nearly 10 years but it all started to fall apart.

The other point I want to make is about vaccination rates. The important thing now is boosters. In the plan we released a number of months ago around our response to COVID-19 in the community, we highlighted the importance of access to boosters no matter where you live. We still do not have regular walk-in clinics where people can get a booster. For children aged five to 11, we should have had community pharmacists involved in the rollout, particularly across rural and regional areas where statewide clinics were not being provided frequently in those communities for those people.

I thank all the staff who have worked really hard, tirelessly, over Christmas, the busiest time of the year. They were frantic and they did not have the resources they required. I thank them very much for the work and service they have provided to the Tasmanian community.

The other point I want to make is about school preparedness. There came a point in time when we did not have a responsible minister in the state. We had the Minister for Health carrying the load for Education as well, when you already have a huge load managing COVID-19 and all of those responsibilities over what really was a very frantic period of time. It was not the right time for the Minister for Education to take leave when they should have been here providing information and support to the community about the return to school.

There were no good details for parents. I did not find out about my children's return to school until a week before we were due to go back to school. To give people two rapid antigen tests, if you have a child who is sick and has to be screened before they go back to school, you use them up and they are gone. Two tests are not enough. They should have been widely available and they should have been free for everybody. It is a Public Health policy failure of the Australian Government and those governments across eight jurisdictions. I know some are providing them but we did not do that in Tasmania and we should have. People should have had the skills to take care of themselves and to monitor whether they were putting their family and those they love at risk by having access to a test.

The other component of testing is PCR testing and the fact that was outsourced to private laboratories. People were waiting up to five days to get a test result to know whether or not they were positive. The disruption that causes to people's lives and livelihood - and I make the point again that the business support package rolled out during that time was not rolled out quickly enough, it was inadequate when it was and it certainly did not provide any support for Tasmanian workers who had lost hours and were severely impacted by COVID-19.

I thank Dr Woodruff for bringing this forward today. The work on this is not complete. We still need to remain diligent as a community and the Government still needs to have this as a major priority in keeping Tasmanians safe. That means putting the adequate resources required into vaccination clinics, boosters, and getting those vaccination rates up for five to 11-year olds, particularly in the north-west, where it is low.

Time expired.

[11.58 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, we thought it was very important that the House be given an opportunity today to fully debate the state's level of preparedness for the pandemic after two years of being COVID-19-free. We heard from the Health minister just then a self-congratulatory claim that the Government has acted cautiously and responsibly. Tell that to the young people who were encouraged to go to the Party in the Apocalypse super-spreader event which led to a spike in COVID-19 positive cases among young people. Tell that to the parents of the 1703 Tasmanian children and young people who we were told last night are confirmed as having tested positive.

Tell that to the now nearly 50 000 Tasmanians who have been exposed to a potentially deadly and disabling virus with known long-term consequences for many people who recover from the acute phase of the virus.

Tell that to the people who were abandoned to find their own rapid antigen tests, line up for hours only to be sent away.

Tell that to the people who for love nor money could not get a call back from COVID@home while this virus gripped them. In the words of one constituent who spoke to me in tears about her experience, it made her feel so much pain because she felt like her body was being ripped inside out. She did not hear from COVID@home for six full days. When she spoke to a COVID@home doctor, who tried to tell her her symptoms were mild, that doctor would not provide their last name.

We were not prepared for Omicron. On the day the Premier lifted the border protections, zero per cent of Tasmanian children under 12 were vaccinated. Most Tasmanians over the age of 50 had been vaccinated with two doses of AstraZeneca, which we knew before the 15 December was ineffectual in preventing Omicron infection.

We now have raging COVID-19 transmission in our schools. We have a Government that decided to send children into classrooms who were unvaccinated with no masks.

We have a Government that gaslit the people of Tasmania by continually referring to Omicron as 'mild', against the advice of the World Health Organization which was clear that this is dangerous language. Omicron may be less severe than Delta but Delta was twice as severe as the original wild Wuhan variant of this virus.

We have been criticised for raising our very deep concerns about this Government's approach. We have never in nearly four months since the border restrictions were lifted heard a single Government minister, or indeed the director of Public Health, acknowledge long COVID-19.

There are so many scientific papers now that confirm long COVID-19, which impacts somewhere between 10 per cent to 30 per cent of people who recover from acute infection. We have papers that confirm SARS virus is found in tissues all over the body from recovered patients. We have papers that confirm immunological impacts. We have papers that confirm damage to the brain. We have now the experience of the United Kingdom and the United States, which are some 18 months ahead of us on this pandemic, that tells us the long-term health consequences for a significant proportion of people who are infected with COVID-19 can be profound.

This virus, contrary to what we hear from Tasmanian Public Health, is not just a respiratory virus. It is a multi-system virus. It is a vascular disease. It gets into our blood, it creates microclots. It has been found in all the organs of people who have died as a result of COVID-19 when autopsies are undertaken. It is found in the reproductive organs.

This Government failed to properly inform and educate Tasmanians about risk. It gaslit them by telling them this variant is 'mild'.

We have had 25 people die with COVID-19 through this pandemic. Quite often we get told when there is another death that there were underlying conditions. The state has the highest chronic disease burden in the country. Many Tasmanians will have some form of underlying condition. It devalues their life, cuts short, when governments say this person who passed away

had an underlying condition. In Denmark and the United Kingdom there is a new variant which has led to all-time high mortality rates.

Time expired.

[12.05 a.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, while the Greens have been trading in fear and falsehoods about COVID-19, every step of the way during the pandemic we have acted on Public Health advice. And we will -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Mr Tucker has accused us of falsehoods. It is now on him to explain what those falsehoods are.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. The Leader of the Greens will resume her seat.

Ms O'Connor - What are the falsehoods?

Mr TUCKER - Calling aeroplanes Omicron air-tubes, that is one thing to start with, Ms O'Connor.

It is important to note that, while nationally other jurisdictions opened their borders at 80 per cent vaccinations for 16 years and older, we waited. The Premier set a much higher benchmark of 90 per cent vaccinated for 12 years and over. This gave Tasmanians the higher level of protection needed and ensured our hospitalisation rates would be lower.

Since opening our borders on 15 December, we have experienced one of the lowest hospitalisation rates in the country. That is a real achievement. It says a lot about the success of our vaccination program, that 100 per cent of Tasmanians aged 16 years and older have had at least one dose of the vaccination. Almost 97 per cent of those aged 12 and older are fully vaccinated. Vaccination is the best protection against getting seriously ill with COVID-19, or worse. The figures we should be looking at are hospitalisations and ICU, which are both very low, particularly in comparison to other jurisdictions.

We have had a very successful vaccine program rollout, which reflects the level of planning and resourcing the Government has put into preparing for COVID-19 and keeping Tasmanians safe. This includes our children. Tasmania is leading the way across the country with five- to 11-year-old vaccinations. As of 26 February, the vaccination rate for dose one was 61.42 per cent, well above the national average of 49.98 per cent. We are the best performing state. From 10 January 2022 clinics have been held across the state giving all children the opportunity to have the first dose of the vaccine. As well as state clinics, there are over 60 GP practices delivering vaccines to the five- to 11-year age group. GPs have administered nearly 6000 doses, or 13 per cent of the eligible population. The Government is focused on ensuring all children continue to have access to vaccination. Dose two clinics are commencing across the state this weekend.

A significant amount of planning has gone to our COVID-19 return-to-school plan. Our plan for weeks one to five of term is delivering on our objective of safely maintaining face-to-face learning as a priority, while supporting learners who need to learn at home due to COVID- 19.

There has been an increase in COVID-19 cases in schools as a result of the virus circulating in the community, but this was expected, anticipated and planned for. We have been able to keep schools open and ensure that students continue to learn. Our return-to-school plan focuses on Public Health guided measures to keep you all safe. These include ensuring all Department of Education staff, including volunteers and contractors, are vaccinated. All students and staff have ongoing access to RATs to ensure when they have symptoms, or are directed to, and I can confirm that 1.15 million RATs will have been provided to schools and early childhood centres by the end of the term of the 2 million RATs that would have been provided to this sector.

All schools are well stocked with facemasks in both junior and adult sizes. COVID- safe behaviours continue to be actively promoted and schools are well supplied with hand soap and sanitisers. Frequent cleaning is continuing, particularly on high-touch surfaces, natural airflow is maximised and air purifiers have been provided to all schools for use in learning spaces with lower natural ventilation. Each site has also been provided a CO₂ monitor, with supporting guidelines developed by an occupational physician.

Our draft plan for weeks six to 10 of term one is almost finished, and builds on an experience of operating schools with COVID-19 in our community. The next steps will continue to be closely guided by Public Health advice and feedback from school staff and families.

While we have been planning across our health system, schools and other sectors, what have the Greens been doing? Mr Deputy Speaker, they have not only publicly come out against independent Public Health advice, but have questioned the integrity of those experts. Worse than that -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Mr Tucker has misled the House. The Public Health advice the Government is getting is not independent and he should be clear about that. He is misrepresenting that advice.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Thank you, Leader of the Greens, it is not a point of order. Mr Tucker will resume.

Mr TUCKER - Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. They continue to recklessly spread fear and misinformation in the community. Ms O'Connor has labelled COVID-19 as a rapidly mutating bat virus that would lead to a mass disabling event -

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Mr TUCKER - She claimed the virus would eat into our brains, hearts and organs.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

MOTION

Ukraine Territorial Sovereignty

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Trade) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Recognises Ukrainian territorial sovereignty and its right to peace, freedom, and democratic rule.
- (2) Notes -
 - (a) that Tasmania is home to both Ukrainian and Russian communities who have received this news with deep concern for their loved ones, and we stand with all Tasmanians in wishing to provide care and support for those communities; and
 - (b) Tasmania stands with the Australian Government in affirming our respect for Ukrainian territorial sovereignty and its right to peace, freedom, and democratic rule.
- (3) Acknowledges that there is no justification for this aggression, which will ultimately be borne by innocent Ukrainians.
- (4) Condemns any aggressive action in Ukraine, which endangers human life and liberty.
- (5) Further notes that Tasmania has a strong history of welcoming and providing support for national efforts in providing humanitarian responses to previous conflicts and will continue to work with the Australian Government in jointly responding to the unfolding events.

Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on what is a heartbreaking, tragic, and deeply concerning event which continues to unfold in Ukraine. As we speak, Ukrainians continue to flood over the border into Poland as the attacks from Russia continue and intensify.

I first acknowledge that Tasmania is home to both Ukrainian and Russian communities who are witnessing these events with deep concern and fear for the ones they love. In the words of President Joe Biden in his State of the Union address delivered yesterday:

Let each of us, if you're able to stand, stand and send an unmistakable signal to Ukraine and to the world.

That is what we are doing here today. As a parliament, we are standing to recognise Ukrainian territorial sovereignty and its right to peace, freedom, and democratic rule. We are acknowledging that there is no justification for this aggression, which of course is being borne by innocent Ukrainians, and we are condemning any aggressive action in Ukraine which endangers human life and liberty.

I know I stand with all Tasmanians in extending our thoughts and our prayers to those in Ukraine but also to their loved ones in Australia and Tasmania. As a government, we continue to liaise as the situation unfolds with the Commonwealth Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. I have had direct contact in that regard and we are currently aware of two Tasmanians who have been living in Kyiv and who are now, as we speak, attempting to travel west to safety. The Department of Premier and Cabinet has spoken directly to those Tasmanians and offered the Tasmanian Government's support and advocacy on behalf of the Premier, Peter Gutwein, and our Government, and we continue to work closely with them as they attempt to cross the Ukraine border to safety, hopefully in due course to return to Tasmania.

Consistent with our actions in recent years following the challenges faced in Syria and Afghanistan, our Government is ready to play our part to assist the Commonwealth Government, should resettlement of Ukrainians be required. The Premier has written to the Prime Minister offering such assistance and requested that any Ukrainian refugees are taken above the Commonwealth humanitarian and refugee intake. Tasmania has a strong history of welcoming and providing support for national efforts in providing humanitarian responses. This crisis will be no different. The Government has reached out to our Ukrainian community in Tasmania to understand their needs for support. We understand this must be a trying, challenging and heart-wrenching time and we all watch from afar. We are left questioning what more we can we do to help.

I understand there are an estimated 250 people in the Ukrainian community in Tasmania, including second- and third-generation Ukrainians. Members of the Ukrainian community in Tasmania came together for a rally on Parliament House lawns on Saturday 26 February with the gathering hearing from members of the Ukrainian and Polish communities, some of whom were deeply impacted by the crisis.

MRC Tasmania's Phoenix Centre is offering mental health support and members of the Ukrainian community impacted by the rapidly escalating situation and Communities Tasmania have written to the Association of Ukrainians in Tasmania to ascertain what support is most relevant and necessary. The association has responded and expressed appreciation of the offer of support. I look forward to meeting with the representative from the community later today, together with others, to gain a deeper understanding of their concerns and needs.

At the Commonwealth level, the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, the Honourable Alex Hawke MP, met with the Ukrainian-Australian community to discuss Australia's participation in the international response to Russia's actions and the Australian Government's support measures available to those of Ukrainian descent in Australia and offshore. Indeed, our Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs have condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and called on Russia to cease its illegal and unprovoked actions and to stop violating Ukraine's independence.

The minister, Mr Hawke, has noted that he has instructed the Department of Home Affairs to accelerate the conclusion of Ukrainian visa applications to Australia and is considering options for support through the humanitarian, skilled student and other visa programs. The Australian Government has also announced targeted financial sanctions against Russia, including Russian individuals, organisations and banks, as part of the international effort to impose a sharp cost on Russia for its unprovoked and unacceptable aggression against Ukraine.

As a state, in times of crisis we have a history of coming together to support those in need. We are caring and supportive community. We want to embrace those going through difficult times.

We can do that as a parliament. We are doing that as a parliament. Our history is rich with examples of doing just that. Many will remember the temporary peace haven camp at Brighton when we welcomed the Kosovars. As the events in the Ukraine continue I know our community will again come together to support those here in Tasmania deeply concerned about their loved ones.

As a parliament we can not only shine a light on the events occurring in the Ukraine but demonstrate our support and care right here right now for those in our communities impacted by it.

[12.21 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I join with the minister and other members of this House to express our solidarity in condemning the actions of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine. We extend our support to the Australian Ukrainian community. I note the work that DPAC is leading to support those in Tasmania as outlined by the minister. We stand united in our support of the people of Ukraine and urge the Russian army to withdraw, to respect the sovereignty of the nation of Ukraine.

The positioning by Russia ahead of their invasion of Ukraine indicated that they were open to dialogue; however, instead of choosing a path of peace they have chosen war. The United Nations has called an emergency special session, just the 11th called since the founding of the United Nations where they have been debating the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine. The UN has heard from delegates from 115 member states that the ongoing bombings and the attacks on civilians in Ukraine must end and for all parties to respect the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, especially provisions on security and peace among countries.

I recognise the bravery of the Ukrainian people who have stood strong in defence of their country and their ideals in the face of bombings, invasions and the destruction of the cities and the lives they enjoyed just a few short days ago. I have seen images of women with their children sleeping in train stations, waiting for trains that may never arrive, wrapped in blankets and huddled together trying to stay warm. I have seen mothers rocking their babies to try to settle them as they crowd with others in bomb shelters. As I held my own baby last night I thought of how terrifying it must be for those women trying to flee Ukraine to safety, to keep their children calm and provide reassurance in the face of such terror. It is simply unimaginable.

I have seen images of men who under martial law are not allowed to leave the country if they are aged under 80 because they must take up arms and fight. The tears in the eyes of the fathers as they kiss their children goodbye or hold their loved ones, maybe for the last time.

The horror of war is unimaginable. The terrifying moments in the stillness between the air raids. The waiting. The human cost of lives. I had shared with me last night some comments from a briefing of trade unions where Ukrainian members joined the participants to debate the agenda, despite the fact their country is at war. Some of the statements from those Ukrainian members made my heart stop for a moment. I would like to share some of them.

Yurii, the president of the Ukrainian State Employees Trade Union, said during the course of that briefing:

Sorry, I am very emotional. My hands are wet from the tears of my children. Families are hiding in basements. We are being killed and exterminated. We are fighting for every square inch of our cities and our lands. We know that truth is behind us. We will continue fighting. Our soldiers have children. They know what they are fighting for.

On that briefing as well was Viktoriya Koval, the president of the Health Workers Union of Ukraine, who said that a week ago they were meeting with ministers about pay increases. Today they are working in buildings that are partially destroyed. They are working under shelling and they are working in cellars, but they continue to work and they continue to fight.

The people of Ukraine are united in their heroic struggle against the aggressive invasion by the Russian Federation. They have the support of Australia and this parliament as they defend their freedom. Australia's ambassador to the United Nations Mitch Fifield's contribution to the debate on the 11th emergency special session called for the immediate withdrawal of the Russian military, the cessation of military action and a peace that allows the people of Ukraine to live according to their own rules. We stand united as Australians with the Ukrainian people and together we call for Russia to withdraw from Ukraine and to cease this war.

[12.26 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, Ukraine is a sovereign democratic country. It has the right to self-determination and the integrity of its territorial borders. The Russian invasion of Ukraine was, in the words of Vladimir Putin, partly designed to 'de-Nazify Ukraine'. What a tragic irony that yesterday Russian shelling destroyed the sacred ground of Babi Yar, where there is a ravine outside Kyiv where about 100 000 Jews, Romas and other people were slaughtered over the course of two days by the Germans in 1941. Vladimir Putin and Adolf Hitler have a lot in common.

Over the past week I have been struck by the courage of the Ukrainian people, those brave brave people. Only today on social media there are pictures of hundreds of Ukrainians with their cars blocking Russian access to the biggest nuclear power plant in Europe. The stories of courage and love of country of the Ukrainian people have been profoundly moving and inspiring. What a price they are paying for being a neighbour of Russia that had the brazenness to wish for a peaceful democratic future.

Thousands of Ukrainians, we now believe, have died in the past week as Russian forces indiscriminately shell residential areas, public buildings. There is no care for preventing civilian deaths. What Vladimir Putin's army is doing amounts to war crimes. I understand now that the Hague is investigating.

This is an unprovoked act of aggression against a democratic nation by a very small psychopath. When people talk about the need for dialogue, I do not think you can reason with someone like Vladimir Putin. I do not think you can reason with someone who, when the western world stood up, threatened to unleash the nukes and apparently is parking part of his nuclear arsenal in Belarus, another state formerly of the Soviet Union that chose democracy which was thwarted again by another nasty little man.

There is a sense of frustration among free-thinking people and nations along with our despair and grief that there is no obvious path to peace here other than capitulation.

My parents always taught me that you stand up to bullies. How does the western world, how does Europe and every democratic country in the world, properly express its disgust and rejection of what Vladimir Putin is doing to peaceful and democratic Ukraine?

A cause for optimism in these dark days has been the way democratic nations have stood up their resolve. We have even had Germany, which has deep business ties with Russia, cancel the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. We have democratic nations across the European Union preparing or sending lethal weapons to help the Ukrainian people defend themselves, because at the moment they are on their own. The risk here is so grave. We are dealing with a potential much wider, devastating conflict should NATO be provoked any further.

It is an issue that democratic nations must find a way to deal with effectively. Yes, sanctions, yes, seize all the corruptly acquired assets of the oligarchs. Stand together in solidarity with Ukraine and any other peaceful democratic nation, like Taiwan, when they are threatened by aggressive totalitarian regimes.

I read into the *Hansard* the other night a very moving plea from the Greens leaders of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine. They captured the values struggle that many of us who long for peace are having right now. They say:

Remaining committed to the principles of non-violence, we are forced to admit that the only way to stop the current bloody marching of the aggressor across Ukraine is by using military force. Russia itself tightly closed the "window of opportunity" in the sphere of diplomacy. We call on all European countries to recognize this cruel reality and ensure the supply of lethal weapons to Ukraine, where the battle between Good and Evil is taking place today, the outcome of which will determine the future of the continent and the whole world.

That is no exaggeration, Mr Speaker. In a more perfect world, the United Nations would be stepping in to help Ukraine and the Ukrainian people defend their democracy but as we know, Russia is on the UN Security Council and has a veto power, so the UN will be no help to the people of Ukraine.

I also want to acknowledge that this is not a war being waged by the Russian people against the people of Ukraine. We have seen the most inspiring protests in Russia against Putin's madness. We have seen brave mayors of Russian cities co-sign an urgent plea for Putin to withdraw the troops. We know this is not a war of the Russian people against the Ukrainian people. We also know many Russian people have friends and family in Ukraine so there will be pain in Russia over this war as well.

As it is now, we can only make sure we are cutting off the dark money to the oligarchs, we are crashing the ruble, we are making pariahs of the Russian Government. We are in a very fraught moment in the history of humanity. As we know, Europe was where the two biggest wars of the last century took place and to see a conflict like this happening in Europe is deeply worrying.

On behalf of the Greens, and I know Dr Woodruff wants to speak as well, I express my deep admiration and support for the Ukrainian people, to recognise the unbelievable courage and leadership of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He did not leave, he did not get on a plane to Hawaii when his country was under attack. He is still in Kyiv which is under relentless assault. We now have reports of a million Ukrainian refugees. We have stories of people in neighbouring countries, when the trains stop, pouring onto the trains with food, clothes and love. This is not only a war but, as every war does, it has created a massive humanitarian crisis.

We do not know because we cannot know where this will lead. But what if Putin wins? What if the Ukrainian people cannot hold his tanks and his thermobaric weapons back? Where does that leave the free world? Where does that leave the people of Taiwan? The signal that is sent to the other nasty totalitarian regime, Xi Jinping's government, is that the west will watch and not do enough. This is a hugely significant and dangerous moment in our history.

