



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 8 December 2020

REVISED EDITION

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The President, **Mr Farrell**, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

TABLED PAPER

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation - Scrutiny of Notice - COVID-19 Disease Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 - Report 13

Ms Rattray presented report 13 of the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation in relation to the scrutiny of notice issued under the COVID-19 Disease Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 (extension of statutory deadline for councils to hold their AGMs by three months).

Report received and printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Member for Prosser

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

That the member for Prosser, Ms Howlett, be granted leave of absence from the service of the Council for this day's sitting.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

Ringarooma Community

[11.05 a.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, today I pay tribute to, and single out one of my many communities in the McIntyre electorate - a wonderful, engaging, and super-proactive community. This community is Ringarooma, and for those members who have not heard of Ringarooma - listen up for its location. Ringarooma is situated in the north-east part of the Dorset Council area; it sits aside Mount Victoria, which locals refer to as the divide between them and Mathinna in the Fingal Valley.

This community is a farming community, as many of my communities are, and, boy, do they get in and make things happen regardless of the challenges of holding events and getting things done in our COVID-19 environment. What makes Ringarooma shine, to be my topic of special interest?

First, let us talk about 7 November, just a few weeks ago now. The Ringarooma School and District Show Committee organised and successfully managed to deliver its annual show held in the school grounds - 1000 patrons in attendance, all doing the right thing about hygiene and compliance.

This was in the landscape of every other country show across the state regrettably not being able to hold their annual shows. Plenty of the usual activities you would expect at a country show: floral art and home industries - that's cooking, jams and preserves. The member for Hobart's wife, Margaret, could have entered, as she does at the Bream Creek Show. There were the usual favourites - horse events; a range of animals, including a working bullock display, thanks to Dale Lester; farm machinery, and the very shiny large tractors that can cost more than most of our homes these days; and the school was open to the public to proudly showcase the various works of the students.

Lots of fabulous food options with all school parents and friends helping out with catering, activities and selling raffle tickets - all those wonderful things that country shows do. Given that I had taken my almost-four-year-old granddaughter along for the day, we spent a lot of the time at the merry-go-round and the jumping castle. The only complaint from Summer was the wait time to get on the merry-go-round because every seat needed to be cleaned between rides and because I was not prepared to buy her fairy floss. Taking her home after a long day where the weather was warm and the activities all free for children, too much sugar would have put me, for certain, at the bottom of the responsible grandmother list in the eyes of my daughter.

It is fair to say that a great day was had by all, especially the young people who had smiles from ear to ear as they munched treats from their show bags and wandered around the grounds. Congratulations must go to the committee president, Stuart Nailer; hardworking secretary, Sheri Mahoney; members of the show committee; and the community support to make the 2020 event a success. A special mention to school principal, Christine Edmunds, and the staff at the Ringarooma Primary School for working with the committee to deliver an excellent community event.

What else does a small community need, especially with the warmer weather here? Well, it was - it might have gone a bit by now in the south; it was very cold last night, very cold. The answer is a community swimming pool, of course. The Ringarooma community has just received an upgrade due to a successful grant application to the Tasmanian Community Fund. The Ringarooma Swimming Pool Association received \$38 000 to install a solar upgrade which included solar matting that has doubled the solar capacity.

The pool temperature now sits at around 27 degrees and with the Scottsdale pool not in use due to an upgrade, it is fair to say that the Ringarooma pool will be in hot demand. Committee president, Sharee Forsyth and her members and the community are to be congratulated on raising \$7500 towards the solar upgrade and also matched a \$3100 grant to upgrade the showers to a new gas connection. That is a total of just over \$10 000 raised by the community. How fantastic is that? For a small rural town getting things done for the benefit of their community, I can only say: well done Ringarooma and keep up the great work. Thank you.

Hadspen Cricket Club

[11.10 a.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, today I speak about something very close to my heart and the hearts of many others in our community - the Hadspen Cricket Club, of which I am patron. This fantastic group of people does so much to promote and play the sport they love, and I am incredibly honoured to be involved.

The Hadspen Chieftains Cricket Club started out as the Sidmouth Cricket Club, which was established in the 1987-88 season, joining the Tasmanian Cricket League with many of the players having played together with another TCL team, the California Hotel Cricket Club. In its first year in the TCL and under the captaincy of Sid Holland, the Hadspen Chieftains finished runners-up, unfortunately going down to Trevallyn in the grand final.

In their second season, again under the stewardship of Sid Holland, the Hadspen Cricket Club had an undefeated season in competition games taking out the premiership. In a tight game Garry Neville, dropped by the keeper earlier, tucked the winning runs in front of square leg, leading to a hard-earned victory.

In the 1991-92 season, the Chieftains reaped their first A-grade premiership with a one wicket win with one ball to spare against Legana at Bethune Park.

Since that time, the club has enjoyed a smattering of wins, near-wins and some absolute floggings in the TCL premiership competitions, but the club itself has gone from strength to strength as a regional team promoting this great sport. These days, the Hadspen Cricket Club fields six sides in the TCL - the Premier League, two A-grade teams, B-grade, C-grade and female T20 BOOM.

Clearly, there are a lot of people who are involved in playing the sport and having a go and have had a great deal of success in the TCL, taking out the premierships in the past two years with their eye on the 2020-21 prize.

Each year, the Hadspen Cricket Club around the time of the season's start holds the Champions of Sport event, an annual entertainment lunch that featuring various current and past sporting champions.

Mr President, in mid-November, the 2020 Champions of Sport event was held at the Tailrace Centre, just outside Launceston. Olympic and Australian Survivor champion, Shane Gould; Tasmanian basketball great, Anthony Stewart; AFL player and coach, Jade Rawlings; and former Australian fast bowler, Brett Geeves, joined MC John X for what was a truly memorable event.

This is a great fundraiser for the club and always very well attended - obviously this year a little harder for them having to have Tasmanian guests, but they were great guests and always a really well attended event.

Mr President, the Hadspen Cricket Club also promotes juniors to get into playing cricket to get kids who are new to cricket to build their skills through fun, game-based activities, and ensuring that every kid gets a go in small teams.

The club is all about inclusivity and diversity and caters to people of all ages, abilities and experience. The only requirement is that you have to love the sport.

I have been a patron of the Hadspen Cricket Club for a number of years now and I try to get out and watch a match or go to many of their events as often as I can.

I am incredibly privileged to work with the fantastic people who make the club what it is. The hardworking committee, including President Corey Martin, works so hard to make the club the inclusive and successful organisation that it is.

I am looking forward to another brilliant season of cricket in 2021.

Climate Change Health and Native Forest Logging

[11.14 a.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, recently more than 250 doctors and medical students from Tasmania wrote to the Premier in his capacity as the Minister for Climate Change calling for an end to native forest logging to protect the health of their patients and community.

These concerned doctors and medical students understand that climate change caused by greenhouse gas emissions is not only an environmental crisis, it is also a serious threat to people's lives and health. Without action, these health impacts will continue to worsen, with disastrous consequences for the wellbeing of future generations.

It is well established that climate change has diverse and far-reaching effects. Climate change has been identified by leading medical journal *The Lancet* as the biggest global health threat of the twenty-first century. Without action, the World Health Organization estimates that climate-related malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, illness and heat stress alone will result in an additional 250 000 global deaths between 2030 and 2050.

The doctors state that climate change is already increasing the number of patients at our hospitals and clinics suffering with asthma, emphysema, heart attacks, strokes, premature births, small-birthweight babies, mental health conditions, suicide and direct injuries. Those who are young, elderly or already unwell are at greater risk.

Historically, medical professionals have acted upon evidence, and have been fierce advocates for public policy that has reduced the harms from health threats, including smoking, unsafe roads and, more recently, COVID-19. Climate change is no different. The Australian Medical Association and eight Australian specialist colleges have all declared that climate change is a health emergency.

These doctors and their representative bodies recognise that an emergency situation requires an urgent response. They also understand that prevention is better than cure. As we rapidly acted to prevent COVID-19 from overwhelming the capacity of our health system, so too must we act to prevent further greenhouse gas emissions, with similarly catastrophic consequences for our health and way of life.

Just as patients can turn their health around with a lifestyle change after seeing those close to them make similar choices in their own lives, so too can local climate action be a

powerful catalyst with global solutions. In Tasmania, we are well placed to take decisive climate action.

The State and Territory Greenhouse Gas Inventories 2018 show that Tasmania recorded net zero carbon dioxide emissions for the fourth year in a row. The report identifies Tasmania's forests as a critical factor in our state's favourable emissions profile. This achievement mainly resulted from a reduction in native forest logging since 2005. Native forests contain carbon stores greater than logged or plantation forests. Native forest retention has a significant role to play as we act to constrain carbon emissions responsible for the climate health emergency.

The doctors state that logging of native forests also raises health and safety risks for local communities through direct impacts of bushfires. Peer-reviewed scientific research shows that logging native forests further intensifies bushfires. As the climate continues to heat, the frequency and severity of bushfires increases. Bushfires are a direct threat to lives and cause substantial deaths from smoke pollution.

Research following the 2019-20 mainland bushfire crisis demonstrated that bushfire smoke was responsible for 417 extra deaths, plus over 3000 additional hospitalisations for heart and lung problems, not to mention physical injuries and mental illness.

Given these disastrous health consequences of climate change and bushfires, we must act to show our children and future generations we are serious about their future and their health. In Tasmania, one of the most important climate change actions we can take right now, in the interests of human health, is to protect native forests.

Addressing the biggest global health threat of the twenty-first century requires an all-of-government, industry and society response. Government and industry must ensure a smooth transition, and that fair support is provided to workers while the changes that are needed for the health of all are implemented.

We must act on the medical and scientific evidence on climate change, just as we had with the COVID-19 threat, for the health, wellbeing and prosperity of both current Tasmanians and future generations.

Tasmanian doctors and medical students believe that native forest logging in Tasmania should cease as soon as practically possible.

Denise Delphin - Northern Suburbs Community Centre

[11.20 a.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, I draw members' attention to an event I had to decline an invitation for, as it coincided with our GBEs next week. The event is a garden party being held at the Northern Suburbs Community Centre to celebrate the farewell of the current NSCC General Manager, Ms Denise Delphin.

Denise has been helping and guiding people from the northern suburbs for 37 years. I would be very surprised if Denise Delphin was not known to most people in this place. I have spoken of Denise here before. Denise has been responsible for turning around the lives of many people in the northern suburbs - many people who would have fallen through the cracks; many people who were suffering and doing it tough. Denise Delphin has been there supporting

these people. Absolutely wonderful person; I really cannot say enough about her. People made a speech about Denise in 2014, when she reached her milestone of working for 25 years for the Northern Suburbs Community Centre.

Since that time, Denise has received the Tasmanian Human Rights Individual Award in 2016, an Australia Day award for Launceston Council's Citizen of the Year in 2019, as well as an Order of Australia medal in 2019 for service to the community through social welfare initiatives.

This lady, if she continued on, would continue to receive awards for what she does. After 37 years, the NSCC will definitely feel the loss of not seeing Denise's happy face there every week. She has led the growth of the NSCC since it started in 1983 in a three-bedroom house in Rocherlea, and today it is a thriving community centre with sites at Rocherlea, Mowbray and Newnham, employing up to 30 staff and 60 volunteers. People just come into these places wanting to volunteer because they can see what is happening and the good these centres are doing.

Denise was instrumental in gaining the funding for the purpose-built community centre at Newnham - a wonderful building, catering for numerous community activities. I imagine the member for Rosevears and the member for Launceston have been to those premises. It is a great building.

Today the centre incorporates a community garden, social enterprise, op shop and men's shed. It also runs a learner driver mentor program with its own vehicle, as well as a dads' group that helps teach skills to expand employment opportunities.

Denise is a very humble person who works quietly and diligently, and does not ask for accolades or, indeed, expect them. Her retirement from this centre will leave a large hole in the entire community, and whoever takes over as general manager certainly has some big shoes to fill. When she retires, Denise will leave behind a great legacy, which has required much blood, sweat and tears to get established. She is loved by the community for who she is, and she gives that love back with her time and the passion she has displayed over the last four decades. Always there, Denise is always wanting to help, always attending to matters that perhaps in her position she probably ought not to do in trying to help people get going and get their lives in order.

Congratulations, Denise, on closing this chapter of your life. You will forever remain in the heart and soul of the Northern Suburbs Community Centre. We wish you well in whatever the future holds for you. Thank you for what you have done for our community.

Members - Hear, hear.

Impact of COVID on Students

[11.24 am.]

Ms LOVELL (Rumney) - Mr President, this has been a year like no other. I want to share today the words of a young woman from Launceston, Emma Madden. Emma initially shared her story as part of the youth employment alliance and then with the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council. The alliance is an initiative of YNOT, the Youth

Network of Tasmania, and is a unique collaboration of experienced youth-focused services that recognise urgent action is required to support young Tasmanian school leavers to navigate work, education and training in a COVID-changed world.

I have known Emma all her life. She is the daughter of good friends of mine. I want to share her story today as a reminder to all of us of the impact of this year on young Tasmanians, to reflect on over our break as we think about and prepare for the year to come in 2021. I share her story today with her permission. Thank you, Emma. This is Emma's story -

From the age of 12, it has been my dream to study at the University of Melbourne, to become a lawyer. I have always felt driven to help people, and I have been working towards this goal for the last several years.