I pass on my love, respect and admiration for the people of Ukraine and to let them know that all over the world people are watching in awe of their guts, tenacity and absolute determination to defend their peaceful democratic country, their unique language and culture, to defend their people, their place in Europe and their status as a democracy.

[12.38 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Premier) - Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister for Trade for bringing this motion on and the discussions that we had about this earlier this week. Like other members in this place, I stand to condemn the actions of Russia and Putin. What is occurring now is without doubt an unprovoked act of aggression against a sovereign nation. I must admit I found myself - as I am sure others in this place have - attempting to explain the circumstances that we find ourselves in to my 17-year-old daughter in the last week, in answer to the question of what happens next, where does this take us? At the moment there are many questions that remain unanswered.

I am certain that every member of this parliament stands united in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and that we support the efforts of both our Government and other western nations as they attempt to introduce sanctions, confiscations, disruptions to trade, the flow of money, the value of their currency, to attempt to clearly send a message that this is just simply not acceptable in the twenty-first century.

Regarding the Tasmanians who have been caught up in this situation, my Department of Premier and Cabinet has spoken directly to a number of them and offered what support we can. We remain engaged with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on a daily basis and we will continue to work as closely as we can with the federal government and the agencies it employs to support those Australians and Tasmanians in country.

I recently wrote to the Prime Minister to make it perfectly clear that Tasmania would, consistent with our actions in recent years following the challenges faced in Syria and Afghanistan, that our Government and this state is prepared to play our part to assist the Commonwealth Government should resettlement options be required for Ukrainians, and that the Commonwealth Government should, in terms of any arrivals from the Ukraine because of this conflict, treat them above the current Commonwealth humanitarian and refugee intake so we do not displace other vulnerable people as we work our way through this.

I want to be very clear with this and my thoughts on it. As Premier of the State of Tasmania which enjoys those freedoms which have been so hard-fought by many over unfortunately significant major conflicts, particularly as the previous member has pointed out across Europe where this unspeakable act is currently occurring, we stand ready to do our bit. We hope that the sanctions and the efforts of those western nations that can bring pressure to bear, that can interrupt, disrupt and implement sanctions, will have an impact but, like many in this place and like my 17-year-old daughter, what happens next is probably the most concerning aspect of this.

On behalf of my Government, and I am certain Tasmanians across this state, we say all strength to the arm of those nations that are doing everything they possibly can at this point in time to interrupt Putin's push and to support Ukrainians in terms of their actions. I know that every one of us has been watching these events unfold on our television sets, watching families being displaced, watching cities being torn down, watching, unfortunately, human beings in the twenty-first century being killed through an act of unparalleled aggression. I know, and I believe very firmly that I speak on behalf of all Tasmanians when I say that this is not acceptable and that we very strongly support the efforts of Ukraine and our allies as we push back and do what we can to halt this dreadful event.

[12.44 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Racing) - Mr Speaker, I will keep it short because I know you want to speak too. I also put on the record that, as does everybody in this Chamber, I recognise and support Ukrainian territorial sovereignty and its right to peace, freedom and democratic rule.

I have been working with members of the Ukrainian community in Hobart but I also recognise the Russian community in Hobart, many of whom have also expressed their complete dismay and hurt at the Putin-led aggression that is currently unfolding. I want to very gently say to everybody here that we are all Tasmanians, we have always stood for refugees and will advocate for them.

This is the first war of the modern information era. I recognise the heroism and leadership that we are seeing from Mr Zelenskyy. It is quite remarkable.

Mr Gutwein - Hear, hear.

Ms OGILVIE - He is Jewish and has called on Jewish people across the globe to support him. The historical sophistication of Russia's information operations is well known. He seems a man for the season as he is able to bat some of that back, particularly using social media and videos. It is obviously a very intense and tightly controlled contest, but some of the images we are seeing coming out in real time, and perhaps the shock and horror we feel at this invasion of a peaceful country must be a little like what people felt in the Vietnam War when they saw that first televised war, and we are seeing it in real time.

As a mother of three, I too have shed tears for those who are affected. The imagery of the women and children and the injured and hurt people fleeing and hiding underground or on the road is absolutely heartbreaking for all of us. I call particularly on Facebook, Twitter, Google, all those massive information and internet content providers, to do everything they can to support Ukraine in its resistance to this unprovoked and aggressive invasion.

Mr Speaker, I understand that there are around 250 people in the Ukrainian community in Tasmania, and I know we all wish to express our sincere support for them. I thank the Premier, who has always led when it comes to refugees and safe haven. I would like to think that Tasmania will continue to be a safe haven for people in trouble. I thank Mr Barnett for bringing on this motion; I know his deep experience at a national level will come into play. I acknowledge the Attorney-General for everything she has been able to do, particularly with the Refugee Legal Service, and I know she has an eye to that as well at the moment.

We are in a very fortunate and privileged position today to speak with one voice in support of democracy in Ukraine and against unprovoked aggression. As a mother, one of the most heartbreaking things is the vision of the young Russian conscripts, no older than my own son, who have been conscripted into a war not of their making, and who have been sent in. To hear Zelenskyy and his people say, 'Mothers of Russia, come and collect your sons, they don't want to be here', really brought me to tears.

[12.48 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, I rise today to support this motion wholeheartedly, and I thank the minister, Mr Barnett, for bringing this forward.

I too condemn the Russian aggression that we are seeing now, the invasion of a peaceful nation. We have to recognise as well the impact that this is having on not only the Ukrainian community but also the refugees who have made Tasmania home. We know that when an issue such as this invasion comes forth that the images we are seeing on our televisions and our social media will have an impact on people who have been through similar experiences in their past. I really feel for them and offer them my support. These things can bring back painful memories. Indeed, Tasmania has a rich history of resettlement for refugees and people who have fled not only conflicts like this but from former countries under the yoke of Soviet control and domination, including members of my wife's family who fled Poland to settle in Tasmania.

As a young man I was an exchange student and I met people from all over the world. One of my best friends is a Latvian. I remember the stories from her about the impact of living under Soviet Russia. When we met the Iron Curtain had only fallen some 12 months earlier. It was all fresh.

In competing on the world stage in the sport of rowing I competed against Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, all the people who are in and around that area. One thing I have learnt through that life experience is that people are people. When you boil it down we are all the same; we have the same goals and aspirations. I believe the families of Russian soldiers are probably none the wiser as to what their children are up to, such is the information control in Russia. The last thing we want is not only for lives to be taken in Ukraine, but for the Russians soldiers to be reunited with their families in body bags. This is a war we do not need to have.

We also have to recognise this Russian aggression has not started today, or yesterday, or indeed six days ago. This started with previous aggressions, in areas like Chechnya. Georgia was invaded by the Russians and, subsequent to that, Crimea was annexed in 2014 from Ukraine. Then we saw Russian aggression in cyber-attacks, especially during the US election and the Brexit vote. What we have seen over a period of time is not an isolated incident but an escalation of aggression from the Russian Federation. That is why this is a moment in time where history is bending. We are at a junction, a sliding doors moment, where this needs to end. We know how this history plays out, and it is not a good ending.

Ukraine is a big country. There are 41 million people living in Ukraine. It is as big as the state of New South Wales. New South Wales, if it was a country, would be a big country. Ukraine is physically one of the biggest countries in the world. It is also a massive exporter of food, and also metals and even modern electronics. A few days ago, families were planning outings, planning school lunches. A few days later they were under severe attack. We saw on our screens that there was no quick victory for the Russians. We saw a valiant and, for the Russians, an unexpected level of resistance from people defending their country, livelihoods and families.

The first sight of that was at the Antonov Airport when the Russian special forces met unexpected resistance. That was the moment where the war turned from being the quick surgical strike the Russians were expecting to a different form of war.

We have seen in the past few days how the Russians are not making progress. They seemed to have changed tack, to the same strategy they used in Grozny, the same strategy they used in Aleppo in defending the Assad regime that was about to fall. That is to start levelling cities. That is why we are at such a frightening moment. The Russians levelled Grozny, they levelled Aleppo. It appears that they are starting to level Ukrainian cities, whether or not there are citizens there simply just trying to survive.

We have seen the valiant efforts of Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the way he has led his people. That is also something the Russians were not expecting. They were expecting the Ukrainians to simply roll over and let the Russians take over and install a puppet government. Volodymyr Zelenskyy is a name that will now go down in history as somebody who has stepped up when the moment was there, leading his people and inspiring his people and indeed the rest of world. As leaders, we should take that as a lesson on what you should do.

We have seen citizens take up arms but we have also seen refugees fleeing Ukraine to other countries. The other thing we have seen, which I really welcome, is the way they have been welcome with open arms into those countries. The borders have been flung open and people have been assisted right from the very first moment.

The people of Ukraine have always known war. There is a Ukrainian saying that Ukrainians do not know peace, they only know the pause between wars. They have been invaded by the Mongols. They have been invaded by the Tartars. There were centuries of slave raiding before becoming dominated by the Russians. As part of the Soviet Union they had to suffer the Holodomor, which was when the Soviet Union removed all food from Ukraine in 1932 and 1933 and millions starved. That is what the Ukrainians have been through, not to mention the Nazi occupation and devastation during World War II.

We are at a juncture. The Russians cannot simply use a fantasy history to argue that Ukraine is not a country. Ukraine is a country and has the right to determine its own future, like Ukrainians did in a referendum that overwhelmingly said they want to be an independent country in 1991. We cannot have a world order where the strongest can do whatever they want; as long as you have nuclear arms and a big army you can just do whatever you want. We cannot live in a world like that. It sends the wrong message. It affects all of us. We are already seeing the price of fuel at the bowser climb. That is only just the start.

If the Russians are not repelled we will see an arms race around the world. We will see countries all over the world investing in arms instead of addressing issues that we should be

addressing, like climate change. We will see the allocation of resources around the world change. We will also see world instability. What is for the Baltic republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia? There is an enclave called Kaliningrad that Russia controls that is surrounded by Poland and the Baltic states. Will the Russians then decide they want an avenue to Kaliningrad?

Sanctions are in place and weapons are being sent but we also need to talk about the information that is being seen in Russia. That is something people are working on. Hackers trying to hack into television stations and expose what is really happening in this war. In breaking news, the news services are reporting that the Black Sea port of Kherson has fallen. This is the first Ukrainian city to be overtaken. Kherson has about 300 000 residents, so it is a little bit bigger than Hobart. This fall, unfortunately, is a strategic win for the Russians as they try to isolate Ukraine from the Black Sea. The Black Sea is the ice-free port that is so strategically important.

We cannot have a world ruled by the strongest. We cannot have the world order determined by who has the biggest army and nuclear weapons. This has to end. We cannot stand by and watch Ukraine get bombed back into the Stone Age. We cannot rely on the Ukrainians having to do everything. We have to support them.

I commend this motion and hope for a swift political resolution before millions of lives are lost.

[12.58 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I have just heard the news that Dr Broad mentioned. It is very sad news that a city has fallen in Ukraine.

People I have spoken with, Ukrainian Tasmanians and other people, are incredibly buoyed by the spirit of resistance in Ukraine. I strongly support this motion and condemn the actions of Putin, who is driving his country to do unconscionable acts of cruelty and is luring and entrapping many people to take part in a bloody war that they do not know what it is for. There is no purpose.

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

MOTION

Ukraine Territorial Sovereignty

Resumed from above.

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I, as a member of the Greens, stand in condemnation of Mr Putin in strong solidarity and support with the people of Ukraine, who are putting up an incredible resistance and have so far managed to stall the progress of one of the most powerful armies on the planet. This is only a week into a war that already has a human toll beyond what we are able to comprehend.

It is basically an eighteenth-century war that is being run by a monarch who has decided to devour his neighbouring country and he has no right, no legality and no provocation. It is

being streamed live to us on TikTok and other forms of social media so we are all party to the suffering and the resistance of the Ukrainian people and witnessing the effects of the brutality of Mr Putin's orders. Children, men, women, pets, schools, hospitals and homes - all are being bombed.

It is because of the fact that this an eighteenth-century war but it is being streamed in a twenty-first-century planet. It means that we are not only watching the destruction but we are privy to the incredibly supercharged and empowering response from people in Ukraine, citizens in Russia and people all across the planet, who are doing everything they can to support the Ukrainian people.

We have all been moved, I am sure, by different images that have affected us. I am surprised when I look at the things that bring tears to my eyes. Sometimes it is simply observing an ordinary person's life that has been completely turned upside-down, confronting a situation they do not know how to respond to. Sometimes it is queues of the more than a million Ukrainians who already have had to flee from their country, and the United Nations is warning of 4 million more and up to 12 million people within Ukraine who might need humanitarian effort very quickly.

It is also hard not to be buoyed by the incredible bravery of Russian civilians, citizens who have stood up to the likelihood of being arrested, detained, tortured, imprisoned, as happens so often to people who protest, which is now illegal in Russia. You see people like Elena Osipova, who was protesting in St Petersburg against the war. She is a survivor of the siege of Leningrad, which lasted for two years and four months, and more than a million Russians died at that time. She recognises exactly the same dictator in Mr Putin and she stands against her president's immorality.

We have also seen the effect of international sanctions. We have seen the European Parliament galvanised with a standing ovation for the Ukrainian diplomat and sending their support to the extraordinary leadership of Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Volodymyr Zelenskyy is a person who could have chosen the easy path. He could be bunkered next door in Hungary or Poland, but there he is, making sure every day while they still have access to the internet that his people understand that he will never leave them, mounting a response, enabling their country to use every single means at their disposal - Molotov cocktails, crocheting camouflage nets - everything that people can do, men, women and children are doing. The Ukrainian men are fighting, but 17 per cent are women as well. People of all ages and abilities are doing what they can to protect their homeland.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy tried diplomacy. It was notable that he was the one who was doing everything he could prior to the invasion to undersell the likelihood of an invasion. Other world leaders were talking about the threat of Russia and Volodymyr Zelenskyy, until the very end, used every diplomatic means available to try to avert what is now the horrific damage that is being done but Putin doubled down on his efforts and has taken no olive branches that have been offered to him. He is now moving to brute force. He is enacting war crimes and threatening nuclear violence.

We do not know what Putin's mad intentions are, but he is insane. He is a psychopath. If he thinks he is just going to install some sort of a puppet government that he can stand on and get to do Russia's bidding, he has no idea. He cannot hold back the democratic force of

the Ukrainian people. The Ukrainians know that freedom is priceless and now they are experiencing the price of defending it.

The Tasmanian Greens exist to represent and defend lutruwita/Tasmania, our people and our beautiful island. Today, and until this bloody war ends and Putin and Russian soldiers are repulsed from Ukraine, we will also stand in solidarity with Ukrainians against this immoral invasion. We agree with Ukrainians that freedom is priceless and we know that democracy is essential for freedom. It is far from perfect but it is the best system we have to protect us as a society from division, violence, war and dictatorship. We will refocus our energies in defence of the preconditions of democracy. We know that democracy is corrupted by vested interests that wield power and influence over governments. Putin's dictatorship is propped up by Russian oligarchs, the super-powerful propertied classes that were made rich after perestroika on real estate and by stealing the natural assets of the Russian people.

We will defend the need for our own Government to be accountable and truthful, the need for free and fair elections where everyone can participate on an even playing field and where the interests of corporations and the rich do not dominate. It is notable that we have vested interests in Australia with the overweening power of certain lobbyists, the oil and gas corporations, that no doubt are having an impact on our national democracy. We have a Prime Minister who has failed to make any comments on the IPPC report which came out two days ago. It is an uncomfortable truth. They are the sorts of uncomfortable truths we have to face.

I want to end by talking about the fact that there have been 160-odd hours now of defence and the heroism of the people of Ukraine who are standing up, who have breached the blockade and are doing everything in their power to put themselves between the tanks and the city of Kyiv, and all the other cities that are being encircled at the moment. We stand with them in solidarity and community. We recognise the common humanity between them and all people around the world who reject the immorality of Mr Putin's invasion. We decry the war crimes that are happening and we will be here and offer what we can to help people in Ukraine, supporting the Government's call to provide access for any refugees in Tasmania and to speak up and continue to defend our democracy which is so precious.

[2.41 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to join in the absolute condemnation of this House of the Russian Federation's actions in the invasion of Ukraine. These are acts of barbarism, acts of brutality, the actions of a tyrant. There is no justification for this war. There is no justification for this invasion. This is bloody-minded, this is brutal, this is barbarous, this is against the rule of law, it is against this planet that we love, what we hope to achieve in terms of world peace and the management of border disputes.

My heart goes out to the people of Ukraine and their inspirational, stoic defence of their homeland. We have seen via social media, day in, day out, their acts of defiance, their acts of protection and pride in their homeland and in their defence. Our love and our hearts go out to those people who are displaced, the millions of people who will be displaced. We wish them safe passage. We wish them soon to be able to return to their homeland to rebuild after what devastation will be wrought by the Russian Federation.

We urge those European nations to open their arms, homes and hearts to the people of Ukraine to ensure that they can be safe and have a roof over their head. We urge those European nations that are hesitating in opening up their visa restrictions to follow through with

their heart, and with the motions from the United Nations and other European nations, in opening their homes and hearts to the people of Ukraine.

We also give our strength and solidarity to the people of Russia who are fighting and have been fighting for true democracy in that country, who have been protesting under the most difficult of circumstances of repression from the tyrant, Putin, and their will and their hope that they can one day have free and fair elections in that country. Our strength and solidarity must go to the people of Russia in that goal.

There is no justification for what is happening. It is heart-wrenching. The images that we see are heart-wrenching and they reach across the world. All of us are impacted by this, and as the Premier has said, what is next? We can only hope that we can find a swift and just resolution to the incidents that are occurring and the invasion of Ukraine.

Today, all Tasmanians, all Australians stand with the people of Ukraine. We stand together with them and we stand against the tyrant, Vladimir Putin. All of our solidarity and love to the people of Ukraine.

[2.44 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Trade) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not wish to say too much in summing up this debate, but thank you to all those who have contributed on behalf of the parliament. There is strong support for this motion.

I have just returned from a meeting with members of the Ukrainian Association and representatives here in Tasmania, together with minister Nic Street, on behalf of the Government. It was very telling. They are very concerned and upset for family members and other relations they have there. They are extremely concerned for their health and welfare. I am sure if anyone was sitting in the same room, you would feel the same way I am at the moment, feeling somewhat emotional and concerned for their family members in Ukraine at this very difficult time.

On behalf of the Government, to reiterate, as I shared, as Nic Street shared, we will do everything we can in association with the federal government regarding any resettlement measures. We thank the federal government for their efforts. They are working assiduously, they are putting in further people and resources in terms of the visa arrangements and return of those who might need that return to Australia and Tasmania.

On behalf of all of us in the parliament, I indicate our solidarity with the local community in Ukraine and in Russia as well. We express their concern.

I thank the members for their terrific support for this motion. I commend the motion to the House.

Motion agreed to.

**JUSTICE MISCELLANEOUS (INDEPENDENT REVIEW AMENDMENTS)
BILL 2022 (No. 3)**

Second Reading

[2.46 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the bill now be read a second time.

The Tasmanian Government does not condone any form of bullying or harassment in any workplace, and requires all members and ministerial staff to abide by standards of conduct necessary to ensure the integrity and ethical standards expected of a staff member in their role.

Our Government acknowledges that when it comes to preventing and dealing with workplace discrimination, workplace sexual harassment and workplace bullying, we must lead by example. Any required changes to culture start with everybody accepting there is a need for change. It also requires all members in this place to accept and acknowledge our duty as community leaders and that we share common values when it comes to promoting a positive and supportive culture. This is why last year the Premier called for an independent review to be conducted on the practices and procedures of parliament, ministerial and electorate office workplaces.

The focus of this important review is to identify any gaps and potential improvements in existing policies and procedures, including complaint mechanisms, frameworks and any cultural and structural barriers to reporting misconduct. This will ensure we have best-practice policies and procedures in place to firstly prevent or, if necessary, support and work through concerns should they arise.

In July 2021 the Premier, in consultation with members of both Houses of parliament, appointed Ms Sarah Bolt, Tasmania's anti-discrimination commissioner, as the independent reviewer for the Independent Review into Parliamentary Practices and Procedures to Support Workplace Culture, which I will refer to as the review. Importantly, Ms Bolt has said she has undertaken the review under safe and supportive conditions to ensure trust and foster open engagement. In order to support and strengthen this work, Ms Bolt has identified the need for discrete legislative amendments to ensure that every single staff member, former staff member or any other individual who wishes to make a submission to or participate in the review can do so safely and confident in the knowledge that their privacy will be respected and they cannot be personally identified through participation in the review.

Accordingly, this bill contains important amendments to the Archives Act 1983 and the Right to Information Act 2009 to achieve that aim. The changes outlined in this bill are limited to the purpose of the review. They aim to ensure that protections apply to prevent the inappropriate disclosure of information received in confidence by the independent reviewer and to ensure the long-term protection of the privacy of participants who have contributed to the review.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will now speak to the specific amendments contained in the bill. First, the bill inserts a new section 16A into the Archives Act 1983 which prohibits the state archivist from making a record part of the review that has been deposited with the archives

office available for inspection by members of the public for a period of 75 years after the record came into existence. The 75-year prohibition on inspection of review records deposited in the archives office aligns with the current maximum period that a state record can be a closed record under the Archives Act. The amendments to the Archives Act will provide participants with confidence that the information provided by them to inform the review will be kept confidential for the maximum period of time available under the Archives Act.

The bill specifies that the provisions inserted into the Archives Act prohibit records or information being made publicly available, including records created between the commencement of the review on 27 July 2021 and commencement of the new section 16A. This ensures coverage of any information or responses made by participants received to date. This prohibition is strictly limited to review records that are held by the state archivist only.

The bill also provides for an offence penalty of the maximum of 10 penalty units in the event an independent review record is disclosed or inspected prior to the expiry of the 75-year period prohibition imposed on a relevant record. This penalty provision is consistent with existing penalties in the Archives Act that apply where a record's contents have been exposed or divulged contrary to a condition imposed under the act.

The bill also inserts a new subsection three in section six of the Right to Information Act 2009, which I will refer to as the RTI Act, to provide that information for the purposes of the review is exempt from the disclosure requirements under the act. Reportedly, the amendments in this bill - exempting all review information from the operation of the RTI Act - will only apply to information provided or brought into existence for the purposes of the review. The amendment does not seek to prevent members of the public from the right to obtain other information from the Government, ministers, or public authorities that they would otherwise be entitled to under the RTI Act.

In addition, any review information, regardless of when it was provided, is exempt from future RTI applications. The bill also clarifies that any application for review information made before the commencement date is invalid.

This is not the first time such protections have been put in place, with similar disclosure exemptions put in place to support the important work of the current Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings. In addition, in preparing this bill, my department noted the similar protections put in place by the Australian Government to strengthen the confidentiality of information provided under the recent Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces. Targeted state coded consultation has been undertaken, including providing the committee members with a draft version of the bill for consideration and comment. I believe this to be an important step to ensure the committee, comprising members of both houses, that has been established to support the work of the reviewer, could be across the proposed changes to assist them with any work they will undertake to lead the implementation of any accepted recommendations upon the review's completion.

I am pleased to advise that my department has also worked closely with key stakeholders in the development of this bill, including the independent reviewer and the state archivist, who have indicated strong support for the approach taken with the amendments.

This is an important bill that supports the work currently underway, which is why I have prioritised its progression through parliament at the earliest opportunity, and obviously intervening on the state of state address. Our Government recognises that due to the unique sensitivity of the information that may arise during the course of the review, it is important that participants have the confidence they need to be able to come forward and share their stories with complete confidence that their experiences or personal information will not be released for public consumption. I commend this bill to the house.

[2.54 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak today on the bill. I commence by recognising the work of the parliamentary committee which was established last year to progress this work, and thank the members of this Chamber and the Legislative Council for their work, as well as Commissioner Sarah Bolt in conducting the survey last year, which was open to everyone who calls Parliament House their workplace. I also thank, through the Attorney-General, secretary Webster along with Georgie, Bruce and Nat from her office for the briefing I was provided yesterday in the lunchbreak.

Labor condemns any form of workplace bullying, harassment or assault. It is indeed a core belief of the labour movement that all people have the right to be safe at work, to work in an environment that is free from all types of risk, including risks of threats, assault, sexual assault, bullying and harassment.

Furthermore, there must be incredibly robust and constantly modernising systems in place to deal with complaints of that type when it does occur. Better still, in modern workplaces, which we should aspire to be, there must also be best practice preventative measures in place for workplaces, so that they promote a healthy workplace culture, provide ongoing education and training, consistent monitoring and information to make sure that we stop these problems before they start.

Making sure that protections like that are in place and are robustly enforced will not completely remove the risk of any of those types of behaviours ever happening in the workplace again. However, best practice systems being in place that are well consulted, well understood and adhered to will certainly go a very long way to making sure that they do not.

I also wish to recognise that we are not the only parliament dealing with this type of work. The federal parliament has debated very similar legislation following the national review into workplace culture at Parliament House in Canberra. The work being undertaken in the federal parliament with support from all parties and crossbench members has been done to enable the independent review into Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces conducted by federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins.

The Jenkins review is comprehensive; it makes 55 recommendations. It is essential that those recommendations are absorbed, taken seriously and adopted swiftly and in full. The Jenkins review was commenced following the enormous bravery of Brittany Higgins who, emboldened by the extraordinary Grace Tame, felt able to publicly share her story. Members would already be very familiar with Brittany Higgins' story. She was a staffer to minister Linda Reynolds in federal parliament in Canberra. I will quote from Ms Higgins' recent powerful speech to the National Press Club:

I was raped on a couch in what I thought was the safest and most secure building in Australia, in a workplace that has a police and security presence 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Parliament of Australia is safe - it is secure - except if you're a woman. If what happened to me can happen there it can happen anywhere, and it does. It happens to women everywhere.

I cannot even try to do justice to Ms Higgins' bravery, her strength and her power to make tangible change, but she articulates so clearly how if what happened to her could happen there, in the most secure building in our nation, that it can, and does, happen to women everywhere, every single day. Without the bravery of Ms Higgins, the Jenkins review would not likely have taken place and these meaningful steps to improve workplace culture in parliaments around the country may not have been commenced.

The federal parliament dealt with similar legislation to this bill. That bill dealt with the application of the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act to materials shared with or created by the Jenkins review, as well as the application of Commonwealth Archives Act to the review's materials. In the contribution to that federal bill, federal Labor leader Anthony Albanese said:

This review is an important opportunity to bring about the cultural change that is needed, to get the resources and protections needed, to transform the parliament into a safe workplace. This should be a safe workplace for everyone who works here. As a Labor parliamentarian I say that Labor have a particular special duty to our staff, but I think every member of parliament has a duty to ensure, their staff are properly protected.

This review must listen to those who come forward. They should be able to come forward in the confidence that any statements or submissions that they make will be confidential, and that they won't be put in a difficult position in a year's time, or in 10 years time, or 20 years time or 30 years time. That is what the legislation is aimed at. The fact is every workplace in Australia should be safe - every recreational venue, every home.

We know that thanks to the courage of people like Brittany Higgins and the thousands of women and men who marched last week - her speech was given some time ago - that this workplace is not the safe work place it should be. He finishes by saying that they knew in the initial parts of the work done in Canberra that some people did not feel safe to come forward to participate in the review unless they had guarantees of confidentiality and privacy.

The Tasmanian parliament, like all Australian parliaments, is an old institution. Sometimes it feels like things move much slower here. We have many old-fashioned, even archaic, processes. Many of the parliamentary staff who work in this place employed by the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council are employed on outdated and inconsistent industrial awards and agreements when compared to the general Tasmanian State Service. Some of those instruments have outdated and quite basic grievance and dispute resolution procedures that do not reflect modern workplaces or best practice for other Tasmanian state servants.

For some staff, including electorate staff and some advisory staff, DPAC is technically their employer who pays their wages. but not all of the DPAC procedures or protections apply

to them. How you come to work in this place should not dictate whether you have protections from workplace bullying, harassment or assault, or how good those protections are. That is inequitable and unfair. It should not matter if you work in the library, the dining room, in IT, as an attendant, as an adviser, in the Clerk's office, in an electorate office, in an MP's office, as a ministerial driver or any other role in this place, you deserve and should have the same protections. You should be confident you are working in a safe, supportive workplace, free from bullying, harassment and assault, and be confident that you have recourse to deal with complaints when you need it. Sadly, however, what we have now is an ad hoc system that does not give comfort or assurance to staff or members of parliament that any grievance they might have will be dealt with fairly or consistently.

In her preliminary work conducting a survey last year, Commissioner Sarah Bolt identified the need for this legislation to protect information provided to or created as part of the review. I agree with the Attorney-General that people contributing to the review need to be 100 per cent certain that they are doing so in a confidential way and that the information they share will remain private and confidential for as long as possible. That is similar to what was found in the preliminary work conducted at the Commonwealth level which led to that mirror legislative change last year.

It is entirely reasonable that we support the provisions of this bill, which will firstly ensure that records created or shared with the review process will be kept private under the Archives Act for the maximum available period of 75 years and also provide that the RTI Act will not apply to private information shared with the review. This is consistent with the federal changes but also consistent with the treatment of personal private information dealt with in Tasmania and shared with a raft of other instrumentalities such as courts, tribunals, the DPP, Solicitor-General, the Ombudsman, the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner and others. It is reasonable that these protections apply retrospectively, which I note this bill does. The reason that is important is so that the information that was provided to Commissioner Bolt as part of that survey that was conducted last year is protected and kept confidential.

Mr Deputy Speaker, if I have any criticism of the bill it is that it is a shame these protections were not in place before that survey was commenced and conducted. We already had the precedent set by the Commonwealth parliament, so arguably we could have anticipated that we needed this change before people who work in this place participated in that survey.

Ms Archer - That's a reflection on the commissioner.

Ms HADDAD - Not really. It is not a reflection on the commissioner because we had the evidence already from the Commonwealth that this change would have been necessary.

Ms Archer - With the greatest respect, we didn't.

Ms HADDAD - My only hesitation is that it is not impossible that people who participated in the survey might not have felt as comfortable as they would otherwise have felt sharing personal and private information as part of that survey. I know that that is the case. I know that there have been people who started the survey and did not feel comfortable sharing information for fear that it might identify them in some way.

I am confident that with this legislative change that will not be the case, that the information will be protected under the Archives Act and under the RTI Act as well but it is

not impossible that people felt hesitation to share as much as they could, which could lead to the review not garnering as much information as it otherwise would, nor be as robust and wide-reaching as it potentially could have been. So, if it is possible to reopen that survey that would be a good idea once these legislative changes take effect. That would allow people who did not participate in the survey to do so, confident in the knowledge that their information will be kept private, or potentially for people to add information or participate again if they were unable to do that.

That is my only suggestion and I do not intend to reflect on the commissioner. That is not the reason for sharing it, or to criticise the Attorney-General for that matter. I just know that it has been the case that there have been some people who felt a little hesitant to share information, and I know that it is a shared aim of that committee and of all us here that we want this survey -

Ms Archer - Can I interject? I think a lot of people submitted surveys thinking it would be confidential as well. It goes both ways.

Ms HADDAD - Possibly. The Attorney-General makes a good point -

Ms Archer - I know for a fact -

Ms HADDAD - That is right. It could be the case that people shared information assuming it would be confidential. It now will be confidential. That is great, but in the reverse it is also possible that people may have withheld or not participated, so if it is possible to reopen the survey, that would be a really good idea. I acknowledge that the commissioner is now taking oral and written evidence. That is really important as well, but some people might prefer that survey option rather than making a written or oral contribution of their own.

I know it is a shared aim of everybody in this place that we get these processes right and we take seriously the issues around workplace culture, particularly for the people who work in this building. Things get pretty heated and robust in this Chamber, but everybody who is not a member of parliament who is working in this building should have the same kinds of protection that every other state servant has. MPs should as well but I suppose we put ourselves in for a little bit of different treatment when we come into this place. It would surprise some Tasmanians to know that people who work at Parliament House do not necessarily have the same workplace conditions as other Tasmanian state servants have.

We know what needs to be done to make sure that Tasmania's parliament is an employer of choice, best-practice workplace, and that is to implement the Jenkins review. There were 55 recommendations. I believe the Government has given in-principle support to the recommendations but I invite the Attorney-General in her summing comments to provide more information about the status of the Jenkins review at the Tasmanian level.

Is the Government committed to implementing all 55 recommendations of the review and is it possible perhaps for the Government to provide, maybe at a later date, an update on where Tasmania is at in implementing those 55 recommendations, or the progress of implementation against those 55 recommendations in the Jenkins review? It is a huge body of work done at the Commonwealth level that we can and should commit to.

Mr Deputy Speaker, other than those comments, Labor welcomes the changes contained in the bill and we will continue to work constructively across the parliament to ensure that Tasmania's parliament is a best-practice workplace.

[3.09 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Greens, we support this bill. Ms O'Connor, the Leader of the Greens, is a member of the committee overseeing the work to make sure that we remove any instances of workplace bullying and harassment in the work of members and ministerial staff. It is incredibly important that the Tasmanian Government and more widely, among Tasmanian government employees. It is very important that we set the standards which are now being driven by a national conversation much bigger than the contributions of people in this state. We have all been party to the national discussion about the horrendous and toxic workplace culture which has played out on the front pages of newspapers and in our social media feed over the last couple of years.

I commend and pay my greatest respects to the bravery of women who have endured not only terrible instances of harassment and sometimes rape and other forms of extreme workplace bullying, but who have found their voice and been able to share those experiences. Brittany Higgins is one of them. Grace Tame has also been part of that conversation. There are many other women who have stood together in hundreds of thousands around the country to say, 'Enough is enough'. Women will not be silenced any longer on matters of sexual violence, abuse and harassment. It is not something that can go back in the box. Women everywhere are going to make sure that it does not go back in the box. People in workplaces should not be shut down. They should not be silenced. They should not have every effort made to ignore or hide their complaints of harassment and bullying in the workplace.

In the context of parliamentary activities, often historically it has been shut down as politically inconvenient truths. It has been more important for members and sometimes parties to hide information perceived to be damaging to a political body without paying any care or respect to the lived experience of harassment and bullying on the very person who is making the complaint.

These are often very difficult situations. Allegations of workplace harassment and bullying have to be listened to and addressed, heard and responded to by an independent, sensitive, impartial person who is able to give both the person who has made an allegation and the person or people against whom the allegation is being made space to be heard, space where they will not be shut down or intimidated and where, importantly, they have confidence that the material they present that they want to remain confidential will remain confidential.

This bill seeks to tie up a loophole which has meant that, until this bill passes, people who have made written contributions to the workplace review being undertaken by the Equal Opportunity Commissioner, Sarah Bolt, are potentially subject to applications under the Right to Information Act 2009. That is untenable and unfortunate. 'Unfortunate' is to put it kindly. It is a problem that this was not rectified earlier because, as Ms Haddad pointed out, people have already made contributions to the survey in good faith. I am sure people would have been horrified to understand that those contributions could have been accessed by a third party through right to information. Clearly this is being rectified.

Ms O'Connor wrote to the Premier on 13 December about this matter. She wrote that the review is being conducted in good faith but it is not being protected. Not only does this bill

protect any right-to applications that are made for the future; it also clarifies that any application for a right to information made before the commencement date of this bill, I presume, specifically in relation to this workplace investigation in Tasmania, be also invalid.

The last point I want to make is about the condition of not allowing material to be made available through the Right to Information Act from the survey being done, that it must be held by the state archivist for a period of 75 years. I understand that this is the standard length of time in the State Archives Act. Could the Attorney-General put on the record whether there was any discussion about making a different time for the purposes of this particular bill that we have before us? Seventy-five years is a good length of time. It is a very long length of time. Is it to account for a person and their children? It is much longer than a person's life. Plausibly it is hard to imagine -

Ms Archer - The short answer is it is consistent with the other provisions in the act and that has already been considered a sufficient time. But if there is anything further, I will -

Dr WOODRUFF - It certainly is sufficient. We could go on, 100, 150. I understand it would be -

Ms Archer - I think it is to ensure that it covers your own lifetime.

Dr WOODRUFF - and the family of children, possibly. Is there anything you have to say around that? Other than that, the Greens are very strong supporters of the work that the commissioner is doing on this review. We will continue to participate and support other people to participate so that we can all work together in a workplace where we are confident that the culture we are setting is not a toxic one; that it is a respectful one where people are not subject to having to work with harassment, bullying, innuendos or anything other than a professional, respectful workplace. We look forward to the results of the review when it is completed.

[3.19 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise today to indicate my support as a member of the working group and to thank the Attorney-General for bringing on this bill as soon as practical for this parliament's consideration.

I want to reiterate my firm belief that every person has the right to be safe in their workplace, particularly that every woman has the right to be safe in the workplace. Parliament is no different to any other workplace. This matter, as members of this House would be aware, is an incredibly personal matter for me. I stood in this place last year and raised my concerns about a culture within Tasmanian politics, in this parliament, more broadly about a lack of respect for women in the workplace. It is very personal for me as it related to my family members. Since that time, I have had a number of conversations with women in this workplace, and in other workplaces across Tasmania, who have similarly raised concerns about safety and sexual harassment in their workplace.

This review is an important step in ensuring that women's voices are heard loud and clear, that they feel safe and comfortable to raise concerns, that those concerns will be heard and acted on accordingly. When it was identified that there was a risk of the process by which we would be engaging with people in the workplace about this matter, that they would not be safe, that it would not be kept confidential, or they would not feel comfortable in coming forward,

I am pleased that the working group has come together to find a solution, to provide that comfort to any member of the workforce who might want to raise issues.

I was not going to speak on this particular bill because it is a straightforward matter, but I have listened to the contribution from the office of the member for Clark on behalf of the Labor Party. I have to say, what I heard hurt. It hurt me, and it perhaps hurt a number of women. Some of the hypocrisy that I heard in that speech was deeply troubling to me. I felt compelled to come forward today and speak on this bill. To any woman in this workplace who is considering making a submission or responding, I commit to doing all that I can to make sure you can bring your complaints forward in a safe and understanding environment. I do not ever want to see any complainant come forward with their genuine concerns and see them treated the way my sister has been treated.

Words are easy, actions are much harder. I trust from what I have heard in the contributions today that this bill will be supported. I look forward to the independent review continuing, to hearing the concerns, to unveiling what has been happening in this place and what we can do to make it better, to make it safe. We need to be very mindful of where this review has come from, what has made it necessary, and what we can do - far more than cheap words, actual actions and support - to make sure that these practices have no place in the parliamentary workplace, or indeed in any other workplace in Tasmania.

In closing, I put on the record my assurance to those people who participate in this process who call out unacceptable sexual harassment that I stand with them. I will be there to support them on that journey.

[3.24 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I welcome the comments from those members this afternoon. As I said in my second reading speech, none of us in this place condones any practice which puts someone's safety at risk, whether it in the workplace or elsewhere. Unfortunately, we do have these incidences that sometimes occur. That is why our Government acted and has undertaken to have this review in the first place.

I will respond to some of the statements and questions put by members in their contributions.

In relation to Ms Haddad's question, there are two scenarios that people who might have otherwise come forward may not have come forward because they thought that confidentiality was at risk. I know of cases where people have submitted to the survey assuming that it would have confidentiality and protection. It certainly would from the independent reviewer's perspective. However, following setting up this review it was discovered that the survey results themselves could be RTI-able. That is what this attempts to address. I will also get to Dr Woodruff's question about the Archives Act.

Regarding the Commonwealth review and its recommendations to which Ms Haddad referred - I will get to the Respect at Work recommendations - but the Commonwealth's review and their recommendations were limited to Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces, processes and practices. Our independent reviewer has very broad scope under the terms of reference that we provided to consider this work as appropriate. In the terms of reference the commissioner can consider:

Any other actions or changes necessary to ensure a safe and respectful workplace free from workplace discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying within MPS and that set the standard for the broader community on best practice workplace policies and procedures that enable safe and respectful workplaces.

I want to put on the record that the wide scope of our terms of reference will allow the independent reviewer to consider recommendations that came out of the Commonwealth recommendations of a more broad or general scope that are not necessarily specific to Commonwealth workplaces.

While none of the 55 recommendations in the Respect at Work report were directed specifically at Tasmania, Tasmania is working with the Commonwealth and other states and territories on a national plan that responds to that report. There is a lot of work going on at a ministerial level and across our departments, across states, territories and Commonwealth to have a coordinated plan on that.

We are already acting on elements of the report through the Tasmanian Women's Strategy and the Safe Homes, Families, Communities: Tasmania's action plan for family and sexual violence 2019-22. Our Government is also working with national colleagues on improving women's economic security, developing a nationally consistent framework for measuring progress on women's economic security. The framework will be underpinned by five key objectives: gender pay gap; participation, employment and enterprise; education skills; supporting women's leadership; and equality and financial security.

Late last year, the Australian Parliament passed legislation implementing six of the Respect at Work recommendations which amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and also the Fair Work Act 2009. These amendments will improve equality of opportunity between men and women, help to protect more workers from sexual harassment in the workplace and clarify that sexual harassment can be a valid reason for dismissal.

Our Government recognises that we are the largest employer in the state being the Tasmanian State Service and we must show leadership in addressing workplace sexual harassment. That is why we are working nationally on those recommendations that came out of the Respect at Work report.

I have had my office check with the independent reviewer about reopening the survey because I know that was a concern expressed by Ms Haddad, and she will investigate whether it is possible to reopen it, noting that we have already had an extremely high survey response which is very positive compared to other jurisdictions. I think that probably goes to the issue that I raised, that I am aware of a lot of people submitted to the survey thinking it was confidential anyway and now of course they will have that protection from RTI and also under the Archives Act.

I want to address the 75-year issue that was raised by Dr Woodruff. The 75-year period is indeed the maximum period that a state record can be a closed record under the Archives Act at present, so we are going to that maximum length of time. The amendment in the bill will provide participants with confidence that the information provided by them to inform the review will be kept confidential for the maximum period of time available under the Archives Act.

The specific prohibition provided by the bill in relation to review information in the Archives Act is justifiable given the unique sensitivity of the review occurring in the ministerial and parliamentary workplace. It is the maximum time available. My observation would be that that figure was originally arrived at to at least afford the protection of someone for the rest of their life based on current average age of their lifetime. Certainly, in a lot of circumstances it also saves the embarrassment of children of that information being exposed. So 75 years is that standard maximum period under the Archives Act and that is what we have implemented.

The point I was going to raise originally was about reopening that survey. I can inform the House that the independent reviewer will give consideration as to whether she is able to do that or not, but it is welcome news that she has received a significant number of surveys completed and no doubt we will hear further in relation to any recommendations that come out of the analysis once she is able to do that. I will reconfirm that this is retrospective and one of the unusual circumstances where it does not present too many issues being retrospective. We need to be retrospective on this occasion to protect those surveys.

Again, I appreciate and thank all members for supporting this. It was raised by the independent reviewer herself. We have closely consulted on the drafting of this bill with the independent reviewer and the State Archivist, and we have had correspondence from the leaders of both parties. I also recall seeing a letter from the Independent member for Clark expressing support and concern, and Meg Webb MLC, in the other place who, as we know, has been instrumental in setting up this review.