I needed this year to go well. To build the future I have hoped for and worked towards, I needed this year to go well.

In January, I took a week off from my part time job and went to Melbourne with my dad. Having studied at Melbourne Uni himself, he was excited to show me around the campus. It was easy to picture myself studying in the library, walking between classes, and attending lectures. My future in that space was tangible. It felt real.

The year started well for me - I was achieving As and Bs in my classes and was appointed as Debating Captain. Things were settled in my home, with my three younger siblings engaged in their school and extra- curricular commitments. My dad works as a financial manager and my mum was working in therapeutic residential care for teenagers.

As we moved through our daily lives and routines, news about 'coronavirus' started to filter into news bulletins. Naively I believed that we were safe here in Australia and even more so in Tassie. I thought that this would be one of those things we would hear about, and feel awful for people who have to experience it, but that it would never actually impact us. When cases started being reported in mainland Australia, my workplace started implementing nationwide safety procedures, such as plexiglass screens, and enhanced cleaning processes. Even then, I still believed we were safe in Tassie.

Until we weren't.

I went on a camp with our school's senior out-reach program. We got word on our bus that the other group was stopped at Campbelltown because one of the students had to return home, as his brother had been placed in quarantine. And suddenly it was real. The threat was not just here in my state, it was in my school community, impacting my peers. In this instance, it was a false alarm. But now there was a cloud of uncertainty and worry hanging over us. Covid-19 became the focal point of all conversation, I became obsessed with consuming as much news about it as I could. I could reel off statistics and facts, recite safety procedures and would wait each night for the new case numbers to be announced. I became addicted to seeking information, an addiction fed by a relentless 24 hour news cycle. Hyper-fixation is

symptomatic of the chronic anxiety I have experienced for many years. But this didn't feel like a stress response, this felt like a completely rational way to behave.

With two weeks to go before the end of term 1, I was still achieving excellent results in my classes and I began coaching the junior debaters, looking to the season ahead with excitement and optimism. Drama club had started up again and I was working on a project to support vulnerable students within our school. I needed this year to go well, and it was off to a great start.

Then one Friday afternoon, 2 weeks before the end of term 1, an announcement came through the PA to tell us to clear out our lockers, that we would not be returning to school until further notice. We had the last 20 minutes of the day to make sure we had everything we needed. My bus is one of the first to leave. I didn't even get to say goodbye.

Things had changed at home, too. My mum left her job to keep our family safe. Dad was working from home, and they took the Littles out of school early because my little brother was born with a hole in his heart and my little sister has low immunity and severe anxiety. There was so much we didn't know about Covid, we weren't taking any chances.

It was fun at first, my mum started a pyjama school for the Littles and they got to learn different languages and cook international food. I loved helping them in the kitchen. One of the best things about us all being at home was sitting at the table together for every meal, safe and secure in our own little bubble. But the thing about having little people in your learning space is that it becomes incredibly hard to learn. They are loud, they are needy, they do 'PE with Joe' at full volume. They argue and they need help with their technology (and sometimes, parents do too). We all tried to be respectful of each other, but 6 people in one house is always going to be a challenge.

Through the school holidays, I was still working regularly and we began to rework our space at home to prepare for the official start of Learning @ Home. Timetables were put up on the walls and play spaces became work spaces.

Monday came around and learning @ home started. It was awful. We had to stay in google meets with our cameras on for the duration of our class time. It was exhausting. I felt uncomfortable and self-conscious and out of control. It felt like every class was a performance. Despite being exhausted, I couldn't sleep properly. I stopped messaging my friends, my grades fell and I lost all motivation. I couldn't concentrate, I would zone out, and the subjects I was so passionate about became frustrating and confusing. I felt untethered.

Two weeks before we were due to return to onsite learning, I had a panic attack so severe that my parents had to call an ambulance because I was struggling to breathe. At the hospital I was told that there was nothing physically wrong with me, and that I should just stop being so anxious.

The decision was made that I should return to school early so that I could be around other people and learn in a classroom environment. But it was still google meets and minimal face to face teaching, just in the classroom instead of my bedroom.

A week later, everyone returned to campus. I was in English when I had my first episode. My right hand began to tremble uncontrollably. It stopped after a while, but when I went to stand at the end of class, my legs would not support me. My muscles started to convulse and I struggled to breathe. The school called an ambulance and I was taken to hospital again. Once again, I was told there was nothing wrong with me.

The episodes became more frequent and debilitating. For a period of several weeks, my right hand would shake constantly. I had to leave my job and it was decided that it was no longer safe for me to be at school, so I was back to learning @ home – but this time with no virtual classes. My mum and dad pushed for me to be able to change my student status to part time. This helped enormously, and I returned to school just in time for mid-year exams. I had a separate exam room and a scribe because my hand was shaking so badly that I couldn't hold a pen. I got Cs on my legal exam and I only passed maths because they lowered the pass mark due to lockdown.

During this time I went through a series of tests to rule out anything physiological. And the results were always the same. My body was fine. My mind was not. I reached out to Headspace to get some support for my mental health. They had long waiting lists and even then, only telehealth was available. Eventually I was referred to CAMHS, which was the lifeline I needed for my mental health.

My episodes slowed and then stopped soon after exams, and I have spent the rest of this year playing catch-up.

My main chance to recover my marks was at the end of year exams. My legal exam went well, but during my maths exam, I had my first episode in months. I had to leave my exam early and apply for derived results. Since then, I've felt shaken and off balance. I needed this year to go well.

Covid has impacted every aspect of my life. From school, to family relationships, from work, to not being able to get my license due to my episodes making it unsafe. I haven't been able to see my family in Victoria, I haven't been a present friend. This year has not gone well.

Looking ahead to next year, I am already feeling anxious. If I don't succeed, I face doing year 13, putting my life on hold, and graduating a year behind my cohort.

I know that there are many pathways towards achieving my goal of being a lawyer, but I resent that a pandemic that was completely unanticipated could potentially derail me. It is sobering to realise that despite having a supportive family, a supportive school, access to mental health support, great friendships

and a solid work history, something so completely out of my control could wreak such havoc on my daily life and on my future plans.

So now I need next year to go well.

Mr President, as we finish our parliamentary year and embark on the break we are all so looking forward to, let us remember young people like Emma, who is so brave, and take the opportunity to think about what we can all do to help next year go well for Emma and for all Tasmanian students.

Members - Hear, hear.

MOTION

Appropriation Bills (Nos. 1 and 2) 2020 - Permissive Instruction

[11.34 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison)(by leave) - Mr President, with regard to Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2020 (No. 46) and Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2020 (No. 47), I move -

That the Committee of the Whole Council be empowered to consider Output and other expenditure detail contained in the document - *Government Services* Volumes 1 and 2;

And further, That the Committee be empowered to exercise a vote on each proposed Output as part of the process of approving appropriations contained within the Appropriation Bills (No. 1 and 2) 2020 under the two line Operating Services and Capital Service appropriation;

And further, That the Committee of the Whole Council be empowered to consider the Outputs as recommended in the Reports of Estimates Committees A and B, and that the Outputs recommended in those Reports be not subject to debate and only those Outputs recommended and listed as being subject to further consideration to be open to debate in Committee;

Provided - That that should any Member require further consideration of any Output then the procedural mechanism of *recommittal* is to be used.

Motion agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2020 (No. 46)

Second Reading

[11.36 a.m.]

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

That the bill be now read the second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2020 (No. 46)

In Committee

Madam CHAIR (Ms Forrest) - Honourable members, I would like to make a brief statement with regard to the way the Committee is to be run, and hopefully for the benefit of newer members as well.

The stages of the bill are intended to achieve two primary objects -

- (1) To enable full discussion of both the substance and the form of legislation.
- (2) To ensure that decisions already made at one stage are not reopened for discussion at a subsequent stage, and do not, as a result, prolong the bill's passage unnecessarily.

In the context of the debate on the Appropriation Bills, members are reminded that the purpose of the consideration in the Committee of the Whole Council is to report to the House as to whether the bills should pass and whether clauses, items and schedules to the bills should be -

- (1) agreed to;
- (2) subject to a request; or
- (3) amended where the item is not for the ordinary annual services of the Government.

The consideration of the Budget Papers during the Estimates process is intended to assist the efficient consideration of the Appropriation Bills by resolving issues prior to the debate of the bills in the Committee of the Whole. This facilitates the efficient consideration of bills in accordance with the permissive instruction. Only those outputs recommended for further debate may be addressed in detail during the Committee stage, unless the output is recommitted.

I have directed that a list of the outputs recommended for further debate in each of the Estimates Committees reports be provided to members, and I assume all members have that. Members will note that the list specifies the matters that gave rise to the recommendation for further debate. In addressing these outputs, members should confine their questions to those particular matters.

A list of instructions to enable the Committee of the Whole to consider a vote on the items under output groups in the Budget Papers is to facilitate debate on the proposed appropriation of public money contained in Appropriation Bills. The instruction does not

broaden the scope for debate which may take place in the Committee of the Whole. It is not an invitation to make statements unrelated to the proposed appropriation, to revisit the second reading debate, or to introduce issues unrelated to the proposed appropriation.

I remind members debate in the Committee is not a grievance-type debate. Therefore I ask members to be succinct and keep these comments in mind when speaking to items in the Budget Papers and ask questions in order to get further information regarding the expenditure items.

The Deputy Clerk will also read the divisions out as per the blue forms to assist members in keeping on track, but also the Leader's advisors who are following along with this. It does go slightly out of order of the bill itself, but is all within schedule 1.

We will make a start.

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

**Clause 4 -
Issue, application and appropriation of \$6 036 272 000**

Mrs HISCUTT - Madam Chair, I move -

That clause 4 be postponed.

Clause 4 postponed.

**Clause 5 -
Purposes of appropriation**

Mrs HISCUTT - Madam Chair, I move -

That clause 5 be postponed.

Clause 5 postponed.

Clause 6 agreed to.

**Schedule 1 -
Purposes of Appropriation 2020-21**

**DIVISION 1
(Brand Tasmania)**

Premier -

Output 1.1 agreed to.

Division agreed to without request.

DIVISION 2

(Department of Communities Tasmania)

Minister for Sport and Recreation -

Output Group 4

Disability Services and Community Development

4.7 Sport and Recreation -

Mr DEAN - During the Estimates process I raised the issue of the current position in relation to North Melbourne playing in Hobart. What is the Government's involvement in the North Melbourne position? Is it a given that they will be recontracted to come into Tasmania? The answer was taken on notice, or part of it, and an answer came back to simply say that the Government had no involvement at all.

Does the Government in some way or another have an interest in North Melbourne coming to play football for three or four games in this state? Has it not had discussions with TT-Line? Did it not have discussions with the Hobart City Council or the Clarence City Council? Did it not have some involvement somewhere? One would think it would be because of what it does for this state and the impact it would have on bringing people here. I ask: is that a case of absolutely no involvement whatsoever?

Mrs HISCUTT - I think the member is quite right; it is a contract between TT-Line and the North Melbourne Football Club. Obviously, the member has received the full answer and he wants that clarified. It is a contract between TT-Line and the North Melbourne Football Club.

Mr DEAN - I am well aware of the contract. However, I would think that a government of this state would have some involvement in the position North Melbourne would hold here. The Leader is telling us that the Government has had no discussions and no involvement whatsoever as to whether North Melbourne plays games here, absolutely none, zilch.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is worth noting that contracts such as the one Tasmania has with the Hawthorn Football Club are managed through Events Tasmania and the Department of State Growth. Therefore, the Minister for Sport and Recreation of that Division of Sport and Recreation does not administer these types of contracts. We are trying to say that it is a contract between TT-Line and North Melbourne in Tasmania, even though the contract is issued and signed by those two, and it is unlikely that the minister would have any influence on that at all. It is a contract between two other parties.

Output agreed to.

Outputs 90.8 and 90.17 agreed to.

Grants and Subsidies agreed to.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Minister for Human Services -

Output Group 1 Children Services

1.1 Children Services -

Ms LOVELL - My question is in relation to a question on notice we received yesterday from the minister. The question asked during the hearing was: how many children or young people exited Ashley Youth Detention Centre in the last financial year? The answer provided was there were 97 exits of young people from AYDC during 2019-20. That is, 49 distinct young people exited during the year, meaning some young people exited on more than one occasion. Could the Leader provide a further breakdown of those exits in relation to each of the 49 distinct young people? How many times did each of those young people exit Ashley?

Mrs HISCUTT - We have the questions here on numbers. Specifically, what did you want?

Ms LOVELL - It is in relation to the answer provided to question (5): how many children/young people exited Ashley Youth Detention Centre in the last financial year?

The answer provided says 49 distinct young people exited Ashley, making up 97 exits. The information I would like is: how many times did each of those 49 young people exit Ashley? Was it 49 young people and some of them exited twice? Did one young person exit 20 times?

Mrs HISCUTT - Right. So, what you are saying is that it could be one person 49 times?

Ms LOVELL - That is right.

Mrs HISCUTT - That data is not available as we speak. The department can get it but they will have to put a bit more work into that. Are you happy to take that question on notice?

Ms Lovell - Yes.