I am hoping all parties are content and happy with the process that has been adopted. We have dealt with this at the earliest opportunity, tabling it on Tuesday and requiring the bill to mature before we could debate it today. It has been a necessary step to ensure that we can afford the protection that the surveys deserve and indeed that the people completing the surveys deserve throughout this process. I again thank members and my department for acting quickly on this occasion. We have a significant law reform agenda this year and we needed to bump this up to the top priority on the first week back, notwithstanding the Premier's Address. I thank members for allowing us to proceed today ahead of what would usually be getting a substantial way through the replies to the Premier's Address today. I again commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

Bill read the third time.

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

Motion to Note

Resumed from 2 March 2022 (page 101).

[3.37 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr Deputy Speaker, in the moments that I have left to conclude, I was speaking in support of the Premier's state of the state address, and commending him on the visionary and aspirational contents of

the document, in particular referring to the honour I have to advocate for a whole range of productive portfolios and sectors in the Tasmanian economy, and lamenting of course the lack of policies, plans or initiatives from the Opposition in any respect but for a torrent of sniping and negativity.

I want to highlight the importance of agriculture under our Government. We know how important it is and I know you, Mr Deputy Speaker, in particular are one of those in those rural or regional parts of Tasmania. We have a plan to reach that \$10 billion farmgate value by 2050 and we are working to the plan, with the five key ingredients to success being access to reliable water at the top of the list, and we are delivering on that - and I will say more about that shortly - cool climate, a fertile soil, enterprising farmers and agribusinesses and investment and research.

I could speak at great length on the importance of that research, education and development, but we have a big plan for the agricultural precinct in Launceston with my department, together with the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture and the University of Tasmania. It is a very exciting, nation-leading initiative and we are right behind it.

I want to thank Biosecurity Tasmania for their work. Particularly over the last two years and over the summer period since the opening of the borders on 15 December, they have kept Tasmanians safe. I want to also indicate my thanks for the hands-on tour in Devonport in terms of the 600 count, in terms of keeping out pests and disease, where they consistently check the fruit and vegetables for and on behalf of all Tasmanians, reminding Tasmanians to be vigilant. It is a general biosecurity duty of everyone to keep Tasmanians safe when it comes to pests and disease.

With respect to water, that has probably been the key ingredient to success for our sustainable growth as a state, and we are investing in it. A total 16 of the last 19 major irrigation schemes across Australia have been built here in Tasmania under successive governments over many years now. We are the envy of the nation and we are delivering. We have a big vision for the future. Tranche 3 is well underway but we have a vision as announced in the state of the state. I am excited to advise that the business case is progressing very positively for the south-east scheme, which will deliver a \$370 million investment in irrigation, delivering an estimated 40 000 megalitres; another \$150 million in on-farm infrastructure development; and an estimated 2000 jobs.

On top of that, we are now seeking support from the federal government for a business case for the southern midlands. Again, an estimate of around \$300 million, delivering similar economic, jobs and environmental benefits for the state in the centre of Tasmania, in those rural and regional areas.

We have seen the benefits as you drive up and down the highway. You have seen the fruit and vegetables on the side of the road; you have seen the polytunnels; you have seen the jobs growing in those rural and regional areas, the nooks and crannies of Tassie, thanks to our vision to sustainably grow our agriculture.

The average across Australia in terms of agricultural growth was 0.4 per cent in the 2019-20 year. In Tasmania, what was it? It was in excess of 14 per cent growth. That is the sort of growth we are getting under our Government and we have big plans to continue sustainable growth, thanks to the support of the Premier and Treasurer, with a \$50 million visionary comprehensive support for agriculture.

I want to mention the Wild Fallow Deer Management Plan, released on the weekend, a five-year plan which gets the balance right. It gets the balance right by ensuring protection for agriculture and our natural environment from wild fallow deer but also that there is a hunting resource available for Tasmania's hunters. There are more than 6000 of those and they have a right to continue doing what they enjoy. It is part of the Tasmanian way of life. Yes, I hear 'Hear, hear' and support for that initiative.

There is fishing, hunting, a whole range of recreational activities that are part of the Tasmanian life; it is part of what makes Tasmania great. I thank all the key stakeholders for their feedback. We had over 300 submissions to the draft plan from farmers, hunters, environmental and conservation organisations and the deer farmers themselves, who will receive a special focus to promote and market their venison to the Tasmanian market. We want to do that in Tasmania. You can make it in Tasmania. That is our policy and our approach.

I want to touch on aquaculture. There is no stronger supporter of the salmon industry than the majority Liberal Government and that will continue because we have plans for offshore, deeper waters, with Commonwealth waters. We signed the MOU last year, around September, with the federal government. This is nation-leading, Tasmania and the Commonwealth Government. This research will be done in the Bass Strait, subject to this legislation passing through the parliament.

It has passed through this House already with overwhelming support and heads to the Legislative Council next week, and I am very positive about the prospects going forward. The debate prior to Christmas is all on the public record so let us not have a hoo-ha from the Greens with respect to plans for research in Commonwealth waters, in the Bass Strait.

Dr Woodruff - That's hard to believe that's all it is.

Mr BARNETT - I heard an interjection, so I will take the interjection, Mr Deputy Speaker. The fact is they change the goalposts every single time. Dr Woodruff, I have a quote from you from a media release supporting more offshore salmon farming, supporting more salmon farming in deep waters but, of course, now you are in opposition.

Dr Woodruff - Look where you are proposing it.

Mr BARNETT - Seriously.

Dr Woodruff - Look where you are proposing it.

Mr BARNETT - The Dennes Point, Bruny Island declaration, the first version talked about offshore salmon farming, but what about the second version? They changed it. Yes, they have changed it.

Dr Woodruff - Yes, because you do not regulate anything and you cannot keep polluting endlessly.

Mr BARNETT - They will not stop in opposition but we will be resolute in supporting sustainable growth in the salmon sector and provide that strong support onshore. It is already happening and there is continued growth there, including for Petuna Seafoods at Cressy. They are getting on with the job so, congratulations, well done, with what they are doing.

Touching on the Wild Fishing Action Plan, we are backing it to the hilt. 'Eat More Seafood' - I love wearing that T-shirt and promoting the benefits of Tasmanian wild-catch seafood.

I was at Naracoopa last week with the member for Braddon, Felix Ellis, meeting with the Naracoopa Progress Association to promote recreational fishing - another part of the Tasmanian way of life that we want to get behind as a government, providing funding support for better lighting, cleaning facilities. We are very supportive, together with federal member for Braddon, Gavin Pearce, with the mayor and local members of the Naracoopa community. It was terrific. That is what we are on about. We have provisions in place to promote easy access, better access, for people with disabilities, better access for women, for children. It is happening both in our sea and inland fisheries as well. We are on track. In terms of recreational fishing, for the first time ever in Tasmanian history we have 10-year strategy. Long term, that is what we are on about.

Yes, it has been tough for our commercial fishers and that is why we provided them that support during the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to support them during the tough times and challenges they have. There have been challenges gaining access to market and that is why we provided that support.

I can provide the latest figures with respect to our exports. The data is out today. Exports grew 22.7 per cent to reach a new record on the \$4.47 billion in the 12 months to January 2022. That is another record. We have a trade strategy to grow our exports. It is working.

I say thank you to our trade advocates. In the last couple of years, following on the initiative of Jeremy Rockcliff, the former minister for Trade, and now me, this is working. We have trade advocates now not just in China - Japan, Singapore, North America. We are doing more to grow our exports. The trade strategy is working. I thank all our exporters for what they are doing because exports mean jobs, jobs, jobs.

Regarding mining, confidence is up. About 65 per cent of all our exports is mining and mineral processing products. Thank you to the mining industry, the backbone of our economy, with thousands of jobs, particularly in those rural and regional areas on the west coast, north-west coast. I met with the mayor and the general manager on the west and with Felix Ellis again, just some weeks ago. They are very positive about the prospects going forward. In terms of the prospects for mining, it is really positive regarding Mt Lyell, obviously New Century Resources, having had a meeting with them a few weeks ago. Again, positive about the future and there will be more said about that in the near future.

Group 6 Metals, with scheelite on King Island: it was great to be at the opening there and officially push the shovel in the ground and get things moving. Again, Gavin Pearce and Felix Ellis were at King Island promoting and supporting the local community.

Confidence is up in the mining and mineral processing sector and we are proud of what they are doing. The exploration drilling grants are working a treat and there is more exploration now than there has been. In fact, we now have 8 kilometres of drill core. Yes, I do love holding things. I loved holding some drill core late last year and that was part of the 8 kilometres of drill core. This is all part of building a repository of information for our miners, our explorers to get out there and have a go. So, it is working.

In terms of forestry, \$10 million for the on-island processing grants; they are out and about. Funding support was recently at Koppers Wood Products in Longford providing all our TasNetworks poles. A lot of the fencing across Tasmania comes out of Koppers thanks to our forest industry, both plantation and native forestry. It was at Austral Bricks just a couple of weeks ago using wood residue, bioenergy as it were, to fire up the kilns for the bricks that are made for building our homes in Tasmania. That is great news. Britton Timbers uses the wood residue to heat the Smithton swimming pool and I had a tour there just last year, thanks to Shawn Britton and his team. There is a lot happening and we announced in this state of the state address the wonderful news of \$10 million to replace the fossil fuels in our schools, hospitals and correctional facilities with bioenergy and other renewable sources, so there is a lot more to be done. We have a big plan and a big future.

In conclusion, we are very positive about the future. I want to say to our veterans, you know what a strong advocate I am for our veteran community and we have the largest support package in Tasmanian history, \$1.4 million but it is not just the money, it is the support we can provide as a government. I know others across the Chamber want to support the veterans and their families in Tasmania and support the RSL as the peak body. Those Teddy Sheean VC Memorial Grants are fantastic and appreciated by the many RSL sub-branches across Tasmania, and there are more than 50 of them. It was great to catch up with Barry Quinn and John Hardy, the new CEO. Congratulations, John, on your appointment. I look forward to working with you, and to all the ex-service organisations that I regularly catch up with.

A big highlight was the Veterans Retreat Project at Lake Sorell and the further \$100 000 to support the training centre that is being built. Thank you very much to Terry Roe, president of the Vietnam Veterans Association and all your team, for the massive volunteer effort in support and helping make that happen. It was outstanding. I cannot say enough. In terms of the health and wellbeing vouchers, they are really important as well. Gavin Pearce is an absolutely fantastic supporter of our veterans, and likewise Susie Bower, a federal Liberal candidate for Lyons, is out and about supporting those local communities wherever she can.

In terms of this state of the state address, there is a lot in it for Tasmanians. We will continue to fight and advocate for the local community in the usual way.

[3.53 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Mr Speaker, this afternoon I rise to reply to the state of the state address. In doing so, I reflect on my feeling of the state of this state and remind myself that it is not yet a year that I have been in this place. The election was just 10 months ago. I was sworn in to this Chamber just nine months ago almost to the day, so I feel I am well placed to provide fresh eyes on my reflection of where I feel this state is and, having heard a state of the state address in the Chamber for the first time, well placed to provide fresh eyes in response to that also.

I remind myself of the commitments I made when I was successful to be part of the privilege of being in parliament. I have always believed that in a state the size of Tasmania it has to be possible that every Tasmanian can feel loved, connected and safe; that they have secure, stable accommodation and a safe place to call home; that they feel loved and are able to express love; that they feel they have a way to contribute to the lives of Tasmanians and contribute to themselves and their family's lives; and that they believe in possibility, the possibility of a clever, courageous, bold, kind and caring Tasmania. I know that for the Tasmania that I and we see for ourselves here in this place, that takes determination to achieve.

I committed to myself that I would always act with courage and compassion and always say what needed to be said - so here we go.

I want to outline this afternoon by reflecting on the state of the state and our position and care for the Tasmanian community, our understanding of the position that many Tasmanians find themselves in right now. I want to share the disappointment, the frustration, and voice on behalf of Tasmanians who have spoken to me the anger, the complete disbelief of the out-of-touch lack of compassion they are feeling from the lack of leadership by the Government right now for Tasmanians.

When coming to prepare for this for the first time, I reflected on things I have accepted, taken on board, heard and learned over my lifetime. I am a very goal-driven person and I am all about making sure things can be better, making sure that we do things to improve, making sure that I am always in action. Action is so very important, because one thing that I remind myself of all the time is that a goal without a plan is just a daydream.

I want to respond to what has seemingly been the centrepiece of the state of the state - the floating stadium - in a moment, but I will reflect on some of the behaviours I have seen in this place when things get difficult. One of the things that I have learned - and it was required of me growing up - was that when things get hard, you stand up, you take it, and you move on. You accept things, you do not just run away or hide, you do not dig yourself into a hole. When in recent weeks I saw the Government, the Premier, go, 'Nothing to see here. Oh, we're going to apply for the Commonwealth Games', it was just disbelief. When questioned within 24 hours, the cities of Launceston and Hobart, in fact the only department that would have been able to deliver the Commonwealth Games, there were crickets - no-one had heard about it. A goal without a plan is just a daydream, and when you are in trouble and you dig a hole, do not distract because you will get called out. Do you seriously think the people of Tasmania are that stupid?

To respond directly to the state of the state, and what has been presented as the centrepiece, this floating stadium, I want to talk a little bit about the change of language I have heard recently; the change of position the Government must be feeling deeply that they can no longer describe themselves as a stable government, but they want to be aspirational. I did hear someone today say that they wanted to have aspiration - and I think it was in fact from the member who has now left the Chamber. I will caution the member who always has these little lines to learn a new line, because when he used the word 'aspiration' repeatedly today, that does not go down very well. Right now in the Tasmanian community there are so many things day on day, week on week and month on month that are not going down very well and are hard to swallow. I think okay, if you cannot be aspirational, what do you want to be? Sometimes I go to the dictionary - that is the old thing that you do - and 'aspiration', in fact, is interesting because it does not speak to care of community. Aspiration is actually about social prestige. It is about material success. Where we say we have a government that cares for, understands, and has compassion for community, but is about prestige and material success, again I would caution that you do another rewrite on that one.

We might think about vision, being visionary. I think of the people in my past who I have felt have been completely visionary about planning for the future with wisdom. I think of the great Jim Bacon, a person when I was elected as mayor of Launceston was the Premier at the time and I was grateful for his warmth, encouragement and support. I was too young to really develop to the point that he was able to drive and lead this state, but I always watched to

learn the way he operated, and I loved that at the same time he was laying down his incredible vision for Tasmania - for infrastructure, growth, development, opportunity - he was also equally caring for our community. I quote Jim Bacon back in 2003, when he said:

Our people are our greatest asset. We must encourage them, invest in them, care for them and educate them, train them and ensure they have a good quality of life.

That is a man who cares for community; that is vision and wisdom.

The centrepiece of the state of the state is the floating stadium. Care, compassion for community, the big shiny object. Perhaps it is not a distraction because I acknowledge, having been with the City of Launceston for many years, this is probably at the end of a pathway. However, on that pathway many commitments were made along the way, commitments to people across Tasmania, particularly to north and north western Tasmania and to the people of Bass and Launceston.

This morning, the Premier proudly referred to the editorial in the *Mercury*. I am not sure if he had read the editorial in the *Examiner*, which put a counterpoint that perhaps promising funding to build a stadium will not help win seats. It may cost the votes of those who believe the money would be better spent on hospitals.

In our community so many people are struggling in so many areas in their life, perhaps people who have never experienced struggle before. They may have had a little tricky time, but have never been confronted with having to sell their house to survive; never worried if their car is going to get to the petrol station and does \$10 still get them out of the petrol station like it used to.

When we are on this pathway towards this big, shiny object, I ask the Government and the Premier not to forget the people of northern Tasmania. The Premier while in opposition, back in 2003 I think, supported a motion that said AFL for the entire state, which recognised that a venue in the north made it most accessible for our decentralised regions. What we want to know in northern Tasmania is when you are investing in such a significant piece of infrastructure, when there are so many other investments that could be made, where you have made commitments that marquee gains would be delivered in the north for economic benefit as well as social and supporting benefit, that you maintain that commitment to the people of the north and the north-west coast. Although a team might want to be housed, if ever there is a team, in the south, we know that the economic benefits, the social and the sporting benefits to all Tasmanians happens in the heart, and the heart is in Bass.

Bright shiny objects, big distractions, big announcements, we are in trouble, we are digging ourselves deeper and deeper. What can we do? This is not a new behaviour. We talk about the north. Let us talk about the Tamar bridge. Will it be \$400 million, \$600 million, \$800 million to deliver a Tamar bridge? It is a promise you know you never intend to deliver, that just moves the deckchairs and congestion around from one side to the other. Why promise just before an election time and again a big, shiny object to make yourselves look good with no intention to ever deliver?

At a very different scale, just before an election, the commitment to dredge. In a community where families struggle to know if they will be able to feed themselves, that \$4 million sounds like so much money and by dredging then the Tamar will be magically fixed

forever. As anyone who takes their kids to the beach knows, when you build a sand castle with the channel to the water, the water comes in and the sand castle has water all around. Then the big waves come and it is all back to normal. Dredging, if you can get the approvals, which are questionable, will be like that channel in the sand. The water returns and it is gone. To present this as a solution is thinking that the community is not clever enough to figure it out. Do you seriously think the people of Tasmania are that stupid?

When you are out of touch, when you lack leadership, you look for these distractions. It is not good enough. Tasmanians deserve a state where they can demonstrate how clever, how amazing, how much they can do not only in their own communities, whether it be a regional or urban community, but in Tasmania, Australia and around the world. We have some of the best people in the world right here. They should have opportunities but they need to be treated with respect and told the real information when challenges present.

Half the time the Government is in a bubble. It has no idea what is going on. The other half of the time it puts a bubble around itself so it cannot know what is going on. The community gets it. One day you are going to come out from the bubble and you are going to know that everything is falling down around you. There is creating a bubble and there is only acting under pressure. When I arrived in the Chamber last year, we put relentless pressure on the Small Business minister because what was being offered was not good enough. The people who had been hit hard by COVID-19 had had their revenues drop so much that they did not receive enough revenue to meet your \$50 000 threshold. Under pressure it was dropped to \$25 000, thanks to the great Labor team. Over summer when the borders re-opened, the Government said, 'If we need to, we will'. It is such a great line. Under the pressure of the Labor team they announced some grants. Under further pressure, knowing that the grants did not go very far, they doubled down. Do not live in a bubble. Tasmanians deserve better.

If you are going to survive your three years in Government, I want you to know that Tasmanians deserve better. Get out of the bubble, stop creating bubbles, and act before you are put under pressure.

Our team and our side of the Chamber are in a great place at the moment. It is really exciting. There is so much talent, there is so much energy. We have a deep sense of purpose. We know how to face the challenges and we are not afraid to work on them. We know how to take opportunity, how to do the work, stay grounded, stay connected and work on behalf of our community. We also know that the key to a great future in Tasmania is through our children. Investing in our children will ensure that the future of Tasmania is in good hands.

We have a community in great need right now. We know that the basics for many are unattainable. We know that getting the basics right seems unattainable for the Government. The Government should be addressing the rising cost of living, addressing declining real wages, deteriorating levels of home ownership. People are struggling with the price of petrol, with power costs, particularly coming into winter. People are making choices about how much energy they use to heat based on how much money they may or may not have in their budget to pay for that through winter. We know that the cost of living right now is crippling.

I want to talk about some constituents who have been into my office. If the Government wants to make the next three years then I want you to have this information so you can act and support people in our community. Someone came in to speak to me about a private rental property that they live in with their children. They were terrified about doing something about

the condition of their property knowing that they could not afford private rental. They and their children would be homeless if they did anything about it.

We have people talking about the importance of education, about supporting kids, about opportunity, about big, shiny objects. Does the Government understand that if a kid does not have a safe roof over their head, if they do not have stable accommodation, if they are struggling to have enough food to sustain themselves, it is hard to get to school, it is hard to feel like getting to school? Some of the people I have been talking about have children who are embarrassed to go to school because they do not have lunch for their lunch box. Some of them do not have parents who are functioning well enough, despite all their best efforts, to make sure they have clean uniforms or appropriate clothes to attend school in. You cannot have a good start in life if you cannot have the start of education. We want the Government that is so disconnected at the moment to reconnect with our community, to provide the support that is required and to support people.

This is not just people we would otherwise usually have felt may have been described as homeless or sleeping rough. This is people in our community, middle-class people, who are finding for the first time they are one major event away from completely overwhelming their life, an inability to continue to live how they have known. Tasmanians deserve better and they deserve good leadership, and we are going to provide that.

As to the area of small business, in the minutes I have left I want to share some of the stories we heard as we moved around the Tasmanian community as a team, led by Rebecca White with the economic team and supported by all members in their electorates. We connected with businesses right across Tasmania. We heard stories of people who would otherwise have been great supporters of the Government but are completely furious at the lack of attention, care and connection.

When you have done something once and it was reasonable, then to keep using that despite the fact that things have changed is grotesque for people, it is disrespectful. To say you have invested \$160 million into small business when I think the figure was \$1 million or so just recently, to those people who are losing their livelihoods, their homes and their businesses, it is just disrespectful.

What we know is that of the nearly 40 000 businesses in Tasmania that employ around 100 000 Tasmanians, of the grants you actually ended up offering, after pressure, actually are announced and promoted as though there is \$5000, which to a lot of people who have no money sounds like a lot of money, while \$10 000 to a lot of people who are struggling sounds like a lot of money. If you have been in a generational business handed down from your parents, you have been in business for 20 to 30 years and you are really good at it, the hurt you have felt since 15 December has been far worse than any of the actual lockdowns and has drained your reserves to the point where you are contemplating having to sell your primary home, you do not want to know about a \$5000 or \$10 000 grant. In fact, what you really want to know is that only three-quarters of Tasmanian businesses - so 30 000 of the 40 000 businesses in Tasmania - are actually only eligible for \$1000 or up to \$2000. So let us not call it a \$5000 or a \$10 000 grant. Let us not get excited and feel proud about that. One of my colleagues, Dean Winter, mentioned someone who we spoke to who spent \$500 to get a \$2000 grant. That is just ridiculous when people are under pressure.