Ms FORREST - It is disappointing when we do not get the information back in a timely manner. We tried to give as long a deadline as we could as a committee, to get these responses back. We met last Friday in an attempt to give as long a period of time as possible to get the answers back and we still did not have them by the time of our meeting. It is not good enough. The Leader might like to pass that onto the ministers.

Everyone is busy, but the number of questions you can see were left open and unanswered during our Estimates hearings too was very disappointing. This means we still have a lot of potential questions that are outstanding and not potentially answered.

I am going to question (11), which is in regard to the Brahminy Foundation. I need to get a bit of context, because the questions were not answered. Effectively three questions were put to the minister, after asking him across the table -

Were you aware of the change in the ACNC-registered charity (Brahminy Foundation Limited) to a private company, 100 % owned by one individual (Many Colours One Direction)?

- (a) If so, when were you aware?
- (b) How do you assess the Government's financial management of such an organisation regarding the expenditure of public money?
- (c) Do you believe access to audited financial records of a company that is in receipt of public funds is important to assist in the monitoring of activities of program participants?

Those were the questions. The responses received do not really address those questions. The first one was answered, in that it said -

Any profits made are returned to the company to fund capital expenditure.

The response went to the fact that the department engaged MWH Consulting in 2017 to undertake a review of Many Colours One Direction and the review identified two separate business legal structures are in place - the Brahminy Foundation and Many Colours One Direction. The review indicated the two entities and gathered some information about them. The review indicated that the two entities are independent of each other. The 2017 review sought advice from the company's accountant to indicate whether any profits are returned to the company to fund capital expenditure, including infrastructure development. The Brahminy Foundation is able to receive tax deductible donations and the foundation is able to help MC1D with financial support if funds are available.

The reality is that profits are not returned in a private company. That is what a private company is - they remain in the company, generally, and that is the point. A private company is free to do whatever it likes before and after tax. A not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, does not have shareholders and thus automatically retains any profits, which can only be spent according to what the constitution allows. That is the Brahminy Foundation, not the Many Colours One Direction.

Any payments to principals would need to be disclosed with a not-for-profit, ACNC-registered charity, and they would be disclosed in the audited accounts. What the Government has stated here is that it relied upon - and this goes into the answer to question (11)(b) - on its ordinary procurement policies when a fit-for-purpose entity with in-built reporting protocols was available. You could argue that if it had stayed with the Brahminy Foundation, there would have been that oversight because that was a registered charity. Furthermore, the company Many Colours One Direction is 100 per cent owned by Mrs Brahminy. The Government essentially contracts with person A who then directs payments to be made to person B. It is not the way public money should be spent, especially when a registered not-for-profit entity already existed and was being used in the first instance, as I understand.

The Department of Communities Tasmania reports the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission reporting was up-to-date for the foundation. This is only half-true. The names of the directors were not properly disclosed and if they had gone through the ASIC

reporting, they would have seen that. I did ask the minister about that at the time; he did not appear to have any knowledge on this. The names of the directors were not properly disclosed. Mrs Brahminy's name was missing and the third director was listed with a name that was different from the name listed with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. Anyone who inspects ACNC and ASIC records will say this is a red flag, especially when public money is being spent.

Again, I say the questions I asked have not been answered. My questions are - and I do repeat them to the same degree almost -

How does this arrangement demonstrate the spending of public moneys in a responsible and accountable process when there is no transparency or accountability of public funds in the private company that MC1D is?

Both comments and questions (11)(b) and (c) make the claim on the minister that the recent review conducted on the Department of Communities Tasmania's financial transactions with MC1D are based on responsible accounting public procurement. They state that in both questions (11)(b) and (c), but where there is no transparency at all, there is no public recording, so how is that test met?

The minister claims here that is the way it is, but how can it be with MC1D? Will the minister act to address these concerns regarding the spending of public moneys, what action will he take and when will he take it? Why was the minister not aware of these matters when contracting these services from MC1D? You can talk about transparency, openness and accountability, but you cannot demonstrate it unless you can actually follow the money. They are the questions I have, Madam Deputy Chair.

Mrs HISCUTT - The member for Murchison's observations regarding statutory bodies are not disputed. It would be important if the Government were funding the organisation, but we are not funding the organisation. The department negotiates individual contracts for each child with MC1D and only pays in arrears after proof of delivery of contracted services, and this is how we follow the money from our end. This is done for all providers of special care packages.

Ms FORREST - I do not think I ever suggested that the Government was funding it, but we are expending public money, a not insignificant amount, for the care of these young people. You said in your brief response to my series of questions, which I might have to put again, that every young person has a special care package and that was in the answer we were provided with. Special care packages are reviewed every six months. The six-monthly review process is how the activities of each program participant is monitored.

Mrs Hiscutt - It is paid in arrears.

Ms FORREST - Yes, paid in arrears. I am not disputing that. However, the issue here is that the money is being given to a private company with no access to financial records. Does the minister see the financial records of this private company and where the money goes to? It is not an ACNC-registered business. It is a private company: 100 per cent owned by one person. The fact is that while you are paying in arrears, we are still handing over public money.

I ask the question: if it is correct that it is the people who run the program, Many Colours One Direction, who determines when a young person has completed the program? It could go on and on. I know it is reviewed every six months, but how can you be sure this is value for money? It is a significant amount of money. We cannot actually see what is being spent on what. There could be a whole heap being hived off into the pockets of the owner of this business because there is no transparency and no accountability at all. The Brahminy Foundation is an ACNC-registered company that does have a level of reporting. Many Colours One Direction has none. The fact that you pay in arrears means that the money is still being sent to them without any accountability. Does the minister get to see the financial records of this private company?

I do not think you have much right to ask for it, but you are talking about being accountable for it. I go back to that first question: how is this arrangement demonstrating the spending of public moneys in a responsible and accountable way without access to that?

Mrs HISCUTT - The Child Safety Service determines the outcomes and whether they are acceptable or not. The MC1D is another service provider. Their outcomes are monitored by Child Safety Service. They are very comparable when it comes to other services, so the Government has deemed we are getting value for money from this group and the reporting is done the same way from this group as any other groups the Government uses.

Ms Forrest - The Government contracts to a lot of private companies, does it? I do not know how that can be the case, but carry on.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is the same contract, whether it is a charitable or reporting. What I hear you saying is: do we need to check on the credentials of the company first, whether it is reputable? I think that is where the member is coming from. The outcomes are measured by the Child Safety Service. It determines that things are okay, that the child is safe. The reporting done is the same as for any other company, individual or non-profit enterprise the Government uses.

This one has been determined to be very comparable when it comes to pricing so we have figured it is value for money and all the checks and balances are in place as they would be for any other contract we use for this type of activity.

Ms FORREST - Any other company the Government is contracting with that is an ACNC-listed company or a publicly listed company - I am not sure to the extent to which that may be the case, but certainly with services contracted from not-for-profits or for purposed businesses that are ACNC-registered, the Government and anybody, myself included, has access to their financial reports. You can see money in, money out, and you have some basis on which to make an assessment about how that money is being spent.

We have seen some unfortunate stories about the treatment of some of the young people up there. There has been an investigation of that, but it is really difficult, without access and oversight over some of the expenditure by this company, to know that it is being used for the purpose for which it is being paid and that is my point. I am not getting a clear answer on that particular question.

I will go back to question (11)(c), which has not been answered. I know you are answering on behalf of the minister through his advisers, but does the minister believe that

access to audited financial reports of a company in receipt of public funds is important to assist in the monitoring of activities of program participants? As a private company, you do not have access to audited financial records of that business or company. That is the point here. You do with other ACNC companies, if questions were raised or if any untoward comment was made, regardless of any investigation that may be done or not done.

Do you believe it is important to have access to audited financial records of a company we are spending significant amounts of public money with, for the benefit of young people, yes, but with regard to making sure that money is being spent appropriately and effectively, and not being hived off into someone's individual pocket? I am not saying that is happening, but how do we know? We have got no oversight, no vision of this, and we have no idea.

Has the minister requested copies of the financial report of this private company? They are at liberty to say 'No', as I understand it - 'No, we are not going to show them to you' - but at least he can have some comfort, I guess, in being able to look at what the money was being spent on.

We have seen this in other circumstances over the years, when we have had some difficulties contracting out to certain providers in the care of children in state care. We have seen carers have to buy things out of their own pockets because they were not adequately funded or money was going elsewhere. If you are going to provide a service or ask someone to provide a service to vulnerable young Tasmanians, surely you want to be sure that money is being used in the most effective and appropriate way?

It might be comparable to other services, but it is still a significant amount of public money going to allegedly support this care provided to young people.

I will repeat the question so it is clear: does the minister believe that access to financial records of a company receiving public money is important to assist their monitoring of activities of program participants?

Mrs HISCUTT - Basically, the outcomes are important and the price of it; you are talking about having oversight of their books. The programs we pay for are comparable with this group and other groups, but the ACNCs, the organisations, do not report down to the individual contact level. The risk you are talking about is highlighted the same as for profits and not-for-profits, hence why we contract individually and we pay in arrears. If you like, we can request a financial audit and can commit to doing that annually, if it will help.

Ms Forrest - You should at the very least. Are you saying it has not been asked for previously?

Mrs HISCUTT - We are saying we can commit to doing that now.

Ms Forrest - But my questions are: You have not done it already? Has that been sought?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, it has been done, but we can commit to doing it annually now, if you like.

Ms Forrest - Have you got it?

Mrs HISCUTT - That last one the department has was done in 2017-18.

Ms Forrest - Was that the Brahminy Foundation at the time?

Mrs HISCUTT - No, that was financial audits, but for Brahminy, we can -

Ms Forrest - No, Many Colours One Direction, I am asking -

Mrs HISCUTT - We can request a financial audit and we can commit to doing it annually if the member so wishes.

Ms Forrest - Have you requested a set of financial audited accounts from Many Colours One Direction?

Mrs HISCUTT - No, we pay in arrears and we pay for satisfaction at the outcome of the program.

Ms Forrest - Does the minister think it is important they do that? Obviously, if he is going to ask for it.

Mrs HISCUTT - The department has just committed to doing it.

Output agreed to.

Output 2.1 agreed to.

Output 4.1 agreed to.

Output Group 90 COVID-19 Response and Recovery

Outputs 90.2 to 90.4 agreed to.

90.5 No Interest Loan Scheme Increase -

Mr VALENTINE - Most of my questions were answered, which is great, but I did not get an exact answer for my question (4): Number and value of loans for devices by region and reason for purchase. I am interested in that information to gauge some level of understanding about the level of loans for educational devices by region.

Basically, it referred to question (2) with regard to the geographic spread of loans per se. I was interested in gaining the information as, indeed, the question said - 'number/value' of loans for devices by region and reason for purchase.

It would probably help answer part of what the member for Nelson was after as well, in question (7), but I will let her talk to that.

Mrs HISCUTT - NILS had provided a certain amount of information, but they were not able to provide the specific information you requested in the time, so we do not have that at hand. I think it will take a fair degree of effort to find that information, which they believe is

possible, but they would have to go back to the providers to see where they supplied that to. Are you happy to take that question on notice?

Mr VALENTINE - I am.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am not sure how long that will take to find. It involves other people, other departments and different businesses, so it could take a while. Sorry about that. We will take that on notice.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Following on somewhat from the slightly unsatisfactory answer to question (7), which is -

What proportion of the extra COVID-19 NILS funding has been spent on education devices to provide school access during the period of school shutdown?

The answer provided does not give an answer to that, and seems to say an answer is not available.

Are we able to tell, in terms of NILS loans provided during that COVID school shutdown time, how many loans were provided to families to enable school access for children through devices? Is that a question that can be answered?

Mrs HISCUTT - Any loan classified for educational purposes was granted and determined in relation to educational needs, based on information collected in the application process. It was all grouped into educational activities.

The information you are asking for further detail on is, again, like the member for Hobart's - we would have to go back through the providers. It will be a lot of work to find that information, and we cannot guarantee it can be provided. Did you wish that work to be done?

Ms WEBB - I am interested in knowing to what extent we require low-income families to go into debt in order for their children to access free public education during the period of school shutdown. I would like to understand that, and I think the Government would want to understand that, too.

Mrs HISCUTT - That is a slightly different question, but the answer is the same. To get some information, you will have to go back to see where the providers actually sent that equipment - whether it is TAFE, primary school, secondary school, which and where - and it could take some time.

There again, what would you like to do? Put it on notice? I would like the member to be aware that it could take some time to find that information, because there are a few different groups to access.

Madam CHAIR - Can I clarify: are you asking the member for Nelson to put the question on notice, as a separate question on notice?

Mrs HISCUTT - No, whether she wishes us to take it on notice at this point. Whether she wants to pursue it, and it will take some time - just letting you know. I am happy to take it on notice if you wish.

Ms WEBB - In terms of holding up this process, are you asking me? Or can I put it on notice at a later time, to get it at a later time, without holding up this process?

Mrs HISCUTT - We would take it on notice so we do not hold up this process. Are you happy for that?

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Output agreed to.

90.6 Child Safety System -

Ms WEBB - I have the answers provided yesterday, and I am still looking through those. I have no further questions at the moment.

Output agreed to.

Output 90.15 agreed to.

Capital Investment Program agreed to

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs -

Output Group 4

Disability Services and Community Development

4.4 Aboriginal Affairs -

Ms WEBB - Lapsed time during the Estimates process. I had a couple of questions on this line item, in relation to the allocation of Government funding. I would like more detail on -

- (1) What has been allocated for Aboriginal-specific programs and policies within that line item?
- (2) How much money has the state Government received from the Commonwealth during the 2019-20 financial year, and what is it expecting to receive in the 2020-21 financial year, in relation to its Indigenous population, and what does that Commonwealth allocation look like to our state?

Mrs HISCUTT - This output has increased by \$0.5 million, from \$1.4 million in 2019-20 to \$1.9 million in 2020-21. This primarily reflects additional funding of \$300 000 for Closing the Gap and \$300 000 rolled over from 2019-20 for Resetting the Relationship with Aboriginal People, noting that these funds are fully allocated against existing commitments.

Table 2.2, Output Group Expense Summary, on page 33 of Budget Paper No. 2 has a summary of what has been spent.

With regard to your second question, this output group receives money from Treasury so that figure is yet to be determined; of course, it is not really a question for this output.

Chair, how do you want to proceed with that? We can take it on notice but we have to ask Treasury.

CHAIR - It is not a line item we have left open. Is the member happy to perhaps pose it in a different way?

Ms Webb - Sure.

Mrs HISCUTT - What are we doing? Are you happy to leave that?

Ms WEBB - You are asking me if I am happy to leave it for this line item because you are telling me it does not relate to this line item?

Mrs Hiscutt - That is correct.

Ms WEBB - I cannot take it up in another line item because we have not left it open. By the sound of it, I need to follow this up separately to the Budget process at a different time.

Mrs Hiscutt - With regard to the Commonwealth funding, that part, yes.

Mr VALENTINE - I touched on this in the Heritage component but I am very keen to understand what the Government is actually doing to reset the relationship. I suppose you could put it that it is a significant program. The Government has certainly made significant statements about how it wanted to reset the relationship with the Aboriginal people. I refer to Rebecca Creek and Irapuna as sites that were being considered for land handback, and that goes back to 2013.

It has been seven years since we had a committee on this and yet we have not seen anything significant coming forward in relation to that so I am keen to hear what the Government is doing in its program. It is going forward to reset the relationship with the Aboriginal people? I am sure that Aboriginal people around Tasmania would be very keen to understand where that is at.

Mrs HISCUTT - It appears there is an awful lot of activity happening within that area. I have been asked whether you would mind putting that on notice. We will take that on notice if you are happy to do that, but a lot of stuff is happening.

Mr Valentine - Please, I would really appreciate that.

Mrs HISCUTT - Thank you.

Output agreed to.

Minister for Women -

Output Group 4

Disability Services and Community Development

4.5 Women's Policy -

Ms WEBB - I want to follow up on the first question put in relation to this output group, which was to confirm the commitment I believe the minister gave during the Estimates process. I am looking for confirmation of the commitment to identify resources required for the Minister for Women to provide gender assessments on all policies taken to Cabinet with a gender impact statement on all state budgets.

The answer that has come back in no way relates to seeking that confirmation of commitment. It is a very bland answer that says -

The Department of Communities will continue to consider approaches of gender assessments nationally, and the Government will always work to ensure the best possible policy outcomes across Government are achieved.

Which is lovely but it is not an answer to the question. I am still looking for the confirmation the minister committed to, of identifying what resources would be available to provide those gender analyses and gender impact statements.

Mrs HISCUTT - Undertaking general impact assessment on all policies taken to Cabinet in all state budgets would require significant resources additional to current resources within the Women's portfolio. The department will be providing further advice to the minister as to the best approaches. That work is happening, but it is not happening here and now; they are working on it. The minister would be the first one to get that list when it comes.

Ms WEBB - Just to clarify, I am not asking for that work to be done. What the minister committed to in Estimates was that she would have a process take place that would identify what resources specifically would be required. You have made the assertion that it would be considerable extra resources - that is fine.

The commitment I believe I received - and I would like confirmed - is that the exact quantum of those resources will be identified so we know how many extra resources would be required to provide the gender impact statement analysis of policy going to Cabinet and a gender analysis of the Budget. That is what I am looking for confirmation on - that the minister will undertake a process to identify the level of resource required for that to be provided.

Mrs HISCUTT - As you can see, the work will be done and presented to the minister and then she will look at it and will commit to do whatever is humanly and financially possible. Do you have anything else you want to add?

Ms WEBB - If it is possible -

DEPUTY CHAIR - The member has another call.

Ms WEBB - Okay. When that identification of those resources is done, as committed to in the Estimates process, will that information be made public and shared? I am not asking now for a commitment of, therefore then those resources will be devoted to it, I am asking for the identification of the resources required and for that to be something that is publicly presented so we all understand what that resource would look like.

Mrs HISCUTT - The usual procedure is a plan will be redeveloped and the minister will see the information. She and her team will develop a policy plan or a plan of attack or approach from there. It will become public, I should imagine, after it is all ticked off.

Ms Webb - You are saying we will have a public availability of the resources required for those two elements to be provided that I have already mentioned a number of times?

Mrs HISCUTT - The minister will determine the approach once the work is done and once that is sorted -

Ms Webb - Just to be clear, it has not actually gone to the core of what this question is. I am not asking about what the minister will do with the information and for -

Mrs HISCUTT - You are asking whether it will be made public?

Ms Webb - I am asking whether there will be an identification process as to the resources required to provide those elements and whether that information will be made public.

Mrs HISCUTT - Once a package is developed, of course it will be made public because we need to act on it.

Ms Webb - But I have not asked you to act on it I have asked you to share information about the -

Mrs HISCUTT - The simple answer is yes.

Ms FORREST - I would like to go to questions (2) and (3) provided on notice to the minister. Again, we did not get these answers until past the deadline for our meeting because had we had them, we would have asked more questions, anyway.

This relates to the gender breakdown and number of positions on Tasmanian Government boards and committees, and particularly how many on multiple boards.

I want to read the answer to the first question which was the number of positions, and as at 30 June 2020 there were 907 filled positions on Tasmanian Government boards and committees, which were held by 762 individual board members, 344 women, and 418 men. I commend the Government on improving the percentages.

This comprises 29 women who hold two positions, seven women who hold three positions, six women who hold four positions, three women who hold five positions, and one woman who holds seven positions.

With regard to question (3), with regard to men holding one-off positions, 37 hold two positions, four hold three positions, five hold four positions, and two hold five positions. Some questions here to follow up with -

- (1) What is the Government doing to recruit more board members generally rather than just recycling all the same ones, with no disrespect to all the members who are on boards at the moment?
- (2) Is the minister confident a person can have seven board positions or committee positions and still be effective at each one? Good governance principles tell you that is absolutely not the case.
- (3) What are you doing to actually increase numbers of individuals, with 907 positions having closer to 900 people rather than 762?
- (4) Who are the women and men who hold four or more positions?

You should be able to tell us that; you should know who these people are. I could troll every committee and board position but should not have to. I want to know particularly who is the one woman who holds seven positions. Who are the three women who hold five positions? Who are the two men who hold five positions and who are the five men who hold four positions and the six women who hold four positions? Those holding two or three are certainly achievable, depending on what else they do with their life, but seven positions -

Mrs HISCUTT - I have pages of who is on what and the person and I can table that for you or I can read the name of the person who has seven boards.

Ms Forrest - If all the information is contained in the documents you are willing to table I am happy to have the documents tabled and then circulated to members.

Mrs HISCUTT - We need to get a clean copy of the first page, so we can sort that and then table it in a moment. Is that okay?

Ms Forrest - We can get that done, but I will ask the other question about what the Government is doing to recruit more board members as well, so maybe you could get that copied and circulated before we finish this line item.

Mrs HISCUTT - I will seek some more advice.

While I am searching for that information, I have an answer to a question put on notice earlier from the member for Rumney. Am I okay to read that in now?

DEPUTY CHAIR - In a separate area - just a moment while I seek advice.

Mrs HISCUTT - It was taken on notice.

DEPUTY CHAIR - I have been advised that given we are still in Division 2, the Leader may proceed.

Mrs HISCUTT - The following is on a question taken on notice earlier for the member for Rumney. The following is a breakdown of the numbers of exits for distinct young people from Ashley Youth Detention Centre during 2019-20. I will give you numbers and see whether you are happy with this answer.

One young person exited nine times; one young person exited five times; six young people exited four times; six young people exited three times; six young people exited two times; and 29 young people exited one time. Hopefully, that will come to 49.

I am seeking some more information.

Women on Boards Strategy - to support the achievement of the 50 per cent gender equity target, the Government has released a new strategy. The new strategy builds and expands upon the success of the first strategy with a refreshed set of actions to increase women's participation on government boards and committees.

The strategy includes practical actions across four focus areas to strengthen pathways, to create contemporary systems and processes, to influence change, and to monitor equity.

Actions have been included in the strategy to leverage new ways of working as a result of COVID-19; address barriers women face in positions of leadership; and foster connections and opportunities for women in industry.

While the strategy focuses on increasing women's representation on government boards and committees, actions have also been included to support the private and not-for-profit sector to improve gender equality on their boards. This recognises that the whole Tasmanian community benefits from increased representation of women both on public and private boards and committees.

Progress towards the actions will be publicly reported annually through the strategy annual report. Cabinet will also continue to be briefed on the Government's progress towards the gender equity targets on a quarterly basis.

Also, the Tasmanian Women's Register is a key feature of the Government's efforts to reach its target of 50 per cent.

Agencies, including government businesses, are required to advertise vacancies via the register and complete the Women's Register Appointment Certification form for Cabinet, which includes measures taken to recruit women. As at 30 September 2020, 585 women were subscribed to the register.

Deputy Chair, I seek leave to table a document.

Leave granted.

Mrs HISCUTT - This is the document with the names and how many different boards they were on.

Ms FORREST - I will be keen to actually see that list. The strategy for women on boards is positive and appreciated, but my question was broader than that because what we have is still many people serving on a number of boards.

The Leader has not answered a couple of questions. What is the Government doing more broadly to recruit new board members per se? I just quickly added up the numbers - out of 334

women, 46 board positions are held by women who are on other boards. For men, there are probably similar numbers - slightly more men holding that number of board positions.

I am interested in what you are doing to get new people into government board positions rather than having people sitting on so many. That is one question. The other question I am really keen to hear answered is: how do you think someone, any person, can hold five or seven board positions of government businesses?

Without seeing a list, it is hard to know what they are on but if you have someone on Hydro - and I challenge anyone here to actually understand all the financials of Hydro - as a board member, you are as responsible for the financial management of that company as the accountants on the board, the chief financial officer, everybody else. I do not know whether people sitting on the Hydro board also sit on two, three or four other boards or committees. Some take more time and more effort than others. That is why I am keen to see the list because that is my concern.

Does the Government believe that any one person, male or female, can hold seven board and/or committee positions and still be able to do all those positions effectively? Why would we allow that to happen?

Mrs HISCUTT - In answer to your second question about whether a person is allowed on seven boards, I think it would be up to that person to determine whether or not they were capable. Is it up to us to say, 'No, you cannot have the job because you are not capable'? I think it comes down to capability - if the person, male or female, applies and they think they are capable and they get the job; I personally could not do it. I bet the member for Murchison could.

Mr Dean - It is up to the Government to be realistic.

Mrs HISCUTT - You have to be realistic about it.

Ms Forrest - I would not want to, just the thought of the responsibility alone would give me nightmares.

Mrs HISCUTT - I cannot answer that and I do not know that the Government can put an answer there. It was a 'what do you think'-type question. I do not know, if that lady who is on seven boards thinks she is capable, that would be up to her to determine.

Ms Forrest - I am not reflecting on an individual here, I am asking the Government: is it reasonable?

Mr Dean - It is not what they think; it is whether or not they are doing the job right.

Mrs HISCUTT - That is true. Some board appointments are based on the substantive positions a person holds within government. Boards vary - some are boards of management and some meet infrequently; some might only meet quarterly.

With regard to your other question -

Ms FORREST - What are you doing to get more male and female?

Mrs HISCUTT - Would you like to give me an example of what you are looking for because I read out the Women's Strategy and you did not seem to like that answer.

Ms Forrest - I am talking about a broad strategy, not just Women on Boards but getting more general participation on government boards rather than the same number of people holding so many positions.

Mrs HISCUTT - I think the figure was 585 women on the register.

Ms Forrest - I am not just talking about the Women's Strategy. We still have a lot of men who are serving on a number of boards.

Mrs HISCUTT - The Tasmanian Government has committed \$200 000 of funding over four years from 2019-20 to Women in Leadership scholarships. In 2019-20, these scholarships focused on sectors where women's representation remains low.

The development of the new strategy has been informed by a survey of women sitting on government boards and committees and what they indicated would be most impactful in achieving gender equality on Tasmanian government boards and committees. The strategy was also informed by extensive research on effective initiatives being undertaken in other Australian states and the benefits of gender parity on government and non-government boards.

I have the feeling the member for Murchison is not satisfied yet.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - I can advise members this actually comes under Division 9, Premier and Cabinet, on boards more broadly, so you might be able to ask that question again, for the general board members, not only women.