Labor went out, Labor listened and, despite all the suggestions of the members on the other side of the House, put together a package. We presented that package, we have tabled that package. We know it will go some way to make a difference. People who have been in business - and there are many in this Chamber on both sides who have been in business - know that cashflow is king and deferred responsibilities like tax and payroll tax really hit hard if you have not had the ability to make provisions for those. In a normally operating world where you are really good at what you do, you provide for that. However, in a really hard time, where you are just making it every week and perhaps not making it every week, and then the tax bill and the payroll tax bill comes, that is when it all goes pear-shaped.

So we put a package together. We wanted to recognise that the Government did some things but it did not go far enough, that it was overwhelming and complicated for a business owner. They are often the person who does the work and then does the administration. They are doing it at night-time and weekends, and become totally overwhelmed, totally exhausted, and totally fearful. We have had people speak to us in tears, not just about their own wellbeing and livelihoods, because if you cannot pay your business bills you cannot pay your home bills, but for the families they employ, the 100 000 Tasmanians who are employed in small businesses. Many of you employ people or have employed people. The responsibility you take on for them and their families is heavy. You love it when it is going well but it is really hard and keeps you up at night when its going badly.

We had a package that focused on payroll support, a request to extend the payroll tax waiver. We had support for cash flow, for some of those fixed charges which are really easy to rebate, like the network charges for a power bill, the fixed charges for a water bill and the land tax. They are really simple things that the Government could be doing and could be doing now.

We had payroll relief up to \$5000 in the month of February. It seems like a bit of a get out of jail free card at the moment. Again, I do not think it is fair, but there has been a bit of an uptick. With the COVID-19 numbers in schools we know that a lot of parents are staying home. They will often also be sole traders, sole operators or business owners themselves. So, there is a little bit of a challenge at the moment but, generally, it feels like there is a bit of an uptick. Again, as anyone who has been in business will know the time it takes to trade out of a challenge - just because you earn a dollar, does not mean you make a dollar. If you have been going backwards, you have got to double down to make that back.

Businesses are going to be challenged through winter and through the next trading month, but many of these iconic Tasmanian businesses that are equally struggling need the ongoing support to make it to the next chapter. If we believe, as the Government often says, they are the backbone of the economy, they are the engine room of the economy, they need to be respected and understood. I know we have made the opportunity to say that we will sit down and talk about this, but as the new shadow small business minister, I implore you to connect deeply with a whole range of businesses across a whole range of sectors across all of Tasmania to make sure that we support them and their families. We support workers and owners to get through this really tricky time.

One of the other responsibilities I have that we do not hear much about is startups. In terms of a great, bright, exciting future for Tasmania, there is nothing more - there are a lot of industries. We have heard the Minister for Primary Industries and Water talk about the benefits of agriculture, of fisheries, of aquaculture to Tasmania but there are so many great opportunities

in Tasmania, incredible people who can leverage great investment here and bring in such big income to Tasmania through pure startups - not a new business but a scaled business that is a startup. We have enterprises in Tasmania, that do a great job. I am going to touch on fisheries and aquaculture in a minute.

I know our Leader talked about the opportunities that were leaving the state, but we have other opportunities right here under our nose. They are being created here and then they are choosing to go away because they are not getting support here. I do not know how many people in this place have heard about Seedlab Australia. Just in the last year, about 100 participants, 62 new jobs were provided in Tasmania. Incredible investment, incredible leverage on the investment here, returns to Tasmania. Great ideas of intelligent people doing incredible things but the ideas have been picked up and invested on the mainland and now others, not Tasmanians, are benefitting from that. So, I ask that in the government of Tasmania, we look at being real about the investments and support that we make to people in startup world. Not just in the ideation space that say, 'enterprise does so well' - and I know we have got some accelerators and things going on - but deep, real investment to create the best outcomes that we can in Tasmania for Tasmanians on the island.

I want to speak about - and the minister has already done so - primary industries, fisheries, aquaculture and agriculture. Things are going well across a number of sectors. There are real challenges with input costs; there are real challenges with freight. They are things that we are going to have to get on top of. As we know, from world events at the moment, it is only going to get harder. Of all the things that we are good at, we know that our Tassie produce, the things that we do here on island are revered around the world. It really leads in and supports Brand Tasmania, So, although things can go well, they also need the support to continue.

I want to just touch on two things: one is in fisheries. The minister talked about the rec fishing plan and he talked about some wild fisheries. What I want to share is, and what I have always committed to while I have been here is that I do not want to waste these three years we are in opposition before we get in government. I want to do what I can to support Tasmanians through that process. I said right at the beginning that you have to have the courage to say what is important.

The minister has a great vision. The Government has a great vision - \$10 billion by 2050 - but sometimes you have to get out of the way. Sometimes you have to act. I get feedback that I want to shift. We deserve and our people in the sector deserve, particularly with the investments around irrigation, that we have to not be all about all show, no go. We have to get in there and address the tricky issues. So, how about a 10-year integrated wild fisheries plan that dealt with both the recreational fishers and the wild fishers? How about it looked at all fisheries for a 10-year plan? Yes, there is a 10-year salmon plan, but there is a moratorium. They talk about being the greatest supporters of the aquaculture industry; I think we are the greatest industry of the aquaculture industry. They talk about investment here and growth, but as our leader said in the last couple of days, Tassal has taken in a huge investment and opportunity that could have otherwise been here, and is now being celebrated off the island.

I will finish on some great things that are happening outside this place. Talking about bubbles, we should not stay in our own bubble either. There are some great things happening in Tasmania. I want to reflect on the City of Launceston and the area of Bass. I have been very excited and proud to meet with people in Bass and to see what is going on in the areas that I have not otherwise connected with for so much in my past. I am proud that Launceston was

recently awarded the best Aussie town in Australia. There are so many great things going on in Launceston; there are so many great things going on in the Tamar Valley and in northern Tasmania. Achieving the designation from UNESCO of a City of Gastronomy will tie together innovation, creativity, our producers, our farmers, our chefs, and also food security. It ties in supporting our community to have access to food, to be nourished so that they can engage in education and be the leaders of our future. There are many things going on that are amazing across Tasmania. That should be celebrated and those things should continue to be supported by all in this place.

I am excited about where we are at. I am excited about the work we are doing. When we talk about fisheries or we talk about aquaculture or farming, they are also small businesses, and I talk about small businesses a lot. I am concerned for the state of our people at the moment, and about the lack of support, how out of touch this community is, how lacking in leadership they have been, to get out and do the hard work, to hear what is really going on.

I encourage everyone in this place to face it when things get hard; take a deep breath and accept the things that have gone wrong so that you can get out of the hole, stop being distracted, and get back to the good work. In a state the size of Tasmania, it is possible for every single person to feel connected, to feel safe, to feel loved; that they can give and receive love, that they have secure, stable accommodation and a safe place to call home. They should have a way that they can contribute and believe in the possibility of a clever, courageous, bold, kind, and caring Tasmania.

That is the Tasmania I want to set up for my kids. I do not want to live in a place where we throw pots against each other. I want to work together to make sure that Tasmanians are supported in the next three years, and the next state of the state report does not just have big, shiny objects.

[4.23 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Education, Children and Youth) - Mr Speaker, I start by congratulating Ms Finlay for her enthusiasm and for the courage to be the only member of the Opposition in this place who stood up in this debate and acknowledged the great things that are going on in Tasmania, and the exciting opportunities that are out there that we can all have aspirations to be part of. I congratulate her for her boldness; I am sure she will be rebuked for that when she gets back to the bunker.

I also congratulate the Premier, Peter Gutwein, on his historic state of the state address, and his leadership of Tasmania through this pandemic.

I start my contribution, as the Premier did, by acknowledging the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the original owners and continuing custodians of this land, and pay my respects to elders past, present, and emerging.

Nothing is more important than the safety and wellbeing of our children and young people, ensuring that they have the tools they need to reach their full potential in life. The children and young people who attend our schools, those in out-of-home care, and those in our youth justice system are not distinct groups of people. They are all Tasmanian kids. They all need to be safe, they all need to learn, and they all need and deserve the best chance we can give them to succeed in life, whatever that might be for them.

That is why I am honoured to be Tasmania's first Minister for Education, Children and Youth, and to be responsible for Tasmania's first government department with the same holistic child-centered focus which will operate from 1 July this year.

I acknowledge the leadership of my predecessors, Ms Courtney and Mr Rockcliff, for working hard to provide the strong foundations for a contemporary and continuously improving public education system.

Under this Government we have seen an increased network of child and family learning centres, every Tasmanian high school extended to year 12, a nation-leading model of disability funding as well as funding to counteract the negative impact of trauma on learning. We have delivered a record investment of \$486.6 million in new education infrastructure across the state, including \$116.2 million of capital investment funding announced in last year's Budget. This funding will ensure: the delivery of 38 separate capital projects and programs including new schools at Brighton and Legana; major redevelopments of existing school and school farms; six new child and family learning centres to support families with young children; new school outdoor learning facilities through our COVID Safety in Schools Plan; and infrastructure upgrades to support years 11 and 12 learning at all government high schools and district schools.

I will continue to focus on student wellbeing and ensuring that they have the skills to engage in education which will set them up to be successful in life.

I will prioritise the recommendations from the DoE inquiry and the royal commission through the Office of Safeguarding Children and Young People. I am committed to our target of all students eligible to sit NAPLAN being able to read at above the national minimum standard before they enter year 7 by 2029.

I also take this opportunity to thank all our school leaders, teachers, teacher assistants, professional support staff, school staff, child and family learning centre and library staff for their commitment and their passion for education in Tasmania. In particular, I acknowledge their continuing efforts to keep our community safe and our learners learning as we manage the transition to living with COVID-19.

As a result of COVID-19 we needed to be flexible. Early in the pandemic we had more than 80 000 public and independent and Catholic school students learning remotely from home. This was an outstanding effort. One of the key learnings was the challenge the digital divide still presents and need for a provision of laptops and iPads to many students and families for their use at home. In the twenty-first century, every child in a public school should have access to the technology they need to support their learning where ever they are learning. That is why our Government will invest an additional \$5 million to boost the pool of loan devices to ensure that families who do not have this basic technology at home are supported, so no child misses out.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is committed to closing the Ashley Youth Detention Centre and establishing two therapeutic youth justice facilities, one in the north and one in the south of the state, as part of our major reform of Tasmania's youth justice system. That is why this year's Budget will include an allocation of \$40 million to ensure work can commence as soon as design work is completed and suitable sites are confirmed.

Education will be an important focus of these facilities, ensuring young people can continue learning during their detention and linking them with longer-term educational, vocational and other supports as they transition back into the community.

The transition plan for transforming the youth justice system is well under way with Noetic Group engaged to develop a detailed brief for the new facilities which will determine the most appropriate settings for a secure and therapeutic environment. A review of Crown-owned sites that may be suitable for new facilities is also under way and the preferred sites will be identified once Noetic Group's brief has been finalised, with planning and consultation processes to follow.

The Government also has a proud record in taking strong action to improve safety and wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and their families. One of our most important achievements has been the implementation of the \$51 million child safety redesign - Strong Families Safe Kids. We are now seeing more support for families at risk than ever before, fewer cases referred for statutory child safety intervention and a decrease in the rate of children and young people entering out-of-home care. Kids are remaining with their families and those families are receiving the support they need to provide safe care. This is a significant achievement.

Together with our redesign, we have ensured that there are greater staffing resources in child safety, with a 40 per cent increase in staffing levels since 2014.

The Government is also providing greater support for informal kinship carers who play a crucial role in the lives of many Tasmanian children who are unable to live with their parents; priority access for kids in care to government services and concessions; and better support for young people at risk of homelessness.

Looking to the future, we are now delivering the Strong Families, Safe Kids Next Steps Action Plan for 2021-23, which will consolidate the changes we have already made and embed the intent of our reforms in new key areas. We are focusing on the statutory Child Safety Service, where we are improving how we engage with parents and families, and building stronger oversight of our out-of-home care system. We are also promoting permanency and stability for children and young people in out-of-home care, and better outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people.

A comprehensive review of the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997 will underpin many of our initiatives, with consultation expected to commence in coming months.

In December we released an implementation plan which responds to the recommendations of the expert panel established in response to our review of the Many Colours One Direction program in the Northern Territory. The plan details the steps we are taking to better meet the complex needs of young people and, importantly, develop services and programs for them here in Tasmania. The Government established a cross-sectoral oversight group of individuals with relevant experience and expertise from government and non-government organisations, including Aboriginal community organisations. The group has now endorsed the implementation plan and will continue to have oversight of its rollout. In readiness to respond to the panel's recommendations, the Government has already set aside

\$500 000 of seed funding to progress the development of Tasmanian-based programs. Under our plan, we expect to have new programs operating in Tasmania by the end of 2022.

We are committed to ensuring that young people with exceptional needs have access to services that can help reset their current life trajectory, provide an opportunity to heal and to re-engage with their community, and the possibility of a positive future.

Mr Speaker, it is my great honour to be the new Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth. The Skills, Training and Workforce Growth portfolios were consolidated last year in recognition of their key shared focus on supporting Tasmanians into training and skills development, to equip them to fill local jobs and more fully participate in their local communities. These portfolios are fundamental to the Gutwein Liberal Government's focus on ensuring that all Tasmanians, no matter what their age, circumstances or where they live, will have opportunities to create a better life for themselves.

Over the past year we have been delivering on our strong plan to ensure that Tasmanian learners have access to the training they need to develop the skills Tasmanian businesses are looking for and to make it easier for local jobseekers to fill local jobs. By supporting individuals in this way, we are supporting Tasmanian families and businesses, building our regional communities and strengthening the state's economy, which is consistently ranked as one of the best-performing in Australia. In the year ahead, we will be building on these strong foundations, delivering skills, training and workforce growth initiatives across industries, including a specific focus on priority sectors to help Tasmanians get the skills they need to enter or re-enter the workforce or to change careers to pursue new opportunities.

The passage of the TasTAFE (Skills and Training Business) Bill 2021 through the parliament in November last year was a watershed moment. It will put TasTAFE, as our public provider of vocational education and training, in a stronger position than ever and equip it to meet the demands of the future. Our commitment was to put TasTAFE in a position to operate flexibly and responsibly and in ways that are better aligned with the businesses and the learners it is there to serve, and that is exactly what we will deliver. This will ensure that every Tasmanian has access to the training that will give them the best opportunities to get the skills to get a job.

We are also backing TasTAFE by investing \$98.6 million over the next four years into capital upgrades, improving access to training for all Tasmanians and recruiting an additional 100 teachers. Importantly, we have guaranteed that 80 per cent of all skills funding will continue to be invested in the new TasTAFE model.

Our ambitious \$40 million workforce growth agenda is already being delivered by the new Jobs Tasmania unit in the Department of State Growth. It is centred on the establishment of a regional Jobs Hub network comprising seven Jobs Hubs covering all areas of Tasmania to provide support to businesses needing staff and jobseekers looking for work, complemented by delivery of a range of programs to remove barriers and support Tasmanians to transition into training and work.

We know Labor supports this because their federal candidates have announced that if successful at the election, they will fund a Jobs Hub at Sorell, which already has one.

Programs include the Job Ready Fund to help jobseekers meet the costs of essential licences or equipment necessary for a new job; the Tasmanian Employer Bonus to support businesses with additional costs associated with taking on a long-term jobseeker; Youth Navigators to support recent school leavers to understand their further education, training or employment options and opportunities; and an expanded Area Connect service to help more Tasmanians get to work, training or education where no easy public transport options exist.

In my State Growth portfolio, the Antarctic sector is an important contributor to the Tasmanian economy, with real non-wage spending by Antarctic sector organisations injecting almost \$160 million into Tasmania's economy each year.

I thank my colleague, the member for Clark, for her enthusiasm for the sector, particularly in her electorate in Clark.

The sector employs nearly 950 FTE's here and also brings thousands of expeditioners and conference delegates to Hobart every year. The announcement of an additional \$800 million in funding from the Australian Government was welcomed by our Government and Tasmania, as home to one of the world's most significant and growing Antarctic gateways.

As a base for Australia's Antarctic and Southern Ocean operations, the new \$528 million icebreaker *Nuyina* and a range of other Antarctic missions from around the world, we are well-placed to increase our scientific and support services to the sector.

Already the sector employs almost 950 Tasmanians and injects almost \$160 million into our economy each year. With this investment, coupled with an increased focus on inland Antarctic science, upgrading of facilities in Antarctica and Macquarie Island, and the much-anticipated new Antarctic and science precinct at Macquarie Point, we are already moving to increase the capacity and capability of Antarctic operations available in Hobart.

We expect this funding boost to have significant flow-on effects for both local jobs and our economy. We will continue to work with and support our local network of specialist businesses servicing and supplying the Antarctic program to ensure our strategically important Antarctic sector continues to grow.

The Government recognises that the private sector is critical to rebuilding and growing our economy, and remains committed to assisting Tasmanian businesses through this period and beyond. In particular, we recognise the important role the building and construction sector has in a strong economy. Through our Building Projects Support Program, we have invested over \$25 million into 32 local community and commercial projects around the state, giving them the confidence to bring forward plans to build, develop and expand. Together, these projects will inject \$238 million into our economy, with the second round of funding alone expected to create 520 additional ongoing jobs for Tasmanians at a time when we need them most. These are not just jobs in the building and construction of growing businesses; this is also assisting these businesses to grow and employ more Tasmanians, and to increase the footprint of their own operations.

Tasmania's largest major industrial firms are from the resource-processing sectors and include Bell Bay Aluminium, Nyrstar, Liberty Bell Bay and Norske Skog. These companies are some of the largest employers and energy consumers in our state. Together they support

nearly 1700 direct jobs and thousands of indirect jobs, and provide significant flow-on benefits to the Tasmanian economy.

Our Government values the long-term economic relationship between our major industrial employers and the Tasmanian economy and community, and the benefits that the sector has delivered over many decades. We maintain a close relationship with our major industrials regarding a range of issues, including investments that mitigate constraints or increase production capacity, productivity and business efficiency. I recently watched the Premier sign a new MOU with Rio Tinto's Bell Bay Aluminium. It is just one example of the work we do to secure the future of major industrials and other businesses. It is a signal of the long-term confidence these businesses have in Tasmania. The MOU includes investigating options for future investment, to secure the competitiveness of the Bell Bay smelter, and potential new industrial opportunities that will create even more local jobs and an economic boost to our state, while encouraging the creation, expansion and uptake of innovative technologies.

The Government is also working with Nyrstar as it progresses its proposal to construct a new cell house at its Lutana smelter to replace its existing electrolysis plant. The project would secure the longevity of Nyrstar's Hobart operations along with employment and economic benefits for Tasmania that Nyrstar generates. The project is at feasibility stage and we continue to be closely engaged with Nyrstar due to the smelter's importance to the state.

The new super jumbo plant would have the capacity to process 300 000 tonnes of zinc products per annum. The existing plant has been in operation at the Nyrstar Hobart facility for over 100 years. Associated benefits of the new plant include reduced power consumption, increased operational efficiencies and a lift in potential output.

Nyrstar recognises that global demand for green metals produced with renewable energy has grown significantly in recent times, making Nyrstar's relationship with Tasmania and its prospects for future investment here even stronger than they have been in the past.

The Launceston City Deal now represents a 10-year partnership between the Australian and Tasmanian governments and the City of Launceston to make Launceston Australia's most innovative and liveable regional city. A total of \$567 million in government and private investment has been devoted to deal commitments. The Tasmanian Government has committed a total of \$126 million in funding to date.

On 22 February this year, I had the honour to participate in the opening of the new library and student experience building at the UTAS Inveresk campus, signifying an exciting step for students and the communities of Launceston and northern Tasmania. The building is the first of three new facilities to be unveiled at the Inveresk UTAS campus in Launceston and is an example of the significant city-shaping benefits of the \$567 million Launceston City Deal. This important addition to the facilities at the university's campus is an investment in the future of our state that will further enhance the university's appeal to prospective students and showcase the design and the materials and the aspirations of Tasmanians building new buildings that will last us for generations.

Our Government has taken important steps to progress the structural and organisational separation of the Environment Protection Authority, EPA, from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, creating a new independent state authority. These changes

commenced on 1 December last year. The Government believes that independent and robust environmental assessment and regulation are an essential part of Tasmania's planning and approval system through the resource management and planning system. This change has reaffirmed the existing independence of the EPA, but the new model will ensure greater public confidence in environmental regulation in Tasmania and promote greater certainty for proponents.

The separation of the EPA from Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania is being supported with additional funds for new positions, including in the area of environmental assessment and regulation, an additional senior compliance officer, a director of fin fish compliance and director of environmental regulation. Shortly I will be releasing draft legislation aimed at providing formal structural separation of the EPA and for the making of statutory policies to create further tools for the EPA to manage the environmental performance of industries, including the development of a statutory environmental standard for the salmon industry.

We also continue to progress our important waste resource recovery and recycling initiatives. We know that recovering resources from waste streams creates business opportunities and jobs. We want to maximise these opportunities and stimulate our circular economy. We want to build confidence in our waste and resource recovery sectors, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution in our environment. We are investing \$5.5 million to develop our plastic reprocessing in Tasmania, through the Recycling Modernisation Fund. Together with the Australian Government funding and industry contributions this will provide a \$20 million boost to Tasmania's plastic recycling industry, resulting in over 50 new ongoing jobs.

In the north-west, a total of \$9 million combined Commonwealth and Tasmanian government funding has been provided for the Dulverton Waste Management Authority to develop a state-of-the-art industrial composting facility, taking household organic waste and other industrial and agricultural waste to produce high value, certified compost. The Southern Organic Waste Processing expression of interest process will provide up to \$3 million to attract investment in a similar operating facility for the south of the state. The EOI closed in January and I hope to make an announcement on the successful applicant shortly.

We are also progressing with our commitment to contribute \$3 million to co-invest with industry in a crumbed rubber plant for Tasmania. Crumbed rubber from end of life vehicle tyres will then be used in our state road resurfacing program.

The container refund scheme and waste levy remain important initiatives that we are progressing. I expect bills will be further considered by the Legislative Council in the coming weeks.

As can be seen by the work we continue to progress and our new commitments, we are getting on with the job of delivering the benefits of a circular economy for Tasmania, building confidence and growth in the recycling and resource recovery sector, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution in our environment.

The Government is strongly focused on achieving better outcomes for and with Tasmanian Aboriginal people. As the Premier highlighted in his state of the state address, the Government received broad feedback that indicated support for both a truth-telling and treaty

process to proceed. Following receipt of this feedback and over the past few weeks, the Premier and I have met with members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and Tasmanian Regional Aboriginal Communities Alliance (TRACA) organisations to discuss what the next step of this process should look like. The feedback was very clear: these processes must be led by Tasmanian Aboriginal people, and that they must co-design the next steps. It was also very clear that the next steps needed to include all Tasmanian Aboriginal people and organisations, and that their voices needed to be heard.

As a result of those discussions, the Government will look to establish an Aboriginal advisory board that is representative of all Tasmanian Aboriginal people and can, through co-design, work with government to establish these two processes, the other recommendations, and on other matters that affect Tasmanian Aboriginal people. These next steps will involve inviting representatives of the 22 registered Aboriginal community organisations to come together to provide advice on the establishment of the Aboriginal advisory body, its membership, its terms of reference and how it will be accountable to Aboriginal people in Tasmania.

TRACA, whose membership is comprised of Aboriginal organisations from across the state, has welcomed our commitment to establish an Aboriginal advisory body, and the invitation to all Aboriginal organisations to provide advice on the establishment of this body, which they say is an authentic commitment to Aboriginal-led co-design.

Invitations will be issued shortly to hold the first meeting of the larger group as soon as possible. The Department of Premier and Cabinet, through its soon-to-be-established Aboriginal affairs whole-of-government division, will be responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating the Government's significant Aboriginal affairs agenda. This will include the development of a new Aboriginal heritage act for Tasmania, as soon as possible, subject to further consultation, which is expected to begin in the coming weeks, and finalising our review into the model for returning land. I will have more to say about the next steps of that in coming weeks.

The Government is also focused on our commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, with the Closing the Gap Tasmanian Implementation Plan 2021-2023 being tabled last year at the Joint Council on Closing the Gap. The Tasmanian Government has allocated over \$5 million towards supporting Aboriginal community controlled organisations to better meet the local and regional needs of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Our current priority for the Tasmanian implementation plan is to work with and invest in Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to help build their capacity to better meet the needs of their members and their communities.

In Tasmania, we have a lot to be grateful for, and a lot to be excited about when it comes to looking at our future, and the aspirations of the generations that are coming through. This all comes off the back of hard work and sacrifice and cooperation from all Tasmanians over a very difficult past few years, especially a difficult few recent months. I am proud to be part of a Government that is prioritising our social and economic recovery with the plan we have laid out in the state of the state address. I look forward to delivering important components of that plan through my portfolios.

[4.50 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I rise to provide a response to the Premier's state of the state address. I note the switch of branding from the 'Premier's stable government' to the 'Premier's aspirational government'. I do not know if you guys undertook group consultation but - and I am probably shooting myself in the foot - the last time I heard 'aspirational government' being used as part of a marketing or PR campaign was Mark Latham's campaign. We know how that turned out.

I also note the awkward list of projects announced, which I doubt this Government has the acumen or the skills to deliver.

Mr Jaensch - You nasty person.

Ms BUTLER - Let us be honest, you guys have form. I am not being nasty, I am being honest. You guys have form when it comes to not being able to deliver projects. I believe that your intent is good and that you really want to deliver these projects. Unfortunately it just gets mucked up. You have form, I am just stating the obvious, I am just stating fact. What is left of your Government has very little concept of how many Tasmanians are living. You have let the horse bolt for eight years, continuously failing to get the basics right.

In the Labor Party's book the basics are: food security, a roof over one's head, a safe place to call home, equal opportunity to access health services, and a quality education, opportunity to be paid a wage that provides a family or an individual with enough income to meet the soaring costs of living in Tasmania.

From extensive consultation with the community, I can confirm that this Government has lost its shine. The public is perceiving the Liberal Government as worn out, tired, out of touch. This is what I am hearing back. Or, more elaborately, 'He has let us down. I trusted them because they did a good job through COVID-19, they kept us safe. Why did they just throw us to the wolves?'

A breach of public trust, when the spin and empty sentences cannot cover the incompetence. That is what has happened to you since you opened the borders. You know that. You would be getting that back from people in the community. If they are not, it is just because they are telling you what they think you want to hear and they are just being pleasant. That is what I keep overwhelmingly hearing from the community, as do most of our team members.

In Tasmania 23.6 per cent of our people, around 120 000 Tasmanians, are living in poverty. One in five Tasmanians live in poverty. Next time you go to a church hall or next time you attend a Public Works Committee meeting, or next time you are at an event, look around the room and do a quick count. If you have 20 people in that room, think, one in five of them are living in poverty. That is what it looks like. Tasmania is now the least affordable state to live in Australia. Under this worn out, tired Government's management, the cost of living is out of control. Tasmania also has the lowest wages. Over the past eight years since the Government has been in charge, Tasmania has gone backwards. The shine has worn off.

Our increasing level of poverty is a direct consequence of your Government's policy decisions and priorities. That is what it boils down to. There is ownership here. It is a direct consequence of the policy decisions that your Government has made. Tasmanians are a trusting

population and we look out for each other. The people of Tasmania have trusted you. This Government is just not getting the basics right.

What a mess you and your flailing team are making of it, Mr Speaker. An Education minister who could not understand that taking a trip to France weeks after Tasmania opened its borders for the first time in a matter of years could be inappropriate. Permitting leave to an Education minister before primary school students had the capacity to be vaccinated is negligent. Permitting an Education minister to travel to France in January, when there was no modelling the seriousness of Omicron and how the virus could affect young people, is negligent and incompetent.

Then we have a Sport minister with serious concerns raised around a conflict of interest and the Premier's involvement in the process of removing that minister from the portfolio. Again, if there is nothing to hide and the process undertaken is in line with the code of conduct criteria, allow it to be scrutinised independently. That is what parliaments do. We have transparent processes so that things can be looked at. We can follow whether processes have been undertaken. That is what you do when you agree to be transparent. Integrity is so important to the people of Tasmania. Open up things so we can have a look at the process and the public can understand whether the right decisions were made, whether or not there was a conflict of interest. Covering it up just makes it even harder and worse for you in the long run.

A bone of contention for me is the seat of Braddon the Government won in 2021 by preselecting and running Adam Brooks, who was known to have issues with misogyny, integrity, telling the truth and honesty. I will never believe that this Government and people from this Government did not know what Mr Brooks was up to on a personal level. Winning the seat, winning an election no matter what it took. Was that the vision? That is what it looked like. It was disgraceful, unforgiveable and ruthless.

It is a standard that this Government and this party on the other side of the room walked past. You lost your way. For the women in your party, many I know who are strong feminists, you have been compromised. By not speaking up and not talking about what really happened with Adam Brooks, you are compromised. Winning at all costs has cost the people of Tasmania dearly. Socially and ethically you are compromised. On economic management, your public relations spin is falling short. The numbers do not lie. The fact is 120 000 Tasmanians live in poverty. You cannot dress that up. You cannot dress it down. It is a fact.

It was interesting to hear the Premier crow about the latest concept report. According to Saul Eslake the data is out of date and did not show how Tasmania had been affected by Omicron. Hours worked in Tasmania actually fell by 0.7 per cent in December 2021, for a third straight decline. Tasmania's labour force also shrank by 4400 people for the month, three quarters of whom are women, the largest drop since May 2020. According to Mr Eslake, labour force reduction is the primary cause of Tasmania's unemployment rate. You come into this Chamber, or you put out in the newspapers, 'We have this amazing unemployment rate'. The real reason we have our unemployment rate is because, as Mr Eslake said:

With the labour force shrinking four times as much as employment, Tasmania's unemployment rate dropped by 1.2 percentage points to 3.9 per cent, the lowest since 2009.

... this is not something to celebrate because it is due entirely to the aforementioned drop in labor force participation. At 58.1 per cent in December, the proportion of working age Tasmanians who have a job was by far the lowest of any state or territory -

and 5.3 per cent points below the national average of 63.3 per cent. Our state is in economic trouble. Mr Eslake continues:

It also takes no account of the fact that 69 per cent of Western Australians aged 15 and over were in the labour force in December 2021 as against only 60.4 per cent of Tasmanians.

It is disingenuous and dishonest for the Premier and his ministers to crow about the unemployment rate as a positive. It is a signal that we are in deep trouble.

I have spoken to many community members since the Government announced a floating stadium for Hobart. The resounding response to the announcement is that is just grotesque. There are 120 000 Tasmanians living in poverty. Aspirational, Jetson-style glossy pictures of a stadium with a price tag of at least \$750 million with no idea how the people of Tasmania will ever fund such a project.

We have a stadium already which seats around 20 000 which we already utilise for football. It is called York Park. The north has football; the south has cricket. This is the structure a real visionary put into place. He was the late premier, Jim Bacon. Why risk football in the north of Tasmania. It makes absolutely no sense.

When it comes to infrastructure, this Government should hang its head in shame. Tasmanians trusted this Government to build them a four-lane Midland Highway. I remember you guys actually won an election on that. I think you took four policies to that election. It was Will Hodgman's election. One of the policies was, 'We are going to build you a four-lane highway', and the public believed you. They trusted you, and you deceived them. It has never eventuated. In fact, as a member of the Public Works Committee I note that sections of the Midland Highway, especially near Lovely Banks in the Southern Midlands, were reduced from four lanes to three lanes. Fact.

I know many Tasmanians who travel to the mainland and travel on national highways and freeways marvel at the beautiful infrastructure. I know I do. I always think the people on the mainland are so spoilt compared to us when it comes to infrastructure. Smooth, not full of potholes; separated by wide nature strips, not wire barriers; distinct two lanes, sometimes three on both sides. As one lady stated to me recently, 'We pay the same amount of taxes as the mainlanders. Why can't we have the same quality roads as the mainlanders?'.

The Bridgewater bridge, a subject close to my heart: its development application and planning is yet to be finalised, I have learnt recently, and it is overdue. The design which we scrutinised as a Public Works Committee did not provide any rail access or even spaces for rail access on the structure. The lack of foresight is staggering. Government spin was acquired quickly. Your PR machine got on to that one quickly with the line of, 'Leaving rail access points unobstructed'. What that means is that the air between the two sides of the river will not be obstructed. So, the air will not be obstructed. It is right from the script of the comedy series

Utopia. That is what it reminded me of. It was perfect. We were later advised that if a financial case should emerge at a later stage for a separate rail bridge to be built, it would be considered. Wow.

The case for a public rail transport is not just financial; it is also a social connectivity obligation. It is an opportunity for the state to finally provide public transport to connect our communities. Brighton, Bridgewater and Gagebrook require decent, accessible public transport. The northern rail link should be seen as an investment to open up our corridor, an opportunity for Tasmanians to access a quick, inexpensive route to travel to work and also to travel to potential work opportunities. Bridgewater and Gagebrook have some of the highest disadvantage indicators in the country. Poverty is very real. We need access to regular, quick public transport which creates opportunities for people to work and to travel; for parents to drop their kids to school and travel to work and return to pick them up, giving children an opportunity for their parents to find regular, accessible work; to assist the family with breaking a cycle of intergenerational unemployment; a cycle of intergenerational poverty.

On the basis of 2018-19 figures, Tasmania has the lowest per capita spend on public transport in the nation, conservatively calculated at \$216.29 per person per year, and the percentages have worsened.

By not providing space on the new Bridgewater bridge for future rail transport, Tasmania becomes the only state in Australia where the capital city rail line is cut off from the rest of the state. It is crazy. I did hear Mr Ferguson in his state of the state response refer to the project as having 'far better junctions'.

I might explain to you what some of those junctions look like on the proposed new plan. I am not sure whether the minister could have looked at the junction, especially the junction providing traffic from the Esk Highway access to the Bridgewater Bridge. You would be interested in this, as a fellow member for Lyons, Mr Speaker. When you are travelling from New Norfolk up the Esk and you veer off at the roundabout to go left onto the Bridgewater Bridge, access will not be there on the new bridge. Traffic will be required to keep travelling up the Brooker Highway until they are at Granton, further up towards the top of the hill. Then they have to exit off the Brooker and then they have to undertake a 'triple donut formation' with lots of stops. So, they come off and go around a donut and then they go through another roundabout donut and then they go through another donut. That then leads them back onto the Brooker and then back down the Brooker and then they can get onto the Bridgewater Bridge.

I do not think that is what I would call a 'far better junction'. To me, it needs a rethink. It was looked at in the Public Works Committee and we were told that the design was probably going to change. I really hope it does because heavy vehicles, trucks, will be using those junction points. I do not think that that is going to work very well as a long-term junction for vehicles travelling from New Norfolk that need to access the new Bridgewater bridge.

I believe this Government is simply not getting the basics right and most of my team believe that as well. Food security is a real issue for our communities. Tasmania has the most expensive food in Australia. *Choice's* latest survey found that Tasmanians are paying \$1 to \$2 more per bag than in Queensland and the Northern Territory, nearly \$5 more than the cheapest state, which is South Australia, in case you were interested.

The Brighton Food Hub initiative has recently undertaken consultation with the community in relation to increasing food costs. The responses are real and display the escalating costs for our communities. This has come from the consultation:

I am one of the many people concerned about the price jump on everyday food, for example, snags ...

That is sausages, by the way -

... used to be \$9 for 24. Now it is up to \$12. Mince used to be \$8, now it is up to \$12. Milk and bread have gone up. Worried about whether I buy food or medication or even pet food becoming hard.

And from another person within that consultation:

It's coming to the season where people will need to start choosing between eating properly and staying warm. With the cost of petrol rising as well, there isn't any room for a middle ground. Employed or not, getting by is getting harder.

Now, this is the reality. A total of 120 000 Tasmanians are living in poverty. So, one in five people are having those conversations at the moment in Tasmania. That is a lot of people. Poverty is not endemic but it persists because this Government has chosen for it to be this way. That is what I believe.

You have not prioritised these policies; you have not prioritised these issues. Tasmanian fuel prices are also out of control. The stress that places on our household budgets is massive. We are now paying \$2 per litre. I spoke to a constituent last week who works in disability care. His job is to drive clients and he is really good at it. He loves his job. He uses his own car and he uses his own petrol. As a disability support worker, he drives clients to different things they want to go to, or appointments, or spends time with them. He sometimes even takes them camping. He is fantastic at his job. He pays for the fuel out of his own pocket and, apparently, when he does his tax return, it is reimbursed through that process. He does not believe he is going to be able to hold onto his job for much longer. He will not be able to afford his job because of the cost of petrol - that with the increase in his rent, an increase in fuel, an increase in most of his other bills, he really does not know whether or not he is going to be able to afford that job that he loves and is good at. We need disability support workers. We do not have enough of them, especially ones like him. That is the real face of fuel prices going up.

We are not even talking yet about how it is going to affect freight, flights and everyday transport logistic companies. This is even without the impact of Russia. This is just the now. I think subsidies need to be looked at. There are different things that governments can do to help reduce the price of fuel and none of that has been done.

Another important point, which I missed and I do apologise, when I was talking about the 120 000 people in Tasmania living in poverty, is that those statistics equate to 20 000 children in Tasmania going to bed hungry every night.

Food security is a really big thing and it may be an opportunity for the Government - you have so many ministers for so many things - have you thought about having a minister for food

security? It is a big issue. If you have 20 000 Tasmanian children going to bed every night hungry, it is a good motivator to do something, make a difference, do something with integrity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we were advised in November 2021 that this Government had prepared our state for a COVID-19 outbreak and we asked numerous questions of this Government. We asked about RATs, we asked about testing capacity, we inquired what the health risks were to children if they were not vaccinated, we asked about quarantine requirements, quarantine capacity, we asked if aged care facilities were ready. We also asked if supply chains were intact. We received very scant information. We were laughed at a lot of the time, that patronising thing you guys do when you all kind of shake your head and laugh like everything is fine. But you never answered any of those questions and it became clear in January that you were not prepared for what happened.

Schools were obviously not prepared and an audit to check if school windows closed or opened had not even been completed before you opened those borders. Other states were miles ahead of us with ensuring proper ventilation was in schools. There was also no Omicron modelling despite us asking for a briefing. We had the Delta modelling apparently but there was none on the Omicron.

Without warning, you took the people of Tasmania from a position of lockdown and caution of COVID-19 to something we have to live with and 'let it rip' philosophy. I know that happened Australia-wide but we were different here in Tasmania. We had had a strict border for a long time. The communication, the lack of preparation and the inability to help Tasmanians move from one state of mind to another was really negligent. Your Government made a very big mistake there and I think you have lost a lot of good will out of making that move without the proper communication strategies in place.

I know that local councils were forced to step up, especially in early January, and provide testing and RATs for their rural communities. They organised volunteers to hand out RATs, which they acquired themselves. The Government did not lead this; those communities actually led that. I know that because I spoke to various regional councils that dug deep and solved problems which the Gutwein Government did not. I congratulate all Tasmanians for the maturity and the community spirit we showed towards each other when it became obvious that the Government did not have anyone's backs. It was like you were just missing. The people of Tasmania felt really let down. It was a difficult time for the people of Tasmania.

Businesses shut, decisions on close contacts changed overnight without adequate communications, your support for small business was haphazard, it was uncaring and it was also substandard. People have lost their livelihoods. A lot of those people had so much trust in you. You have lost that trust. The community had so much faith in the way that you had previously handled COVID-19 and kept everyone safe. The community feels like you have let them down.

At that time the wait time for Tasmanians to get a PCR test was out of control. RATs were not available and it was a very frightening time for many. We will never know how many Tasmanians have contracted COVID-19 or continue to contract COVID-19 because many were unable to access tests. Many Tasmanians who did access RATs did not register them due to the lengthy - it was like a census form when you were filling out the registration forms. With a community that has 52 per cent of the population functionally illiterate, it really minimised the number of people wanting to register. None of that had been thought through from a

community perspective. I think it had been thought through from a bureaucratic bubble sitting in a tall office in Hobart. I am not sure.

There are countless stories of people who registered positive COVID-19 cases being contacted on day six of their illness. The people who worked in those client services areas and were on the phones did an amazing job. There were many mistakes made but they were thrown in at the deep end without much guidance and it felt like a massive panic. I say again to the Gutwein Government, you have lost so much good will. The people of Tasmania really trusted you.

Your aspirational bid for the Commonwealth Games and those floating stadiums have just caused more eye rolls. 'What the heck?', one lady said to me. It has not given you the distraction, admiration or awe you were looking for because you have lost that trust from the public. You are looking very tired, worn-out and not trusted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, our children are our future, and this Government is not looking after the next generation of Tasmanians. On 3 December 2021, Tasmania earned the unenviable title of having the worst childcare in the country. Poverty is not endemic, as I will say again, but it persists because this Government has chosen it to be this way. Professor David Adams, former chair of the Tasmanian Food Security Council, recently stated, 'Twenty thousand Tasmanian children are going to bed hungry every night'. There needs to be a more serious conversation about why we can accept this in 2021 and then hide behind the plethora of latest initiatives as the solution.

Child Safety Services is also in turmoil, with 54 per cent of investigations taking more than 90 days to complete, the worst in Australia, while 80 per cent of notifications were substantiated - also the highest in the nation.

Instead of addressing this issue, the Government responded that Tasmania's approach is fundamentally different from other jurisdictions. What on earth does that mean? That is just spin. You guys have to stop doing this and actually get to the root of the problems and fix them. You are a government. Look after children. It is a fabulous piece of spin, though but really, it is children, so stop the spin and get some work done.

Tasmania's NAPLAN results provide insight into how much Tasmanian children are falling behind their mainland peers. Our results are the worst of any state across each age group in reading, the second worst in every age group in writing, the worst in every age group in spelling, grammar and punctuation, and the worst in years 5, 7, and 9 in numeracy. In the lead-up to the 2018 election, this Government promised the people of Tasmania that by 2020 Tasmanian students would be above the national average in reading, writing and maths. It sounds a bit like a floating stadium or a Commonwealth Games bid. But these are children: do better.

It is really bad that 28.5 per cent of Tasmanian grade 9 students cannot read above the level expected to engage in the wider curriculum; 41 per cent of grade 9 students could not express themselves in written form; and 23.5 per cent are not numerate. This is not the fault of the students. This is the fault of the system. But 'It's okay, we will build a floating stadium, you guys will really love it, we will spend \$750 million, we have no idea but we have some bad stuff going on at the moment and we want a distraction'. It is just like a *Utopia* series; it is crazy.

More than 3000 families are now on the social housing waiting list in Tasmania, 56 000 Tasmanians are waiting to see a specialist, 120 000 are living in poverty, 20 000 children are going to bed every night feeling hungry, but we will build a floating stadium: a floating stadium, \$750 million, we will take football away from its home in the north and we will put it in the south. That is a great distraction. Why do we not have a Commonwealth Games but not tell anyone we are doing it? How embarrassing when Victoria announced it was doing it and you guys did not even know about it. That was sloppy, that was terrible, you could do better.

There are 18 000 Tasmanians on the waiting list for dental health. The rate of serious crime in Tasmania has risen by 40 per cent. Our incarceration level is out of control. The Tasmanian building and construction sector, which he has announced things for, I will talk about on the adjournment.