I know this is about women's representation on boards and more generally, but I have been advised boards come under Premier and Cabinet.

Mr DEAN - In the document tabled, are the salaries received for each board included in that list of persons?

Mrs Hiscutt - I can confirm while the member is on his feet that the salaries were not on the list. It had the names and how many boards they are on.

Mr DEAN - Is that information available or would it be available? Can that be taken on notice or have we the information? To be fair I will ask the same question of the men also in Premier and Cabinet, if we need to ask that question there. Of the multiple board holders, what salaries or income do they get from those positions?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, that information is available. We do not have it on hand but can provide it and take your question on notice.

Mr DEAN - Yes, thank you. That would be great, on notice.

Ms FORREST - Madam Deputy Chair, I am having a quick look. It is helpful to have this information. I can see some of the synergies with some of the positions that people hold.

One person, Kate Cuthbertson, is on seven. Some of these can have quite a lot of work at times, depending on what comes before them. The Anti-Discrimination Tribunal, for example, could be very busy or have very little work. The Council of Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity again depends on investigations that need to be taken under this area and can be significant. You can have a run of unfortunate events with women and children. The Parole Board obviously has a lot of work to do. The Sentencing Advisory Council has fairly regular references provided to them. I do not know about the Tasmanian Racing Appeal Board -

Mr Dean - It was fairly busy during the year with increases in numbers there.

Mr Gaffney - Are all these positions financial positions or some voluntary?

Ms FORREST - They would all get sitting fees.

Mr Gaffney - They would all get sitting fees, but it depends. I would be interested to know that as a breakdown.

Ms FORREST - The sitting fee is one thing; time commitment is the other. I have sat on the Council of Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity and whilst at times there was not a lot of work, at other times there was. That was an unpaid position.

It is not only the money; it is the capacity to do the work if all these things are going on, and having someone on so many boards does run the risk of overloading a person. I am not suggesting any one person does not have the capacity to do these jobs individually. It is when all of them become busy at once that we need to perhaps look more broadly, as a government, and ensure we are not trying to spread people too thin.

The Women on Boards Strategy is one mechanism to get more women involved, and that is really good, but we also need to look at the men on boards, to ensure we do not just have the same men popping up on every government board. I have been in this place long enough to sit across the table at GBEs and other times to see the same faces. You think, 'You have moved to there now, okay.'

It is nothing about their capacity; it is just we need to get fresh blood at times and give other people - particularly some of the younger people who actually have a great deal of capacity - onto these boards to actually take up these positions, particularly when you look at the Chairs, who just seem to get rotated around the various government businesses at times. That is not futureproofing; it is not looking at succession planning - it is just holding the fort without bringing new people in.

That was the question. That is more in Premier and Cabinet, the broader board question. In terms of the work you are doing on women, hopefully we will see there will be fewer women ready to take on so many board positions to meet your target. That is the risk with targets. When you have a target that says 'We will get to x ', the same women get tapped on the shoulder every time, or there is a smaller pool to go to - so let us hope the strategy is effective in increasing the number of women available.

I took the call, Madam Deputy Chair, really to have a chance to have a quick look through some of these positions. I note some of them are statutory roles as well.

Mrs HISCUTT - I note this was not particularly a question the member for Murchison asked, but the Government is mindful, of course, that you do not want to overload your workers. All these roles usually are up for renegotiation or reapplication every two to five years, averaging three years. For example, the first name there - she is a lawyer so she has to be able to represent those boards.

The Government is mindful not to overload people, and when their turn is up every two or three years, of course that is all looked at. Is that person capable, are they willing, have they applied? That all happens at the rollover of their term.

Ms FORREST - But there are probably others you could start elevating through the ranks.

Output agreed to.

Minister for Housing -

**Output Group 3
Housing services**

3.1 Housing Services -

Ms WEBB - I have some follow-up questions. I would like a bit more information in relation to questions (3) and (4) that were taken on notice.

Question (3) relates to presentations to youth shelters in 2019-20 -

... how many children were turned away? Of those, how many were turned away because they were too young to receive a service?

In the answer, you have given numbers: 143 instances of children under 15 years of age and 436 instances of young people aged between 15 and 17 presented to youth shelters and were unable to be assisted.

You said the data does not reflect whether children or young people presented alone, or accompanied by an adult.

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

QUESTIONS

Sentencing Advisory Council - Non-Fatal Strangulation

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

With regard to the referral to the Sentencing Advisory Council - SAC - regarding the consideration of non-fatal strangulation, in Estimates Committee hearings on 24 November in Legislative Council Estimates Committee B hearings, the Attorney-General stated -

I have requested that council undertake research as a matter of priority; ... I am mindful that we don't want to have a perverse outcome by having a standalone offence, which is, on the face of it, very attractive. ... That is why I have handed it to the Sentencing Advisory Council to look at a range of different issues.

They know I am very keen, because of the public interest in this matter, to undertake the research and make observations in relation to criminal law approaches in other jurisdictions, so that I have all that information. I am hoping to receive that in the new year.

She went on to say -

So much gets proposed to me to do some law reform on that sometimes we are able to do that internally. But on this occasion the expertise of the Sentencing Advisory Council is warranted.

She also stated with regard to the request to the Sentencing Advisory Council -

...because of the public interest in this matter, to undertake the research and make observations in relation to criminal law approaches in other jurisdictions, so that I have all that information.

Further noting SAC's role as an advisory body on matters concerning sentencing in Tasmania, providing high level advice to the Attorney-General on sentencing in Tasmania to -

- assist the Attorney-General make decisions related to sentencing matters
- improve the quality and availability of information on sentencing in Tasmania, and
- educate the public on sentencing matters,

my questions are -

- (1) Please provide the terms of reference sent to the Sentencing Advisory Council regarding this matter.
- (2) Is the role of SAC to consider and compare sentencing options for non-fatal strangulation?
- (3) Is the role of SAC to consider and compare criminal law approaches to non-fatal strangulation?
- (4) Under the Sentencing Advisory Council's area of expertise and responsibilities:
 - (a) how is this body appropriate to fully consider all options regarding non-fatal strangulation as a standalone offence; and

(b) if so, where is this role described?

5. If SAC is not able to fully consider non-fatal strangulation as a standalone offence, will the Tasmania Law Reform Institute - TLRI - also be requested to consider law reform in this area as a matter of urgency and priority?

ANSWER

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

Member for Murchison, the answer is very lengthy and with your permission, I will seek leave to table it, but I will read it if you like. Are you okay if I table it? I will have it emailed to you immediately. Happy to read it.

Ms Forrest - Yes.

Mrs HISCUTT - The terms of reference provided to the Sentencing Advisory Council are as follows -

- (1) In Tasmania, how many cases and in what circumstances has non-fatal strangulation, choking or suffocation been considered as a sentencing factor and in relation to which offences? What were the sentencing outcomes of those cases?
- (2) In those jurisdictions that have introduced an offence of non-fatal strangulation (or cognate offence), what have been the sentencing outcomes and where information is available, what factors have the courts considered in sentencing the offender?
- (3) In most jurisdictions, that have introduced an offence of non-fatal strangulation (or cognate offence), for what other offences was the offender also sentenced at the same court event?
- (4) Any other observations considered relevant to (1) to (3)?

The council has been invited to make observations on the terms of reference, which the minister can confirm include sentencing outcomes with regard to non-fatal strangulation, choking or suffocation in both Tasmania and in other jurisdictions; and the sentencing outcomes of jurisdictions that have introduced standalone non-fatal strangulation, choking or suffocation offences (or a cognate offence) in criminal law as well as other matters considered relevant.

The Sentencing Advisory Council is an advisory body on matters concerning sentencing in Tasmania. The council provides the Attorney-General with high-level independent advice on sentencing in Tasmania to assist the Attorney-General make decisions relating to sentencing matters; improve the quality and availability of information on sentencing in Tasmania; and educate the public about sentencing matters.

Further information about the council and its role can be found at www.sentencingcouncil.tas.gov.au/about.

The council is regularly asked to undertake research and analysis on specific sentencing matters and to provide advice, reports and recommendations accordingly. It is appropriately qualified to consider this important matter.

On family and sexual violence, the council's previous reports have included sentencing for serious sex offences against children, mandatory treatment for sex offenders, mandatory sentencing for serious sex offences against children, sentencing of adult family violence offenders and sex offence sentencing.

The council comprises members chosen to represent a unique and balanced perspective on the sentencing process. This includes a chairperson, three community members, nominees from the legal profession, the Commissioner of Police or a nominated delegate, the Director of Public Prosecutions or a nominated delegate, the University of Tasmania, and the Legal Aid Commission.

The current council chair is Emeritus Professor Arie Freiberg AO, a highly distinguished legal practitioner and academic in criminology and sentencing reform, who has been the chair of the Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council since its inception in July 2004.

Other members of the council include -

- Ms Rosalie Martin, speech pathologist, criminologist and facilitator and founder of Connect42;
- Mr Peter Dixon, retired magistrate admitted as a practitioner in 1969, appointed magistrate in 1986, retired in 2012, who has an extensive professional career in reform of criminal law and procedure; and
- Ms Kate Cuthbertson, a leading barrister in Tasmania who, in her earlier career, served at the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania for over 10 years, conducted research for the TLRI, and whose professional appointment currently includes being a member of the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal, the Mental Health Tribunal, and the Parole Board.

Other members include –

- Mr Scott Tilyard, Deputy Commissioner of Tasmania Police and Deputy Secretary of the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management;
- Adjunct Associate Professor Ms Terese Henning, who alongside her distinguished academic career, is the immediate past director of TLRI;
- Ms Jill Maxwell, CEO of the Sexual Assault Support Service since 2015, whose previous career includes extensive periods with Tasmania Police and in the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service;
- Ms Kim Baumeler, who is a leading Tasmanian legal practitioner with extensive practical experience in criminal law;
- Ms Linda Mason SC, the current Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, who holds in excess of 20 years criminal law practice experience;

- Ms Rochelle Mainwaring, Senior In-House Counsel and Deputy Criminal Practice Manager at Legal Aid; and
- Dr Isabelle Bartkowiak-Théron, who specialises in socio-legal studies and currently sits as a lead researcher in Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies at the University of Tasmania, among other international and Australian professional and research governance boards.

The council's research, particularly around the sentencing outcomes in other jurisdictions and their alignment to the underlying objective of a standalone offence, together with a picture of what is occurring in Tasmanian courts regarding these offences, will provide valuable information to inform consideration of any new offence in Tasmania.

As you can see from the terms of reference, the minister has not asked the council to specifically recommend whether a possible new standalone criminal law offence should be introduced in Tasmania on this matter. She would ordinarily seek advice from the department in relation to these types of matters and, in relation to this referral, the minister can confirm this analysis is being conducted by her department.

Whether there are any questions outstanding in relation to this matter that require further research and advice from the TLRI or other bodies is something that will be decided after the council's report has been received and considered. The minister fully appreciates the high importance of this matter and, therefore, will continue to treat it with the utmost priority. The minister maintains that any law reform must be thoroughly considered to prevent any perverse outcomes or unintended legal consequences, and this is precisely - and appropriately - her focus for victim survivors.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania - PTPZ Land - Organised Activities

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

[2.41 p.m.]

With regard to Sustainable Timber Tasmania - STT - will the Leader please advise -

- (1) Are permits required for organised activities on PTPZ land and, if so, can you please give some examples of the types of activity where a permit would be required?
- (2) Is a permit for commercial filming of the use of UAVs - that is, drones - on PTPZ land?
- (3) If an individual, organisation or group is engaged in an activity on PTPZ land that requires a permit, but none has been applied for or issued, what can STT do to enforce the requirement for a permit?
- (4) Is there a fine or a penalty for not obtaining a permit, or operating outside the conditions of a permit?

- (5) Are groups, organisations or individuals engaged in organised activities on PTPZ land required to provide STT with evidence of current public liability insurance for the activities being undertaken?

ANSWER

I thank the member for Windermere for his questions.

- (1) Yes, PTPZ, which is the Permanent Timber Production Zone land, is used regularly for organised activities such as car and motorbike rallies, multi-sports competitions, horseriding, mountain-biking, orienteering, festivals and research projects. Activities on PTPZ land may have the potential to cause environmental harm. To manage the risk, STT, through its forest activity assessment process, manages an approved process to assess environmental values and the potential impacts of activities.

If approved, STT issues a permit that includes management actions that the event organiser is required to meet. The forest activity assessment and permit process is a policy and procedural mechanism of STT, and has no legal enforceability. The response to question (3) below - I will come to that - describes the power available to STT under the Forest Management Act 2013.

- (2) Commercial filming on PTPZ land is managed under the forest activity assessment process outlined above. The use of UAVs is regulated by the Australian Government's Civil Aviation Safety Authority.
- (3) STT's powers, as the forestry corporation, are defined under the Forest Management Act 2013. These include the right to charge a fee for access to PTPZ land, closure of forest roads and requests to leave PTPZ land. As outlined in the answer to question (1), STT does not have the power of enforcement with respect to permit conditions.
- (4) No.
- (5) Public liability insurance is a requirement for the issuance of permits.

TasWater - Waratah Reservoir

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

[2.44 p.m.]

I have sent a series of questions through. I understand they are the first answers available at this stage. I will just ask the first question, and hopefully the others will be available later in the week.