Time expired.

[5.21 p.m.]

Mrs PETRUSMA (Franklin - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Mr Deputy Speaker, as a proud member of the Tasmanian Liberal Gutwein Government it is a privilege to be back for this, the second year of the 50th Parliament of Tasmania. I congratulate the Premier on his 2022 address. I also thank the Premier for his friendship and for his calm steady leadership. His reassuring manner has been a great comfort to all Tasmanians throughout the challenges of the past two years.

Under the Premier's guidance Tasmania has weathered the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is not over yet, we are in a good place and our reopening plan is progressing well. We have worked hard to deliver our plan to secure Tasmania's future and we have kept Tasmanians safe. This week the Premier outlined a bold long-term vision for the future of Tasmania, with significant announcements in health, education, children and young people, women, family and sexual violence, skills and training, housing, renewable energy, Aboriginal affairs, tourism, agriculture, the environment and sporting infrastructure.

It is clear that, along with current economic indicators and our strong policy and infrastructure agenda, our beautiful state is poised to maximise the opportunities and to thrive once again. Tasmania is now in a fantastic position with unemployment at a record low of 3.8 per cent, which is half of what it was when we came to Government in 2014. Tasmania has been rebounding strongly from the worst of the pandemic with state final demand in the December 2021 quarter growing at a massive 5.8 per cent over the last 12 months. This was the second highest growth rate in the nation. These are just some of the reasons why CommSec has rated Tasmania as the best performing economy in Australia for eight consecutive quarters.

Mr WINTER - Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

Mr SPEAKER - Quorum required. Ring the bells.

Quorum formed.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I am honoured to be the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management and the Minister for Parks. The opportunity to work across all three of these portfolio areas is a great privilege and I am very dedicated to delivering on all of our commitments during our third term of Government.

Like the Premier I thank in the most generous of terms our hardworking, dedicated and talented public servants as well as all our Parks personnel, police officers, firefighters and state emergency service personnel who over the past two years have gone above and beyond in their efforts to keep our state safe and to assist those Tasmanians who needed support during these most challenging times.

Likewise, I acknowledge all my wonderful ministerial and electorate staff, each of whom work exceptionally hard and very long hours to support me. From the bottom of my heart a huge and big thank you to all of them.

I also congratulate my wonderful parliamentary colleague and fellow member for Franklin, the honourable Nic Street MP, for his well-deserved promotion to Cabinet. I wish him every success in each of his portfolios. I likewise congratulate the member for Clark, the honourable Madeleine Ogilvie MP, on her promotion to Cabinet, Mr Tucker for his election as Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees, and Mr Ellis on his appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and Government Whip.

I acknowledge the outstanding contributions of both Sarah Courtney and the honourable Jane Howlett MLC in their times as ministers. We should all understand and appreciate the difficulty in balancing the demands of public life and family. I know the recent loss of family members has been a devastating loss for both Sarah and Jane and their families. To them both, I offer my deepest condolences today.

I warmly welcome and congratulate our new member for Bass, Lara Alexander MP, who has a wonderful and inspiring background in community service and will bring a wealth of skills and experience to this parliament and to the Gutwein Liberal team.

I am proud to represent the great electorate and wonderful people of Franklin. I am delighted that there is an exciting range of commitments that this Government is delivering for those living south and east of Hobart. Anyone who has travelled between the city and Sorell recently cannot miss the significant works that are currently under construction as part of our southeast traffic solution, with major upgrades at the Hobart Airport interchange and Midway Point well advanced and on track to be finished by the end of this year.

In addition to the significant investments we are already making in our greater Hobart traffic solution, in the next few years we will also be commencing the \$60 million upgrade to deliver a new grade separated interchange at the Algona Road roundabout, and duplication of the Kingston bypass. On the eastern shore, we are providing funding towards the commencement of the \$55 million stage three upgrade of the South Arm Highway through Rokeby, which will provide full duplication between Pass Road and Oakdowns, and remove commuter traffic from the Rokeby commercial district.

We are providing funding to a new \$8 million multi-sports facility at Bayview Secondary College, \$6.5 million for a major redevelopment of Lauderdale Primary School and \$15.1 million dollars for a major redevelopment of Cambridge Primary School. These are all very exciting improvements that will vastly improve opportunities and outcomes for our children and young people in these growing parts of the electorate of Franklin.

Keeping our community safe from harm is a core function of government and I am very honoured to be working with our brave police officers, firefighters and SES staff and

volunteers. Throughout the pandemic, Tasmania Police has had a central role in protecting our community. Commissioner Hine as the state controller has had the responsibility for the whole-of-government response. I offer my thanks and deepest appreciation to Commissioner Hine for his steady leadership, as well as to all of our hard-working police officers and emergency services personnel who have helped protect us from the threat of COVID-19. Their dedicated efforts have enabled us to reopen our borders safely and to re-join Australia and the rest of the world.

Tasmania is one of the safest places in Australia to live and raise a family because of this Government's commitment to tackling crime and investing in policing. Tasmania Police recorded 24 089 total offences in 2020-21, the lowest number recorded in eight years. This is an outstanding result. We know that there is more to do, which is why last year's Budget committed \$348 million over the forward Estimates to Tasmania Police as part of our plan to keep Tasmanians safe. This includes capital funding of \$100 million. The Government has also committed to recruiting an additional 308 police officers, which is a 30 per cent increase since we came to Government in 2014. To deliver on this commitment, we have another course of recruits graduating at the academy next week. I am very much looking forward to welcoming them to the force.

We continue to make investments to ensure that our emergency services personnel are well supported and have fit-for-purpose infrastructure. I was delighted last week to open the new \$5 million New Norfolk Police Station. In a couple of weeks we will be opening the new \$1 million Northern Special Operations Group facility as well as the new \$5 million Longford Police Station.

We also have a new \$6.5 million state control centre, which will provide our emergency services personnel with the state of the art technology and space they need to respond to emergencies, with the Tasmania Fire Service and the air desk already operating from this facility throughout the bushfire season. Linked to this investment we will be expanding the team of skilled staff in the state operations centre, with an investment of \$900 000 to set up our permanent multi-hazard intelligence team, that will work from the state control centre to plan and provide rapid advice to incident response.

Tasmanians can be proud of our magnificent Tasmania Fire Service and State Emergency Service volunteers. This Government is delivering for our volunteers: \$2 million in grants funding on top of the \$2 million committed in 2018, \$2 million to roll out enhanced standard equipment for brigades, \$250 000 for new-generation defibrillators, which are already being distributed around the state; \$2.4 million for staff to recruit and retain volunteers and we have also doubled our investment in the health and wellbeing program to \$3 million, with this program being fully expanded to all of our volunteers in the TFS and the SES.

Over the coming year, we will also complete the new Sorell Emergency Services Hub, with a contract awarded to Tasmanian company Fairbrother. Construction is already under way. In addition to this, we are investing \$7 million to refurbish the Launceston Police Station and will be delivering a new \$3.6 million Southern Special Operations Group facility, which is being built by another Tasmanian firm, Voss Construction and Joinery.

As well, we have our rollout of the \$567 million Tasmanian Government radio network contract, which is progressing well. Over the forward Estimates, we will see the

commencement of a new \$12.5 million Bridgewater Police Station and a new \$7.5 million St Helens Police Station.

This Government understands that we face increasing climate-related threats and challenges, which is why last year's Budget provided \$125.6 million across the forward Estimates for bushfire and flood prevention and safety, ensuring that our communities are ready and resilient. To date, we have invested \$55 million in fuel reduction and over the forward Estimates, we will deliver another \$48.3 million to reduce the risk of bushfires. This will be a massive investment of \$103.3 million in fuel reduction since 2014.

We are also diversifying our approaches to fuel reduction. Last year's Budget provided \$2.5 million through the fuel reduction program to support mechanical clearing in places where burning is not appropriate. While fuel reduction burning does not prevent bushfires from occurring, the potential damage from fires is greatly reduced, making it easier and safer for firefighters to control them. We have seen this on several occasions in this summer's bushfire season, with fuel reduction burns already undertaken in recent years being credited with reducing intensities of fires at Dynnyrne, Sisters Beach and Olegas Bluff in south-west Tasmania.

I thank all our brave firefighters in the Tasmania Fire Service, Parks and Wildlife Service and Sustainable Timbers Tasmania and the staff who support them for everything they do to keep our community safe and protect our homes and our natural and cultural values and heritage.

The voices of all victim/survivors matter. All victim/survivors of child sexual violence, whether historical or contemporary, need to know that they can come forward and that when they do they will be heard and appropriate action will be taken.

On 26 February 2021 Tasmania Police released the Tasmania Police Outcomes Report in relation to the police investigation of James Geoffrey Griffin. The outcomes report demonstrated that collaboration between government agencies was not optimal and service to victim/survivors needed to be improved. Tasmania Police and other agencies have also acknowledged this need for improvement. As a result of the outcomes report, the Government allocated \$1.5 million for the establishment of a child sexual abuse joint review team, which has been given the task of implementing the recommendations from the outcomes report, along with a need to deliver a historical complaints review process and to provide recommendations to government on structural reform for best practice service provision to victim/survivors of sexual violence. The joint review team includes experienced child safety professionals from the Department of Communities, detectives and intelligence analysts. Since its inception the joint review team has undertaken a significant body of work, including: undertaken a review of thousands of records held across government agencies to assess any potential risk to children; developed MOUs between Tasmania Police, Communities Tasmania, Justice and Education to ensure that information is shared promptly across agencies; and they have also developed training and investigation guidelines for police officers and child safety professionals.

The work of the joint review team in reviewing reports and records has been meticulous and thorough. This process has involved the review of thousands of records held across government systems and agencies, with a focus on the approximately 136 000 individuals who are registered to work with vulnerable people in Tasmania, as these individuals have access to

our children through their work or volunteering. I am advised that after all these thousands of records were reviewed by the joint review team there have been no children identified as being at current risk of harm. Furthermore, that reviewing intelligence holdings will continue to be a key focus to ensure that information holdings are maintained, evaluated and used to protect children and identify and respond to potential risk.

The impact of child sexual violence is devastating and it is critically important that we provide the most comprehensive and supportive response for victim/survivors. This Government wants to ensure that we do everything we possibly can to make sure that our children and young people remain safe and protected. This is why, last year, the Premier asked the Commissioner of Police for advice on structural reform across government to ensure that we are providing a best practice sexual violence response for Tasmania that puts victim/survivors at the centre.

Having received the commissioner's advice, the Premier announced this week the Government's intention to establish next level multi-disciplinary centres in Tasmania. Multi-disciplinary centres are a proven model in other jurisdictions, both nationally and internationally as they ensure that victim/survivors of sexual and family violence receive immediate and integrated wraparound support in a safe place from a range of services.

This is a landmark outcome for victim/survivors who will be at the centre of this new support model. In addition, this will be the most significant change to how we respond to family and sexual violence since we came to government in 2014. These new facilities will be a place where victim/survivors can access the support and the services they need and, if they are ready, to formally report to specialist police investigators through the provision of multi-disciplinary support teams including family and sexual support and counselling services, witness intermediaries, police and other related services.

These multi-disciplinary centres will also have specialist analysts embedded in them so that any and all information regarding the abhorrent criminal behaviour of child exploitation will be subject to immediate review and information sharing across agencies so that we can better protect our children, improve investigation outcomes and make our community safer. In addition, these new centres will recognise the intersection between sexual and family violence by expanding the capabilities and resourcing of the Safe Families Coordination Unit to include sexual violence more broadly, creating a multi-agency response and intelligence hub with more effective working relationships between agencies for both sexual and family violence.

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the reporting of sexual violence which comes amid unprecedented public disclosure, media attention and awareness around sexual violence and consent. The provision of multi-disciplinary centres will address the increasing need for services for both adult and children victim/survivors and I am pleased to know that funding will be included in this year's budget for the first of these centres.

Victim/survivors are at the heart of this major reform, therefore planning work has already commenced and will be coordinated alongside the development and release of the Government's third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan. The prevention and elimination of family sexual violence is a top priority for me and this Government. Violence against anyone in any form is simply unacceptable but the harm caused by family and sexual violence is particularly devastating.

Today I would like to pause and acknowledge and pay tribute to the courage of all victim/survivors of family and sexual violence. I also thank all those in our Government and NGOs who assist victim/survivors of family and sexual violence and help them in their most vulnerable time of need, as well as for their strong dedication and ongoing efforts to support Tasmanians impacted by family and sexual violence.

Every Tasmanian has the right to live free from all forms of violence and abuse. All of us have the responsibility to help make this happen. This Government takes our role very seriously. This is why since the launch of our first nation-leading action plan in 2015 and under our second action plan launched in 2019, this Government has continued to build upon its commitment, investment and scope in preventing and responding to family and sexual violence in Tasmania. We have invested over \$300 million in direct and indirect services in responding to family and sexual violence, including \$63 million for specific measures under our first and second action plans and the \$19 million in direct funding and \$59 million in indirect funding that the Tasmanian Government spends to address family violence each year.

Over the same period, we have also successfully secured \$8.5 million in investment from the Australian Government, which has enabled the very successful Keeping Women Safe in their Homes program as well funded a range of family sexual violence supports under the national partnership agreements.

We have also always taken a flexible and responsive approach so that we can continue to be responsive to emerging needs and issues. For example, rather than wait for the current action plan to expire, we committed to investing a further \$11.5 million through our 2020-21 state election policies to address current family and sexual violence priorities and related initiatives. As well, we have already provided additional funding to the family and sexual violence sector to maintain increased organisational capacity to meet demand up to the 30 June 2022.

We were also the first state in Australia to implement a COVID response support package in anticipation of increased family violence. This is why since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 we have invested an extra \$10.8 million in state and national partnership funding for additional service responses to meet demand.

As well, despite the challenges, we continue to deliver significant new responses and key activities under Safe Homes, Families, Communities to date, including increased investment in primary prevention, including establishing a national first partnership with Our Watch, committing all Tasmanian government departments to implement the Our Watch Workplace Equality and Respect Standards.

The launch of our new Safe from Violence website, Tasmania's central point of information for family and sexual violence and I am delighted to say that in February, this website had a 535 per cent increase in monthly page views because of the launch of the Hearing Lived Experience survey on 11 February.

We have also established a harmful sexual behaviours program: we have extended forensic medical examinations to a statewide service and there has also been ongoing legislative reform including amending the Evidence Act 2001 to allow victims of sexual offences the right to speak out publicly and to identify themselves.

We have also continued our focus on holding perpetrators to account by continuing funding for electronic monitoring following outcomes of the trial that showed: a 76 per cent decrease in high risk incidents; a 75 per cent decrease in assaults; an 81 per cent reduction of threats; a 74 per cent decrease in property damage; a 100 per cent decrease in reports of stalking; and that 80 per cent of offenders did not reoffend in the six months following the removal of the electronic monitoring device. These extraordinary results are why Project Vigilance won a silver award in November at the 2021 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards.

I am also pleased to note that this year, my colleague, the Attorney-General will introduce amendments to the Criminal Code to introduce a new standalone criminal offence of strangulation, choking and suffocation and to amend the definition of consent in relation to stealthing.

Recent national conversations have highlighted the importance of hearing from people with lived experience, which is why the Tasmanian Liberal Government is putting the voices of victim/survivors at the centre of our consultation approach in developing our next Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan. Through a comprehensive consultation process with people with lived and diverse experience, the community and key stakeholders, we will develop a range of evidence-based initiatives based on feedback from those who are most impacted.

I was pleased to recently launch the public consultation process to inform the development of our next Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan. I want to say how grateful I am and thankful that Mayor Mary Knowles OAM, who is a victim/survivor herself, has kindly agreed to be our consultation ambassador so as to encourage other victim/survivors to share with us their own personal experiences.

There are five key elements of our community consultation including: the Hearing Lived Experience Survey 2022; establishing a Victim Survivors Advisory Council; partnering with Tasmanian Aboriginal people; targeted workshops with stakeholders, especially those with diverse lived experience including people with disability, women from CALD communities, women from rural and regional communities and LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians; and public written submissions.

The Hearing Lived Experience Survey 2022 is an online public survey of adult victim/survivors with lived experience of family and sexual violence. Through providing an opportunity for victim/survivors to share their experience, the survey will also build upon our previous survey that we did in 2018, by also including peoples experience of sexual violence in addition to family violence. Importantly, it provides people the opportunity to share their story anonymously. The survey is being promoted through family and sexual violence service providers and a statewide advertising campaign. It can be accessed through the QR code on promotional posters or via the Tasmanian Government's Safe from Violence website.

I am pleased to note that as of today we have already received 419 completed survey responses, which is a fantastic level of take up in such a short time. The survey will also be open for 12 months giving people a chance to have their say at a time that is safe for them.

Mr WINTER - Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Government will establish Tasmania's first ever Victim Survivor Advisory Council. The advisory council will inform our next action plan as well as provide ongoing advice to the Government during the life of the action plan, ensuring our policy and program design continues to be informed by lived experience.

Additionally, the Government will work in partnership with Tasmanian Aboriginal people during the development and implementation of the action plan, enacting the priority reform areas of the national agreement on Closing the Gap and empowering Tasmanian Aboriginal people to lead responses in their communities. Development of the action plan will involve collaboration across government and we will be working with the Family and Sexual Violence Community Consultative Group as well as with a large number of government and non-government stakeholders and service providers.

Like many Tasmanians, our parks and reserves are dear to my heart and I absolutely love getting out and about with my family to experience Tasmania's natural beauty. The Tasmanian Government is very committed to the delivery of upgrades and improvements to enhance our national parks and reserves as well as creating world-class visitor experiences for locals and visitors alike. This Government committed an unprecedented \$127 million in infrastructure investment at the last two elections to futureproof our parks and reserves. This investment is continuing to support our regional economies in terms of economic activity and jobs creation.

Just this year alone, we will be completing upgrades around the state including the new Dove Lake viewing shelter as part of our \$29.8 million investment in the Cradle Mountain Gateway precinct which will complement our award-winning Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre. We will also be completing our joint state-federal \$3 million investment in new huts on the Overland Track, with renovated huts at Kia Ora and Windermere, which will improve the quality and experience for those completing this iconic bucket-list walk with modern, larger fit-for-purpose facilities.

I am pleased to note that this year with the assistance of Australian Government funding, we will be completing campsite and track upgrades in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and a new foreshore link track at Freycinet. We will also be undertaking a range of upgrades to camping facilities on the east coast including at Dianas Basin, Humbug Point, Scamander, Little Beach and Mount William National Park.

Our planned program of works for the future also includes investing \$8.4 million to upgrade the waste water treatment systems at Freycinet National Park. The contract has been awarded and preparations are already under way. As well, we are committed to our \$3 million revitalisation at the Hastings Thermal Pool to contemporise this jewel of the south. In addition, we will be continuing our program upgrades on Maria Island with a further \$6.8 million committed for investments in waste water treatment, energy generation and rainwater capture and storage.

We also have stage two of our camping and access upgrades at Cockle Creek with \$3 million committed to deliver realignment and construction of new camping areas for caravans, motor homes and camper trailers. Over the next three years, we also will be investing \$10 million to provide improved and enhanced opportunities for recreational driving in the Arthur Pieman Conservation Area and the broader west coast region, as well as increasing the management and enforcement of regulations in the APCA through increasing the resourcing of the Parks and Wildlife Service at Arthur River as well as undertaking review of the legislative

tools available to PWS staff to deal with behaviour which poses a risk to the area's natural and cultural values.

Other identified priorities include upgrades to the shack nodes in the APCA and the development of a four-wheel drive strategy, which will inform the investment of our \$10 million with tenders for the development of the four-wheel drive strategy for the APCA and west coast, closing on Monday this week.

I was pleased to announce in September last year that the Tasmanian Government will develop amendments to the National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002 to recognise the RAA process as a statutory process to improve transparency and opportunity for public comment and appeals. The current RAA process has been in existence for some time, having been first implemented in 2005 and it has served both the previous Labor-Greens government as well as this Government in managing and mitigating the impacts of activities on reserve land.

Over the last 18 months, the PWS has undertaken extensive review of the RAA system and it has been progressively implementing improvements to the system for greater transparency and consistency. This includes earlier consultation with experts such as the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council and earlier engagement and consultation with Tasmanian Aboriginal people through Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania and for matters to be referred to the Aboriginal Heritage Council as well as formal, consultative and expert review of proposals that may affect reserved land managed by the PWS.

The next phase of RAA improvements is to develop a statutory and binding environmental impact assessment process for major use and development proposals. This work has commenced and I am advised that the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania has established a project team to lead all aspects of this RAA reform. A consultation paper is currently being prepared to be released in April 2022 to support further discussions and engagement. Critical to ensuring the success of the RAA reform will be public consultation, especially with key stakeholders and the broader Tasmanian community. Therefore, the NRET project team will be in contact with key stakeholders when the consultation process commences, and to invite them to provide a submission. Informed by this feedback, the Government will prepare a draft bill which will be released for public consultation with a view to tabling a final bill this year.

In parallel to this, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment will shortly commence a program to collate and review existing leases and licences with the intention that NRET will be ready to start publishing these once the legislation is in place. This will include engagement with existing lease and licence holders later this year and will be an important achievement in the delivery of the Government's transparency agenda and a more robust process.

In conclusion, I thank the Premier for his address. We have an exciting vision ahead for Tasmania and for the next 10 years.

[5.51 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Mr Speaker, the Premier's Address is an opportunity for each of us to reflect on the state of our communities at the start of the parliamentary sittings for the year, as well as to reflect on the events of the previous 12 months.

Perhaps more relevant for this Government is to reflect on just the past few weeks. There is no denying that this is a Government in utter chaos. Three Cabinet reshuffles this year, two in just two weeks. The reshuffle was called for because this Government is losing ministers at a rate faster than I have seen in a very long time. A rate of one a week at this point.

The wheels are clearly falling off this Government. The Premier, Peter Gutwein, has all along, since he became Premier, promised a stable, majority Liberal Government. It became a mantra. He is delivering anything but that right now. Mr Gutwein and his colleagues are delivering instability, uncertainty, and showing very clearly to all Tasmanians that he is out of touch and he is failing our communities.

I want to step back a little way. Tasmanians might recall that we should be gearing up right now for an election. Today is the four-year anniversary of the 2018 election. That is the day we should have been expecting to go to the polls, or around about now. We are not at the polls. Why not? The Premier called an election almost a year early. He took Tasmania to the polls 10 months ahead of when the election was scheduled. Why? He wanted to capitalise on COVID-19, pure and simple. He saw what was happening for incumbent governments on the mainland, winning elections off the back of what happened during the pandemic. He thought he would like a bit of that.

Why did he want to do that ahead of when the election was due? He knew that as soon as the borders reopened the wheels would start falling off. That is precisely what happened.

The Government chose the reopening date. It had months to prepare. We had at least 18 months head start on every other state and territory and other jurisdictions around the world to learn and to be the best prepared place in the nation. Labor asked multiple questions last year in this place. We were assured that Tasmania was ready to open and that the systems would cope. In this place, minister after minister stood up and said we were ready.

Deputy Premier Rockcliff said, 'We have been preparing for this moment since the start of the pandemic'. The Premier said, 'We can reopen, but we can reopen safely'. Then minister Sarah Courtney said, 'the Government was doing all it could to ensure that our schools were prepared'. Deputy Premier Rockcliff as Health minister said, 'In all areas of our health system we are ready, we have invested heavily to ensure we are as prepared as we can be for a COVID-19 outbreak'. Even Mr Tucker, the member for Lyons, got in on the act. He assured the House and the public that, 'We will reopen our borders safely'.

Those were the assurances that we were given and that the Tasmanian public were given. What happened when the borders reopened? We were not ready. They had not done the work to get the basics right. They did not support Public Health officials and state servants, teachers, nurses, people working their fingers to the bone in a stretched system. They told them that things would be fine. They did not listen to the warnings from those workers that things were not going to be fine. We saw massive shortages of RATs, with people lined up around the block and failing to be able to find the equipment they needed.

Schools were not ready. Windows repairs were described in those utopian weasel words as, 'checking if those windows operated as intended'. For any normal person that means do they open?

An audit was done. They would not release the audit. A lot of the work that was identified through that audit was not completed, even days before the school year recommenced. Students were going back, teachers were going back, families were going back, with very little certainty about what to expect. It has been just a few weeks of the school year and we can see every day the COVID-19 numbers are rapidly rising.

We also saw rapidly changing rules every day. That cannot possibly have been as a result of rapidly changing Public Health advice. There was no certainty. There was no clarity for families or businesses about basic things such as what constitutes a close contact? Is it someone that you have been in close contact with at home? At work? In a public setting? Wearing a mask, not wearing a mask? People were rightly disappointed and confused, because they have been doing the right thing for two years.

Tasmanians performed better than any other people in Australia in respecting the need for vigilance around public safety, public health. They sacrificed a lot to make sure that they followed the rules. We saw outbreaks start to occur around the state and numbers rising quickly. People were really surprised. I had many people come into my office, email me, even friends and family who said they were surprised that the Government was just routinely reporting these huge numbers of cases growing and growing each day. A few weeks earlier, in October, the whole of southern Tasmania was in a three-day lockdown when one positive case escaped from hotel quarantine.

Mr Winter - He walked out.

Ms HADDAD - We walked out of hotel quarantine, thank you to my colleague the member for Franklin. He left hotel quarantine and quite rightly the state went into a three-day lockdown.

People complied with that lockdown. There is no complaint from me about the fact that that measure needed to be taken. However, just a few weeks later the gloves came off. 'Let it rip' seemed to be the new policy of the Government. There was massive pressure on Public Health officials, massive pressure on frontline health workers, massive pressure on small businesses, on people working in small business, missing out on shifts, businesses having to close.

It was heartbreaking to see that because Tasmanians had put their trust in this Government. We heard it right through that election, that 10-month-early election, 'He has done a good job with COVID-19, we will give him another go'. The Premier knew what was going to happen, he knew what was coming and he capitalised on COVID-19 nearly a year early. It is shameful to take the Tasmanian public for granted like that.

The Tasmanian public did everything they could in their power to comply with what was needed: social distancing, density limits, mask wearing, even event cancellations, limitations on movement.

Despite that abundance of caution it seems the new secret agenda the Premier had not shared with the people of Tasmania, or with this place, was let it rip. Numbers climbed. There was no explanation or comfort for Tasmanians because he had kept us in the dark. His messaging changed very quickly from 'dealing with COVID-19' to 'we are transitioning to living with COVID-19'. There was no lead up. The Tasmanian public was not given enough

information to understand why and what he was doing. There was no honesty or transparency with the Tasmanian people or the Tasmanian parliament on what we could expect to come. That is because of the plan he had, to not let Tasmanians know what he knew was coming after the borders reopened.

People were right to be disappointed. The result, of course, was a shadow lockdown. People made their own decisions to stay away.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Scouts Tasmania

[6.00 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Mr Speaker, I would like to speak this evening about the important work of Scouts Tasmania. Scouts Tasmania has been operating continuously since 1921. Since then, its committed volunteers have been dedicated to supporting their local communities and creating opportunities for young people and adults alike to connect, have fun, learn and build lifelong friendships.

There are about 5000 people involved in Scouts around Tasmania who join with over 70 000 people around the country and 40 million Scouts across the globe, embodying the Scout law which is to be respectful, do what is right and 'believe in myself'. The Scouts talk about the scouting effect and that is that people who participate in Scouts demonstrate higher levels of resilience, self-confidence, mental wellbeing and the emotional capacity to cope with difficulty. Never has that been more acute than during the pandemic, where the capacity to cope with adversity and to support each other in our communities has never been more vital.

I am sure that all members in this place are familiar with the Scouts. Perhaps you have met with Scout groups in your electorates, maybe your kids go to Scouts, maybe you were a Scout, or maybe you are still a Scout. What some people might not know is that for 70 years, Scouts Tasmania has owned and managed 459 acres of land right on Hobart's doorstep at the Lea. It is located just off the Southern Outlet between Hobart and Kingston. This valuable community asset was last year used by 96 school groups, 24 government organisations, 56 community groups and over 170 Scout groups.

It is an amazing site. Anyone who has not visited it, I recommend that you do. There is nothing quite like it for Scouts so close to a capital city anywhere else in the country. There are heaps of activities you can do at the Lea, enjoyed not just by Scout groups but also those other groups I have mentioned. Camping, bush activities, jamborees, even weddings have happened at the Lea and there is a lot more as well. I recall even my grade 8 camp was held there and I will not disclose how many years ago that was now, except to say that my daughter is now in year 8 so that probably ages me.

Recently, I visited the Lea and met with Nigel Clutterbuck, who is the president of Scouts Tasmania, and he showed me around the site, along with other community members, Griffin, Mike and Phil. It was great to hear more about the rich history of Scouts in Tasmania, about

the site at the Lea, about what they are doing right now, and their ongoing plans to keep young people and people of all ages engaged and enjoying the great outdoors.

As with everything, COVID-19 heavily impacted the Scouts and the work that they do, but with acumen and creativity, they have adapted with minimal disruption with camps occurring in back yards, on Zoom, badge work happening online and groups staying connected and supporting each other through digital social platforms.

I heard from Nigel and the team about the Scouts' ambition to use this time as an opportunity for further reform and change. They have identified key service gaps for improvement and are working on financial governance and other upgrades. This work will help Scouts continue to provide important and valuable support to young people and communities well into the future.

Thanks again to Scouts Tasmania for having me to visit the Lea. I look forward to continuing to hear about the work of the Scouts in the future.

Veterans Retreat - Official Opening

[6.04 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, on 17 February I had the privilege of representing Mr Barnett at the official opening of the Veterans Retreat. I was delighted to officially open this retreat for veterans and their families. I want to thank all veterans and their families for their service to our country whenever and wherever it may have been.

I also thank the many businesses that have donated materials to this project and the many volunteers who have given tirelessly of their time to ensure the retreat is worthy of hosting our veterans and their families. There are too many to individually mention but you have my sincere thanks and appreciation. It is commendable how much they have achieved.

I am very pleased that the retreat will be able to be used for many different purposes. I always had the vision that, like any building, how the retreat will be used will be decided by the veteran or group of veterans using it. The retreat might be used as a peaceful place for a veteran and their family and friends to relax and enjoy those surroundings. Other veterans might use it as a place to come together to share their experiences. Whatever the retreat is used for, I hope that it helps those who use it. I commend the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Tasmania branch for taking this project on and making it such a success.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is the strongest supporter of the state's veterans and ex-service community. Seeing the results of the renovated disused Parks and Wildlife Service hut at Lake Sorell turned into a modern retreat for veterans and their families from the original \$100 000 in funding provided to the Tasmanian branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, I commend them on their amazing efforts.

As part of the 2021-22 Tasmanian Budget we are investing an additional \$1.4 million to support our veterans, including an additional \$100 000 for a training centre and additional facilities at the Lake Sorell retreat.

In every way this retreat project was a real Team Tasmania effort. There was generous support from the Tasmanian community, with in-kind donations of material and fittings provided by local companies and individuals. The results are superb and it is rewarding to see this project develop to include a new deck added to the lake side of the property, new windows, flooring, wiring and plumbing. This highland retreat will make a material difference to the health and wellbeing of our veterans, offering a place for them to heal, recover and connect.

Office of Racing Integrity - Updated Answer

[6.06 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Racing) - Mr Speaker, I would like to add to an answer I provided this morning. During question time I said I would seek advice in relation to the Office of Racing Integrity and I can add to my answer by informing the House that individual employment matters are the responsibility of secretaries of departments. As I said during my answer, it would not be appropriate for me to comment on the specifics of individual employment matters. However, I have been informed by the acting secretary of the department that he is not aware of any police investigation. Police investigations are obviously a matter for the police.

Further, I can inform the House that I have been advised by Tasracing that the animal welfare manager has left the organisation. Like any employment matter, this is an operational matter for Tasracing, and discussing reasons for changes in individual employees is not appropriate.

Building and Construction Sector - Call for an Inquiry

[6.07 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, on this adjournment, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the recent collapse of the Hotondo Hobart and Inside Out Construction building companies, which have not only devastated dozens of clients who have lost significant savings but it has also brought into stark focus the inadequacies of regulation in the Tasmanian building and construction sector. A state government support package is underway and it will provide some welcome relief to those who are worst affected. I thank the state government for stepping up and assisting the people affected by the collapse of Hotondo Homes Hobart and also Inside Out Construction.

However, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in relation to the inadequacies in the Tasmanian building and construction sector. We have recently tabled a notice of motion to bring another building inquiry pledge to this House. We believe that there needs to be a parliamentary inquiry into the Tasmanian building and construction sector. What has happened with Hotondo Homes Hobart and Inside Out Construction is a very good indication of just how poorly regulated and legislated the Tasmanian building and construction sector is.

We know that there are gaps in the compensation packages that were handed out. We know that there are also other building companies, such as Urban and Sorell Hotondo, that did go into liquidation. One of them only went into liquidation eight months before Inside Out Construction and those people lost a lot of money because there is no home warranty insurance, there is no consumer protection for Tasmanians. I know the Government, after us jumping up

and down for quite some time about bringing in some form of protection regulation, have finally decided and congratulations to Master Builders because they have also been lobbying for there to be a home builder warranty insurance for many years. It is good that you are looking at that, but why now? What about the people from Sorell Hotondo who lost their life savings? What about the people from Urban who lost their savings? There is only an eight month difference.

Call me cynical. I know this is a PR government. I know that they do not like negative press but these problems have been going on for many years. We have built up over 100 cases and when I say we are building up 100 cases, it is not just a matter of someone's name and a photograph and their contact details; we have copies of their documents. People have confided their legal documents, their correspondence with CBOS, their correspondence with ministerial offices, photographs, architectural problems, surveyor reports, inspector reports and we have visited people.

We know what has been going on. We know where the gaps are. This time when we are bringing it on for debate we will be talking about demand; we will be talking about the supply chain; we will be talking about the expense of building materials; we will be talking about the supply of building materials, which is something that the building industry have asked us to bring into this. That is something from our consultation. We are not just meeting with community members, we are not just meeting with constituents, we are also meeting and talking to industry experts. There is so much that can be done to improve the current situation.

We know there are people who signed preliminary contracts and did not sign the actual residential building contract with Hotondo Hobart and also with Inside Out Construction who have lost their deposits. That is of no fault of their own. We know that there are also people whose state home building grants are now compromised. We have been lobbying Mr Ferguson's office on behalf of these people, and keeping Ms Archer in the correspondence, because Mr Ferguson as finance minister is responsible. Some people will potentially lose those grants and it is not their fault.

It is not their fault that the company collapsed. It has nothing to do with them and it is really not fair. There is one case of a couple who contacted me last week. They had written to the minister and there have been public announcements saying that we will look after everyone and everything will be fine and we will do what we can but they were told if their build is not complete by May they will lose the state component of the building grant. That is a lot of money. They will not lose the federal but because of the specifications of the legislation for the state grant, they will lose that and it is not their fault. This is a young couple who have worked their butts off to save to build their first home.

It is getting to a stage now where I am going through new suburbs and meeting people at their properties and being really concerned as I am driving through. I am seeing all these framed up properties and just wishing and wishing it is not their property. It is reaching a stage where you become so devastated for people.

We really have to do so much more than what we have done over the last eight years. Ministers have known that these problems exist. The trauma on people's relationships, the trauma on people's financial lives just devastates people. We can do so much better so we will be again bringing on a parliamentary inquiry. We believe this is the best way to futureproof this industry and the best way to provide protection to Tasmanian consumers but also the best

way to provide protection to our building industry and our builders. They deserve better as well. Thank you.

Mount Lyell Strahan Picnic

[6.14 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to celebrate my favourite Australia Day event, the Mount Lyell Strahan Picnic. It is probably my favourite event on the whole calendar. It is unique. It was first held on 5 December 1897, in the very early days of the mining boom that was taking place on the west coast where all the miners would gather together in the train that went from Mount Lyell in Queenstown all the way to Strahan to drop off copper and gold. Instead of dropping off precious metals, they were dropping off some other precious cargo on that day, which was the workers and their families from Mount Lyell Mine to go down to beautiful Strahan to West Beach to enjoy a picnic together - a bit of fellowship and some classic picnic games.

This year's picnic was the 124th Mount Lyell Strahan Picnic, an incredible legacy for what is a community event. These days it is held on Australia Day and celebrates all that is weird and wonderful about the west coast. My first Mount Lyell Strahan Picnic was when I was a plumber working in Strahan and I had the pleasure of catching the Abt Railway steam train from Queenstown right the way through the mountains and the rainforest down to beautiful West Bay and Strahan. This year, it was not running due to some COVID-19 restrictions but the event was still well attended by west coasters right around the coast. The great feature of the picnic is the range of picnic games which are held for all ages, all abilities.

Ms Ogilvie - What sort of games? Three-legged races?

Mr ELLIS - I have a very long list, Ms Ogilvie. I am very glad you asked that Dorothy Dixier.

Ms Ogilvie - The most important question.

Mr ELLIS - I will not start with the most important. There are wheelbarrow races, egg and spoon races, the TasPorts Men's Gift - I have here 100 metre sprint but I am pretty sure it is a 100-yard sprint, that old money - TasPorts Women's Gift which is again a 100-yard sprint; hammer the nail - one which I used to be reasonably good at. I can feel my skills deteriorating every day that I am in here. Stepping the chain, again, in a bit of the old money; the three-legged race; sand castle building competition, which is one of my favourites; the children's foot races -

Ms Butler - Janie Finlay is good at that.

Mr ELLIS - Yes. The Old Boilers, which is the Women's Over 50 foot race.

A member - That's rude.

Mr ELLIS - I did not name it. It is closely followed by the Old Buffers, which is Men's Over 50 foot race. There is a children's treasure hunt; a sack race; horse shoe throwing; and my personal favourite, the tug of war. I was devastated this year that my winning team from last year, the Mountain Heights Teachers Team, which I was lucky to be a part of last year, was

sadly unable to compete this year due to a range of other commitments so we let some other people have a crack this year.

I am pleased to say that this year's picnic was joined with Nestlé and Nescafé. They were selling commemorative tins of instant coffee - people in my office know that I love that far over the Hobart Salamanca lattes - selling Strahan, celebrating community spirit through the Mount Lyell Strahan Picnic commemorative kilo tin of coffee cans. I have one proudly sitting in my office. I was very lucky to nab one and I congratulate Nestlé, a giant company that is supporting a small event on a little island at the end of the world run by very passionate volunteers.

I also thank the Premier because it was through his generosity that the Mount Lyell Strahan Picnic was able to access a \$1000 grant through the Premier's Discretionary Fund to assist with ambulance services onsite which, as anyone who has been to the Mount Lyell Strahan Picnic knows, can be very important. There are a few people who make a serious error of judgment and enter competitions for which they probably are not as well-suited as they once were; however, it is always nice to know that you have people on hand to help when you need.

Ms Ogilvie - What was the food like?

Mr ELLIS - I hear Ms Ogilvie interjecting about what the food was like. As always, I can attest that it was fantastic. Lots of fairy floss, lots of sandwiches and lots of healthy treats.

I want to give a big shout out to Mr Fairy Floss man, Kevin Mathewson, who this year was awarded the West Coast Community Spirit Award. He is an absolute stalwart of the Labor Party and a friend of mine who was nominated by Senator Anne Urquhart. Other people who listen to ABC may know Kevin as the organiser of the Rosebery ABC Giving Tree, which every year raises 10 times more than Hobart, because that is just how generous the west coast is. Rosebery is the number one ABC Giving Tree destination for funds raised. That is a tiny town that puts the 300 000 people in Hobart to shame in a very good-natured way. I congratulate Kevin for all the work he does right across the west coast community. He describes me as the luckiest politician in Tasmania and knowing him and his wife, Bernice, I feel the same.

I congratulate all the organisers, including my old mate councillor, Leigh Styles, who has now stepped down from Strahan Council. He is probably the most passionate community member I have ever met anywhere in my life. Mount Lyell Strahan Picnic is lucky to have him as well as all the many other volunteers who make it happen every year. I cannot wait to come back and defend the tug-of-war title from two years ago at the 125th Mount Lyell Strahan Picnic.

Swift Parrot Protection Plan

[6.44 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I rise to draw the House's attention to an excellent report that has just been prepared called *On the Edge of Extinction: The Case for the Swift Parrot Protection Plan*. It is a fantastically produced and evidence-rich report prepared by Dr Jen Sanger, with the contributing support and extensive ornithological research of 18 other bird scientists from Tasmania and the ANU. These are people who have been

stalwarts of recording and providing us with the evidence that we need to be able to track the movements of species and do what we can to protect them.

This work was supported by The Tree Projects, BirdLife Tasmania and the Wilderness Society. It is an enormously significant report. I commend it to the Government to pay close attention to.

This incredibly beautiful parrot - the swift parrot - is the fastest moving parrot on the planet. It is a tiny and colourful bird which makes its way down to Tasmania every year to feed and nest in our beautiful forests. We understand there are only 750 of the critically endangered swift parrots left. This little bird is at high risk of extinction if there is not a dramatic change to land management.

The report documents that there are multiple threats to the swift parrot. There is the sugar glider, climate change and land development, but far and away the greatest threat to the swift parrot is the dramatic increase in destruction of its habitat by our Forestry Tasmania. The dramatic decrease in numbers of the swift parrot has been followed in connection with the increasing destruction of the bird's habitat over the last decade in particular.

The Liberals in Government has been deaf to the evidence of experts about the importance of protecting areas of swift parrot habitat, areas that we know are not only important for nesting hollows, but for foraging. Swift parrots rely on a number of species of gums that come into flower in different years and at different times in parts of the east coast and other years parts of the southwest, also up in the tip in the northwest and in the north.

At different years with different climatic conditions, some trees will flower and other trees will not. It is not simply a matter of the birds flying down to Tasmania from Victoria and other parts and going to the same area every year. They do not, they move around. They are looking for the best food. They are looking for the best place to make a nest and bring more chicks into the world.

It is important that this work has been done. It points out that the Public Authority Management Agreement, the PAMA, does not protect the parrot's habitat but it further weakens protections for it. It has falsely claimed that 10 000 hectares have been set aside from logging for breeding habitats. In fact, only a small proportion of that, 2900 hectares that they estimate from their work, is being saved from being cleared. The rest of the 7100 hectares is not being kept aside. They are areas that are already unavailable for STT to do clear felling operations because of typography or other geographical conditions. It was always never going to be on the chopping block. So, there are only 2900 hectares that the Government has set aside to protect the habitat of known trees that need to be maintained for a critical endangered species.

The report identifies only 7 per cent of public forests currently listed for logging that would need to be protected in order to properly protect the swift parrot's habitat and its foraging habitat now and into the future. That is a tiny proportion. It is very clear that the Forestry Tasmania board recognised that it was being driven by an unsustainable minimum saw log quota. There are 137 000 cubic metres required to be logged every year of saw logs. The board approached the Government and recommended in 2016 that that saw log quota be dropped by 30 per cent so that the company could improve its financial viability.

The company is acknowledging that it has an unsustainable saw log quota that is affecting its financial viability and wants to drop it. There is a report by conservationists who have made it very clear that to save the amount that Forestry Tasmania wanted to stop logging would be a perfect conjunction where the swift parrot's habitat could be protected in perpetuity.

Time expired.

The House adjourned at 6.28 p.m.