With regard to previous questions and responses I have received related to the Waratah Reservoir -

- (1) In response to my question on 28 October, the Leader's answer noted that TasWater reduced the level of the Waratah Reservoir in accordance with the Water Management Act 1999, section 165G, because of an emergency situation. Under the act, a consequence category assessment is required. Please provide full details of this assessment that prompted TasWater to act.

ANSWER

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

The consequence category assessment for Waratah reservoir is significant. Details of how the assessment was reached is a matter for TasWater. TasWater discovered a leak, referred to as piping in the dam wall at Waratah Reservoir. A significant rain event was underway with further rainfall expected.

TasWater acted to reduce the water levels to below the piping event by 1.2 metres, by widening the spillway. TasWater informed the Dam Safety Regulator that works had been undertaken. TasWater undertook works under the Water Management Act, section 165G, Duty for safe operation of dam -

An owner of a dam must, so far as is reasonably practicable, maintain and operate the dam so as not to cause, or be likely to cause, material environmental harm or serious environmental harm or danger to any person or property.

At the completion of the emergency works, TasWater notified the regulator that works had been undertaken. The regulator determined the works did not need a permit in accordance with section 143 of the act as the dam works were required to maintain the structural integrity of the dam and the works were limited to such works as was necessary for that purpose.

TasWater has and continues to liaise regularly with the regulator in the management of the dam and we hope to have an answer to question (2) for you as soon as possible.

I note the member has been asking a lot of questions about the reservoir of late and the Government is happy to offer you a briefing if you so desire to take that offer.

Ms Forrest - Might like to brief the community.

Tasmania Police - Incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

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

[2.47 p.m.]

Police officers have experienced far more critical incidents in their careers than the average person. Beyond Blue's 'Answering the call', an Australian survey of 21 014 emergency services personnel, found post-traumatic stress disorder at the following rates. I am only going to refer to 4 per cent in adults in Australia and in police it was 11 per cent, which was the highest of any area within emergency services in the country.

As at a few weeks ago, there were 94 - that is, 7.1 per cent - Tasmania Police members on workers compensation claims, 39 for mental health issues. The questions I ask are -

- (1) Is the full extent of the prevalence of mental health in the department known?
- (2) What are the known causes of mental health issues within the Tasmania Police department?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his question. The answers to questions are -

- (1) Employees of the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management are not required to discuss their mental health issues with their employer. The department actively supports employees and encourages people to come forward if they are struggling and need assistance. Various strategies exist to assist employees when a mental health issue is identified and considerable effort is made both proactively and reactively to assist staff to deal with the nature of the work and issues that might arise in their personal lives.
- (2) We know that police, firefighters and other emergency service workers are susceptible to mental illness, both on account of the severity of incidents they attend and the cumulative effect of incidents attended over a long period of time. Emergency service work is, by its very nature, confronting, as the member would know.

The mental health of its employees is of fundamental importance to the department. The Tasmanian Government is providing funding of \$1.5 million per annum to increase both the proactive (preventative) services and the reactive (intervention) services.

Additionally, the department has concluded consultation with the Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan and will shortly release the final version of that plan.

Pharmacies - Sale of Scratchies

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

[2.49 p.m.]

My questions relate to the position of pharmacies becoming agents for gambling, in this case the selling of scratchies. Will the Leader please advise -

- (1) How many pharmacies in the state are licensed and permitted to sell scratchies.
- (2) If applicable, what is the location of these premises? One recently applied in George Town and was knocked back, thank goodness.
- (3) Are new application being made for licences and permits; if so, in what locations?

- (4) What criteria are necessary to be met in determining whether a licence or permit for an application will be granted for selling gambling products from pharmacies?

ANSWER

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

- (1) There are six pharmacies in Tasmania approved to sell scratchies.
- (2) The pharmacies currently approved to sell scratchies in Tasmania are the Friendly Care Pharmacy New Town; the Longford Chemmart Pharmacy; the New Norfolk Pharmacy; the Sorell Lucky Agency; Turnbolls Pharmacy in Sheffield; and the Youngtown Pharmacy.

Mr Dean - My next question is going to be: why are they allowed to sell them? Keep going.

Mrs HISCUTT - The answers continue as follows -

- (3) Presently there are no new applications for a pharmacy in Tasmania to sell scratchies.
- (4) Scratchies are sold in Tasmania under a Foreign Games Permit framework. The permit authorises the lottery operator, Golden Casket Lottery Corporation Limited, which is licensed in Queensland, to sell its products over the counter in Tasmania through locally accredited representatives.

A condition applies to Foreign Games Permits requiring new local representatives to be approved by the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commissioner. The commission can consider, amongst other factors, responsible gambling and harm minimisation when approving any new representatives.

The lottery operator is also bound by the legislation and conditions of its licence regulated by the other jurisdictions - in this case, it is Queensland.

Mr Dean - I am flabbergasted by the answer, Mr President, that a pharmacy where people go to get medicines to keep well is allowed to sell gambling products. I just do not believe it.

Ms Forrest - Mostly in the north, I might add.

Mr Dean - It is crazy, crazy stuff.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania - Huon Pine - Decline in Sawlogs

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

According to the Sustainable Timber Tasmania's annual report, the volume of Huon pine sawlogs applied for in 2019-20 was only 28 cubic metres. Additionally, the supply of sawlogs

from the traditional recovery area for Huon pine at Teepookana Plateau is now exhausted. Will the Leader please advise -

- (1) What is the estimated volume of millable - category 4 and utility - Huon pine sawlogs that will be supplied in the 2020-21 year?
- (2) How many years' supply of millable Huon pine sawlogs remain at Teepookana in areas classified as accessible?
- (3) What strategy does the Government propose to ensure an ongoing supply of the millable Huon pine sawlogs to Tasmania's boatbuilders, furniture makers and craftspeople once the supply at Teepookana is exhausted?

In previous years, Forestry Tasmania or Sustainable Timber Tasmania received approximately \$900 000 per year in Community Service Obligation - CSO – funding to 'identify, manage and harvest special species timber and manage the Huon pine log stockpile'. Can the Leader please advise -

- (1) How much CSO was expended on identifying, managing and harvesting special species timber in the 2019-20 year?
- (2) How much CSO funding was expended in managing the Huon pine stockpile in the 2019- 20 year?
- (3) How much CSO funding is allocated in the 2020-21 financial year to these tasks?

ANSWER

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

There are two parts; we will do the first part first.

- (1) It is estimated that the volume of Huon pine sawlogs that will be made available in 2020-21 is approximately 100 cubic metres, which will be sourced from the Strahan Huon pine stockpile.
- (2) Salvage harvesting on Teepookana Plateau has been occurring for over 25 years. There is one season's worth of accessible Huon pine salvage remaining on the Teepookana Plateau. Sustainable Timber Tasmania is currently reviewing areas previously deemed inaccessible.
- (3) The Government has identified the potential Huon pine resource available to industry and the mechanisms to access it by the Tasmanian Special Species Management Plan 2017, now called 'the management plan'.

The management plan noted that in 2015 there was an estimated 5315 cubic metres of Huon pine sawlogs and craft wood on Sustainable Timber Tasmania Permanent Timber Production Zone - PTPZ - land. The management plan also noted -

... based on recent and historic levels of demand for special species timbers, it is apparent that supply from couped-up areas of the PTPZ land will be insufficient to meet ongoing demand for special species sawlogs.

Opportunistic salvage from Macquarie Harbour into the Strahan, Huon pine stockpile will continue.

The answer to your second question -

- (1) In 2019-20, approximately \$1 million was expended on special species timber management. No CSO funds were expended on harvesting, consistent with the Government's policy of no subsidies for wood production.
- (2) In 2019-20, approximately \$110 000 was expended on managing the Huon pine stockpiles in Strahan.
- (3) In 2020-21, \$1 million is allocated to special species timber management.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2020 (No. 46)

In Committee

Resumed from above.

3.1 Housing Services -

Ms WEBB - I made mention of the answer to question (3), which provided figures for children under 15 years of age and children between 15 and 17 who presented to youth shelters in Tasmania and were unable to be assisted.

The first clarification I wanted was where it says the data does not reflect whether children or young people presented alone or were accompanied by an adult. Why do we not have that distinction to make, whether children are accompanied or unaccompanied by their parent or guardian, given we are talking about youth shelters?

Understanding that children will present with a parent to an adult shelter, but if we are talking about youth shelters, can we not assume children presenting to youth shelters are unaccompanied? That is the first part of that question, clarifying the answer to (3).

Part (3)(b) relates to how many were turned away because they were too young to receive a service. The answer given is 'Nil', young people are not turned away because they are too young. I would like clarification on that part. Our youth shelters do have a lower age limit. My question relates to children below the age limit of the shelter, who presented and who therefore were not able to receive a service.

I have characterised that in the question as being turned away, because presumably they are not able to be provided with the service if they fall below the lower cut-off. Can you clarify the answer of 'Nil'? Did no children under the lower cut-off age present to youth shelters in the state during that year or did some present and then were not provided with a service?

Mrs HISCUTT - The answer to the first part of your question: the data about people who are assisted and unassisted by the specialist homelessness services come from different data reports. Unassisted data is sourced from a system called Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data or specialist homelessness services data and reports. This data source shows only how many children or young people were not assisted and does not show if they presented alone or were accompanied by adults.

Assisted data is sourced from specialist homelessness services data, annual reports and confidentialised unit record files. The data source identifies young people presenting alone.

Ms Webb - Can I clarify something on that part of the answer? With the AIHW data of those who were unassisted - the numbers of children under 15 or between 15 and 17 - would those figures you have given me based on the AIHW data relate to all shelters in the state, not just youth shelters? Because if it includes accompanied and unaccompanied children and young people, presumably you are counting from all shelters.

Mrs HISCUTT - No, the response we gave was for youth shelters only so it is not for all.

Ms Webb - So you can draw from that data youth shelters opposed to adult shelters, but we cannot make an assumption that those who presented to youth shelters were unaccompanied by an adult?

Mrs HISCUTT - We are saying that, yes, you can make an assumption.

Ms Webb - You can infer that without it being explicit?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes. I will just start on the last sentence again. Assisted data is sourced from specialist homelessness services data, annual reports and confidentialised unit record files, and the data source identifies young people presenting alone. Unassisted data found that in 2019-20 there were 143 instances of children under 15 years of age and 436 instances of young people aged between 15 and 17 who presented to youth shelters in Tasmania and were unable to be assisted.

With regard to the second part of your question, we are unable to identify if these were accompanied or unaccompanied through the dataset, but it could be assumed that considering these -

Ms Webb - That is what we just discussed, yes.

Mrs HISCUTT - Assuming these children and young people were assisted by youth shelters, they were unaccompanied, yes. Would you like to clarify your second question then, please?

Ms Webb - It was in relation to the answer for (3)(b), which said 'Nil' in answer to how many were turned away because they were too young to receive a service, nil. Young people not turned away because they are too young. I asked a question to clarify that.

Mrs HISCUTT - I can read the answer again; I think that is the most we can give you. The data is not available for unaccompanied young people or children under the age of 16. The data is only available for the age groups zero to nine, 10 to 14, 15 to 17. Data is available on the number assisted. There were eight young people aged under 15 years and 113 young people aged between 16 and 17 who presented alone and were assisted and became clients of youth shelters in Tasmania in 2019. That is the grouping of the ages.

Ms Webb - You did not read that before, by the way.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, I know.

Ms WEBB - You were not repeating an answer. I am just going to absolutely clarify here - we do not have any data collected by youth shelters about children who are under the lower cut-off age who present for assistance and are not provided with assistance? We do not collect that data as a state even though it has been a matter of discussion for many years? Is that correct?

Mrs HISCUTT - We cannot break it down any further. We can only present the information to you as it is given to us.

Ms WEBB - The answer is no to that one. Just to utterly clarify the way the answer has been presented in (3)(b) to me where it says 'Nil,' but then it goes on to say, 'Young people are not turned away because they are too young.'

Explain to me what happens if an 11-year-old or 12-year-old presents to a shelter that does not take children below the age of 13. What happens in those circumstances, in this state, to those children if they are not turned away?

We do not count them. We do not know how many there are, because you do not collect the data as a state. If they are not turned away, as per this answer, what happens?

Madam CHAIR - Before you sit down, member for Nelson, do you have other questions on this output group? There are a couple of other items you have questions on.

Ms WEBB - No, I do not.

Madam CHAIR - I will give you a chance to have a quick look, in case you have.

Ms WEBB - No, I do not.

Mrs HISCUTT - They are referred to other services.

Ms WEBB - Which services are they referred to? More detail, thank you.

Mrs HISCUTT - I will seek some advice.

Ms Webb - I would like to hear. I would like to be aware of what services they are referred to, because I know there are virtually none. What services, and in what regions,? If they have been referred to services, how come we have not counted those referrals?

Mrs HISCUTT - Other services could include places like other shelters, other family members, other youth services, maybe the police.

Ms Webb - If we can say for sure they have been referred to those other services - such as the ones you have just listed - why do we not know how many there are, if we can say for sure they have been referred?

Mrs HISCUTT - Because they are not recorded.

[

Ms Webb - Right, we send them off into the ether.

Output agreed to.

Outputs 90.1 and 90.10 agreed to.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Minister for Disability Services and Community Development -

Output Group 4

Disability Services and Community Development

4.2 Disability Services -

Ms SIEJKA - I did get the answer, and I appreciate that, but I just want some clarification. The details provided relate to the funding for certain disability organisations, but a lot of the information in the answer refers to Commonwealth funding, when I was particularly interested in what those organisations received in the last financial year, and what they will now receive in this Budget, because that is not clear.

Mrs HISCUTT - I will take that on notice, because it will be in the Budget Papers somewhere. We do not have it here, and I will have to search for that information.

Ms SIEJKA - It is not broken down, though, in the Budget Papers. That is the thing.

Mrs HISCUTT - I do not know.

Output agreed to.

Output 4.3 agreed to.

Outputs 90.11 and 90.16 agreed to.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs -

Output Group 4

Disability Services and Community Development

4.6 Veterans' Affairs -

Mr DEAN - The member for Launceston also looked at and considered this matter during Estimates. In asking this question, I need to be careful, because I am a returned serviceman, a veteran, as well, so I need to put that on the record.

In relation to the answers provided to us by the minister in relation to the concessions for veterans, gold card holders, pensioner card holders and so on - she has given us a full list, which is good and appreciated. Public transport has been an area of concern to gold card holders and veterans for a long time.

In New South Wales, they provide free transport, from memory, certainly on trains. Also, in Victoria there is free public transport. Has the Government considered looking at expanding the concessions for public transport to apply to gold card holders? These are veterans who served in war zones. Has this been or will it be considered?

Ms ARMITAGE - Before the Leader answers, if I could expand, which would probably save the Leader time. I thank her for the further answers we received this afternoon. I am not sure whether the member saw all those further answers.

Mr Dean - No, I probably did not.

Ms ARMITAGE - No, I thought you might not have, but that is all right. When you look at a pensioner concession card and who qualifies for a pensioner concession card, it is old-age pensioners, people who are over a certain age, certainly quite a lot of people. When you look at the list we received today of what a pensioner concession card - PCC - receives, there are four pages.

There are many concessions, whereas even with a gold card - I know the member for Windermere mentions the gold card, but with many of them you actually have to have TPI written on that gold card. A gold card recipient who actually left Australia and actually went to a theatre of war - there are so few concessions they actually receive in comparison to a pensioner concession card.

My question is along the lines of the member, but it is also about the concessions they receive already, the TPI members, so very few for a gold card - rates, for example, a 30 per cent reduction et cetera, if a gold card is inscribed with TPI or war widow or war widower. Even when you are giving it to a gold card concession holder, very few actually are going to get it, unless they are totally and permanently incapacitated.

Mr Dean - The state and Commonwealth, did you look at that side of it?

Ms ARMITAGE - The state, absolutely. The pensioner concession cards are federal so it does not make a lot of difference.

Mrs HISCUTT - Public transport is free to gold card holders in Tasmania.

Mr Dean - It does not say that is a given?

Ms Armitage - Only if they are TPI. I have your answers here. DVA gold card - sorry.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, the answer relates to DVA card holders, yes.

Ms Armitage - Yes, but as long as they are TPI.

Mr Dean - Yes.

Ms Armitage - I have here the answer you sent me this afternoon.

Mrs HISCUTT - Okay. We will just think about that while I read the rest.

Ms Armitage - I can show you what you have written.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is here. It is okay. Thank you anyway. There are regular ongoing discussions across jurisdictions to look at concessions for veterans to try to obtain consistency. The Government is happy to continue to look at getting these more consistent across the country. I hear what you say about -

Ms Armitage - Not going to do anything.

Mrs HISCUTT - It answers to DVA card holders.

Mr Dean - The document provided by the minister to us simply says, as the member for Launceston is saying, a DVA gold card can get public transport free only if it is embossed with total and permanent incapacitation - TPI, or extreme disablement adjustment - EDA, and they are entitled to free travel, not a gold card holder.

Mrs HISCUTT - We are looking to make it consistent with New South Wales and other jurisdictions.

Mr Dean - We are.

Mrs HISCUTT - What was originally in the answer is correct.

Mr DEAN - Just to get this clear, further progress is being made in relation to a gold card holder, that they will be entitled to free public transport in this state, that is what is being considered.

Ms Armitage - If they are not TPI.

Mr DEAN - Yes, just a holder without any adjustments, without any -

Ms Armitage - What about all the others?

Mr DEAN - Leader, what stage are we at if it is being considered? Where are we at this stage? Can we understand or know when it is likely to come in?

I have had a number of inquiries in relation to this and other matters.

Ms Armitage - There are four pages.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, it is being looked into and there are ongoing discussions.

Ms ARMITAGE - With regard to all the other concessions, such as the Bass Strait islands' travel concession, *Spirit of Tasmania* cabin fares, Bruny Island taxi travel, electricity, heating, rates, water and sewerage but many of the others that the PCCs get that the gold card holders do not get. Are they also being looked at?

Apart from just the public transport, and as the member for Windermere said with New South Wales, I know that in Victoria they give free airport transport on the Skybus to gold card holders and not TPI. Are we looking at myriad other concessions? As I said, there is actually four-and-a-half pages here that a PCC gets. I do not have a problem with them getting it, but I just feel that the DVAs should at least be on an equal footing.

Are we looking at that as well and where are we at with it?

Mrs HISCUTT - You would know that the Minister for Veterans' Affairs is very passionate about this and there are ongoing discussions all the time trying to get consistency across the country.

Ms Armitage - Passion is one thing but action is another.

Output agreed to.

Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence -

Output Group 5

Safe Homes, Families, Communities

5.1 Safe Homes, Families, Communities: Tasmania's action plan for family and sexual violence 2019-2022 -

Ms LOVELL - Whilst advisers are coming to the table, just a point of clarification: do we have three speaks on each output line or on each question?

Madam CHAIR - On each line item. If you have several questions on one line, you will need to ask them and hope the Leader can keep up.

Ms LOVELL - Thank you. My question is in relation to a question posed during hearings to the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence into what the minister was doing individually, or personally, to ensure that the Government's commitment of a low-cost termination of pregnancy clinic was established.

The response we have received is basically the Government line that we receive any time this issue is raised - that advice is being sought through the Minister for Health, that it is important to be clear that affordable and accessible terminations are available for Tasmanian women. I would dispute that point strongly. I think for some Tasmanian women, yes, you can access a surgical termination of pregnancy at an affordable rate. If you are lucky to live in Hobart, for example, it might be accessible to you, but for somebody living in the north-west,

or the north-east or indeed the north, it is not as easy. I accept that 'accessible' may be a somewhat subjective term; certainly in my view it is far from accessible.

The answer then goes on to say that -

The Tasmanian Government provides funding through the Women's Health Fund and the Youth Health Fund to assist women in accessing a full range of pregnancy and reproductive health services, including contraception and termination care outside of the public system as well as access to medical and surgical terminations and long acting reversible contraceptives.

I understand that. I know that this fund is administered through a number of very excellent organisations that do some really fantastic work in this space. Again, my point would be that if terminations were accessible in the public system, we would not need to fund these organisations and this is just another barrier for women who have to find an organisation to assist them.

A number of dot points go on to basically conclude by saying that negotiations were held with an interstate provider that was planning to provide terminations in Tasmania if it were able to source a suitable facility; that Hampton Park, the organisation, was unable to find such a facility, has not been in contact with the department for some time, and that the department stands ready to work with them should they pursue this option in the future.

I will rephrase my question or put the question again that I put to the minister in the hearings. Coercive control in reproductive matters and in the instance of pregnancy and termination of pregnancy is a form of family violence. Given there is data and research to show that women are at greater risk of family violence in areas where there is no or low access to termination of pregnancy, what is the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence proactively doing to ensure that women across Tasmania have access to low-cost surgical termination of pregnancy without having to travel many hours to a clinic at the other end of the state? For women in a vulnerable situation or women who might be living in a family violence situation, that is not an option. That is just not an option. It is not accessible if you cannot leave your home even if someone else is paying for it. If you cannot leave your home for even a day, maybe two days, maybe three days, that is not an option.

What is the minister doing? Will the minister advocate for women to have access to surgical terminations through the public hospital system? What is the minister doing proactively to engage with service providers to ensure that the low-cost termination clinic that was promised to Tasmanian women is delivered?

Mrs HISCUTT - Thank you for your lengthy in-depth question. I am reliably informed that terminations are the department of the Health minister and I cannot answer those questions for you with the advisers I have because it is a health-related question.

Ms LOVELL - I will put the question again, because my question is to the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence: what is he doing personally, proactively, to ensure that women can access low-cost terminations? It might be that he advocates to the Minister for Health. It might be that he advocates around the Cabinet table. If the answer is that he is doing nothing, you can say that. That can be the answer. That is my question: what is he doing as the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence specifically on this issue?

Mrs HISCUTT - Evidently during Estimates he said he would discuss it with the Health minister. I cannot answer your question.

Ms Lovell - He did and this is the answer. He took it on notice and said that he would and this is the answer he has come back with.

Mrs HISCUTT - I and the people here at the table are not privy to Cabinet discussions. I personally cannot answer that question other than what the Premier has said during Estimates.

Output agreed to.

Output 90.7 agreed to

Division 2 agreed to without request and without amendment.

DIVISION 3

(Department of Education)

Minister for Education and Training -

**Output Group 1
Education**

1.1 In School Education -

Mr WILLIE - As far as I know these answers have not been provided to our committee so I will ask the questions again.

The number of students referred to speech pathologists in 2019 and the current ratio of speech pathologists to students? This question is of particular relevance because during our hearing the minister announced that a phonics screening trial for year 1s conducted in 30 schools will be made available to all schools. It will not be mandatory. My understanding is our schools will be able to access it, and speech pathologists are key to that.

If you are going to screen kids in year 1, schools need to have access to speech and language pathologists, experts in their field, to be part of the intervention.

There are expert teachers in languages, but we know that speech pathology has a key role in our education system. In the annual report - I think I know some of the answers that will be coming forward - there are only 49.65 FTE speech pathologists across our whole system.

We are extending this screening test availability to all schools. Do we have the resources in our schools to be able to intervene effectively and use that data for further teaching and learning opportunities? They are the two questions.

Madam CHAIR - Before the member sits down, you might want to ask the others because you only have three calls.

Mr WILLIE - The other ones are related to different fields. Do we want to keep it to the same topic?

Madam CHAIR - You have only three calls so you want to use them to the full effect.

Mr WILLIE - I will ask all my questions in this output.

Madam CHAIR - That way you can respond to the answers.

Mr WILLIE - I will ask all the questions in this output our committee put to the minister -

- The attendance numbers at extension schools by school at the beginning of 2019 and the end of 2019?
- The number of students referred to school psychologists, nurses and social workers?
- The following data for years 2016 to 2020 -
 - (a) figures on bullying;
 - (b) number and percentage of suspensions;
 - (c) the number of -
 - (i) student-on-student assaults or physical violence;
 - (ii) student-on-teacher assaults;
 - (iii) student suspensions for bullying, harassment or stalking or other students;
 - (iv) student suspensions for bullying, harassing or stalking staff members;
 - (v) student suspensions by grade;
 - (vi) incidents reported to police;
 - (vii) reported sexual assaults;
 - (viii) family violence notifications made by schools; and
 - (ix) child safety notifications made by schools.

The minister gave an explanation in our hearing that he will be able to provide those to me in writing in March because the data has not been formalised yet. I am happy to accept that. That is for the updated figures for 2020. I already have the 2016-19 figures, but I want this year's figures. I asked some questions in the hearing in addition to those I previously asked -

What were the -

- truancy numbers in Tasmania for 2019 as well as a comment on the efficacy of current anti-truancy measures;
- number of conciliation conferences for the past year and the number of students with a disability that have participated in the conferences;
- number of individual students who have been suspended multiple times; and
- current number of acting principals and deputy principals and a comparison with last year's figure?

They are the questions that the committee put to the minister. We are yet to receive a response for any of those.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am seeking advice.

- (1) There were 1838 students referred to speech pathologists. Please note that this figure is approximate only as DoE does not currently have a central electronic system for calculating this information. Centralised data collection should be significantly enhanced with the development and introduction of the new case load management system announced as part of this year's Budget.
- (2) Regarding speech pathologists. A response to this query was provided and accepted during Estimates; see pages 17 and 18 of *Hansard* transcript for Budget Estimates for 26 November 2020.
- (3) About the attendance numbers at extension schools. Student FTE enrolments at extension schools in 2019, Census 1 and Census 2 is quite lengthy. Does the member want me to go through that?

Mr Willie - If you could possibly table it? We would not mind a copy now though so we can contribute to the debate.

Mr Dean - From these answers, there will be a lot of other questions. I have a number of other questions anticipating the answers.

Mrs HISCUTT - What do you want me to do? Either table it or answer it?

Madam CHAIR - If it is a table of numbers, it is probably better to table it and have it circulated to members.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes.

Madam CHAIR - It depends on what time you want to finish tonight.

Mrs HISCUTT - We have to get a certain amount of work done. What does the member for Elwick want? It was your question.

Mr WILLIE - I am happy for you to table it; and if you circulate it now while you are answering the rest of the questions, we will probably have it.

Mrs HISCUTT - We will get that to happen.

Mr WILLIE - Thank you.

Mrs HISCUTT - Madam Chair, I seek leave to table a document.

Leave granted.

Mrs HISCUTT - I request that it is photocopied and circulated to members. Moving on while that happens -

(4) The numbers of students referred to school psychologists, nurses and social workers. Please note the figures I am about to present are approximate only as DoE does not currently have a central electronic system. That case load management system will be coming in with this year's Budget -

- Social work - the data is not available for either Learning Services Southern Region or Learning Services Northern Region.
- School psychology - from February 2019 to July 2019, approximately 1015 students were referred for assessment and/or assessment review in Learning Services Southern Region. Information on counselling referrals was not recorded in 2019 in LSSR. The data is not available for Learning Services Northern Region. Then we talked about nurses.

Mr Willie - Is there an explanation why it is not available?

Mrs HISCUTT - Let me finish and then I will have a talk -

- Nurses - 2019, referrals for the School Health Nurse Program - SHNP - include referrals from parents, teachers, others, as well as student self-referrals, and totalled 2351. There is a footnote that says -

DoE is unable to provide exact numbers due to limitations with the current student support system'

What was your question while I am standing?

Mr Willie - Why the data was not available for school psychologist referrals in Learning Services North?

Mrs HISCUTT - It is work that has not been done but when it is centrally collected, it will be there then. There is additional information there if you want me to read it out. This says it will be made available in March 2021.

Additional data requested for 2016-19 -

The number of incidents reported to police - this information is not available as the data is currently not collected centrally.

The number of reported sexual assaults since 2016. There have been 11 cases in which allegations against employees involve sexual conduct. Please note the nature of these allegations may vary from verbal to physical. Anything that may involve criminal acts has been reported to Tasmania Police.

The number of family violence notifications made by schools. The answer is the same - the information is not available as the data is currently not collected centrally.

The number of child safety notifications - it is the same answer there. This will be sorted when the budget for the central collective service begins in March 2021.

Truancy numbers - in 2019, on average each day, 0.1 per cent of students - that is, about 62 students - were recorded as absent for the reason 'truant' by government schools. Absent rates reported as truant have been less than 0.1 percentage points since 2016. Table 9 - absence rates reported for the reason 'truant'. For prep to year 10, I will say four figures - it starts at 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. For 2016, it was 0.05 per cent; then 0.05 per cent, 0.04 per cent, and then 0.10 per cent in 2019. Years 11 and 12 starting at 2016 was 0.04 per cent; 0.04 per cent; 0.10 per cent; ending in 2019 with 0.10 per cent.

The department in partnership with parents and other agencies is committed to improving student attendance through a range of strategies and curriculum supports, including -

- engaging with parents and students through programs like Learning in Families Together and My Education;
- offering a range of educational pathways to meet students' individual needs along with such things as vocational education, training in schools and school-based apprenticeships;
- providing three student engagement officers who work closely with schools across the state to support the development of flexible provisions that meet the needs of young people who are not engaged in learning; and
- committing to the Back on Track pilot which aims to reconnect with students and address the barriers to learning; the pilot is operating in the north-west and south with the Hellyer and Derwent/Claremont collectives, where a multidisciplinary team consisting of a social worker, an advanced skills teacher and a youth engagement officer are currently engaging with young people in each region.

Compulsory conciliation conferences are conducted by the Education Registrar in accordance with the Education Act. Further work on engagement will take place throughout 2021.

Question (7) talks about conciliation conferences. Between 1 January 2020 and 27 November 2020, the Office of the Education Registrar has held 130 conciliation conferences. Of these, 15 involved children who have a disability as defined in the Education Act 2016, where the disability was one of the reasons for the referral.

Question (8) is about suspension multiple times or being suspended more than once.

The following is a breakdown of the number of students with one or more suspensions between 2016 and 2019, with the statistics for 2020 to be provided in March 2021 -

- In the calendar year 2016, students with only one suspension - 1616; students with multiple suspensions - 1357; and the total number of suspended students - 2973.
- In 2017, students with only one suspension - 1579; students with multiple suspensions - 1474; and the total number of suspended students - 3053.
- In 2018, students with only one suspension - 1681; students with multiple suspensions - 1483; and the total number of suspended students - 3164.
- In 2019, students with only one suspension 1674; students with multiple suspensions 1548; and the total number of suspended students - 3222.

Mr DEAN - This is where it makes it very hard. We are given this information. I am a disappointed we were not provided with this information earlier, because I would not have thought it would have been that difficult to get.

We are told that the Edi program was the duck's guts, to use that expression, of the system within the Education department, and just about brought everything together. It was easy, quick, right across the state. It was sold to us as being an absolutely wonderful system.

I would have thought that a lot of this information would have been available to us earlier than this. Just makes it tough. Doing the best I can in the circumstances.

During the questioning of the minister in the Estimates, I raised the issue of two schools in the member for Mersey's area. These schools are within about 800 metres of each other. You can just about handshake across the boundaries of Devonport High School and Reece High School.

Devonport High School, we have 1.8 students who ended up being only two students in years 11 and 12.

The information I had been given for Reece High School was corrected when I questioned the minister. Reece had 3.8 at the beginning of the year, and 3.9 at the end of the year.

My question from that is: what is the cost of having only those two students at Devonport High at the end of 2019? What was the actual cost to the Education department of having those one or two students there? What is the cost to the Education department in having those 3.9 students at Reece High? In those cases where these schools are so close, has the department looked at bringing them together, for years 11 and 12 at least?

What is the capacity of Don College? If you know what its capacity is, what are the current numbers at Don College, which is also about 3 kilometres away from Reece High, and

probably about 2 kilometres from Devonport High? They are all very close, these three. If I can be given those answers, thank you.

I was trying to write down some figures in relation to the multiple suspensions that have occurred. If we look across the state, I think I have most of them right. The multiple suspensions have continued to escalate. Correct me if I am wrong, Leader; you have the figures there. In the first year, you mentioned there were about 1357 multiple suspensions. The next year, 1474 multiple suspensions. The year after that, 1483 - and 1548 in 2019. I think I recorded those figures right. Those multiple suspension figures are continuing to go up. What are we doing to try to counter that, and get some changes here? How many multiple suspensions do we have with a student before some real positive action is being taken?

How much of the school's time is being taken in managing truancy and these suspensions, and so on? Is it not high time that we re-engage truancy officers into the Education department, as one assistant principal has asked me to raise here today, saying it is not the duty of teachers? They are not employed for the purpose of chasing up truant students, and/or students who are being suspended. That is not their job. Their job is teaching, and they are concerned about it.

Mrs HISCUTT - There were quite a few questions in that, which we are addressing.

You asked what are we doing about truancy. I did read that earlier. Did you want me to -

Mr Dean - No, I do not need you to read it again. I will take that from *Hansard*.

Mrs HISCUTT - There are five dot points. They are things that are being done.

Mr Dean - And the multiple suspensions?

Mrs HISCUTT - We are just getting the answers to some of your other ones. The member asked about time. Time is difficult to allocate because it involves more than the teacher. It could be the assistant principal who does a lot of work on this type of matter. It could be social workers, or office workers; it is not just the teacher.

I know as an office worker when I was working in a school, my first job in the morning was to ring people to check if they were okay and if they were coming in. It is hard to allocate that to an exact teacher.

The per capita funding allocation for years 11 to 12 extension schools for 2020, including capital funding, is \$23 377 per FTE. That figure is based on a per enrolment, variable cost using the fair up funding model for both cash and staffing. However, the figure is inflated by the capital funding allocation. As the capital allocation will benefit year 11 and 12 cohorts well into the future, it is not appropriate to apportion these costs to students in 2020.

The more appropriate figure, without the capital component, is \$20 089 per student.

Mr Dean - The question was: What is the cost of having 1.8 students at Devonport High? What is the cost for those two students at Devonport High? What is the total cost of having them there, and the total cost of having 3.8 or 3.9 at Reece? What is the cost in each of those schools to have them there? Josh, you might have answered it.

Mrs HISCUTT - Madam Chair, it is very hard to allocate it because the figure is allocated to a system. We have here a figure of \$20 089 per student, but that covers a lot of other things. I do not believe it is a simple matter of multiplying that figure by 1.9 or 3.8 or anything like that. It is more complicated than that.

Mr WILLIE - I can help the Leader with the member's question about Devonport High School. My information is from a right to information request, because I was also interested in the resource going into extension schools.

At the census date at the start of the year, there were two enrolments which is pretty close to this document. The school was allocated \$186 004 towards their school resources package. They were also provided a teaching allocation - 1 FTE base grade teacher and an AST at 0.5. So, 1.5 teachers were allocated as well.

Regarding Reece High, there were 1.75 enrolments at the first census, I think. This might not be correct, but in the document I have it was \$186 004 - the same allocation for the school resources package and the same allocation for the teaching resource.

The member might also be interested about schools that had zero enrolments but had resources allocated to them. I was later given clarification that the resource had been withdrawn from those schools because they did not have an enrolment.

That information might help the member with his line of questioning. I am happy for the Leader to correct it; it is an RTI I had at the start of the year and it does not include the second census date. However, it does show significant resource allocations to enrolments.

The Leader talked about the student database system being problematic, regarding the retrieval of some of this data. There were just over 1300 referrals to speech pathologists. I will not go through all the referral numbers, but there were around 2000 referrals to nurses.

How was that data captured if you cannot retrieve all of it? The statement was that a new case management system will help retrieve this data more effectively. I am interested in how that information was retrieved with the current data system. The explanation was that you cannot retrieve all of it. What sort of robustness is around it with those figures you gave? What methodology was used to recall that data? A little more explanation would be helpful.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is based on a referral system. However, not everybody who attends is captured from a referral; some of it could be an emergency. This figure captures referrals to a speech pathologist, whereas there may be others who actually attend, but there is no referral. That information will now be captured on the new data system. There is also group work undertaken by a speech pathologist, which is not captured under the referral system.

Mr WILLIE - My question is whether referrals are being made that are not being captured at the moment in the data.

Mrs HISCUTT - I will seek advice on that question but before I sit, is there anything else you would like to know? At this stage, there is room for error because the figure is reliant on people - specialists - entering that information. When the new data collection system comes up, that will record everything. Some people are too busy to do it.

Mr Willie - Will there be formal protocols around the new data system? There may be a teacher that has a conversation with a speech pathologist on the way into school. Will that be counted as a referral?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, a much better system and more accurate figures will come out of it.

Ms RATTRAY - I share the disappointment the member for Windermere expressed about not being able to have this information. I understand we had the Minister for Education on Thursday, and we had our meeting on Friday, the week after that, so that only allowed five days -

Mr Dean - I think it was on Thursday, was it not?

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, Thursday, sorry, so that is effectively five days before we met. We have had some information trickle in after that meeting, but this was not included. I have been here a while now, but I find it interesting that some of the questions asked, particularly those asked by the member for Windermere, are perennial questions. He asks them every year so I am not sure.

Madam CHAIR - They should be ready.

Ms RATTRAY - I would have thought that many of those questions would be able to be answered given that we know exactly what the member for Windermere is going to ask and if he does not ask it, you can rest assured another member of the committee will be asking it. That is my input into the process.

In regard to the enrolments at extension schools, why is there no data available for Dover District, King Island District, Kingston, New Town, Ogilvie, Winnaleah and Triabunna District high schools? There has to be someone in those schools who knows how many students are in the extension school. As the member for Elwick read out, they get an allocation of funding so in my view 'NA' just is not good enough for a school not to provide that information to the Education department. Who in Learning Services in their particular area - north or south - is not doing their work, not following up? It says 'NA' - that is not available, isn't it?

Mr Dean - They might not be online yet.

Mr Willie - Some have not extended and then the 'NA' might be that there are no enrolments.

Ms RATTRAY - Winnaleah has extended; I know that for a fact.

Mr Willie - They might not have enrolments.

Ms RATTRAY - 'NA' - is that not available or is that no-one there? That would be 'No' wouldn't it? If it is zero, it is zero, not NA; I need an explanation around 'NA'. Is that the case because this says 'extension schools' so the extension schools that are not yet online would not be in this list. That would be my assessment.

Mr Dean - You are right.

Ms RATTRAY - I might be wrong. I have been wrong once before.

Mr Dean - I think you are right; they would not be on the list.

Ms RATTRAY - No, they would not be on the list. Extension schools in 2019.

Mr Dean - Queechy is not there and that is not on yet.

Ms RATTRAY - I am aware of some of these schools that are extension schools.

My second question, while I go through my three calls, is about the acting principals and deputy principals. I know that is a question which is asked every year, so what are Learning Services north and south doing with their time if they do not know how many current acting principals and deputy principals they have in their school system? I will leave the others because they belong in the next output group.

Mrs HISCUTT - With the first part of your question, the 'NA' means not applicable - and we have just decided that next year there will be either a dash or a figure but not an NA, but that is what it means, it is not applicable. It is because they have not moved onto an extension school at some stage or schools like Dover have their years 11 and 12 going to Huonville. It is all about choice for the students, where they want to go and what they want to study. Point noted - the 'NA' next year will be something different or something easier to understand.

The answer to your second part about acting principals. Between October 2019 and 2020 - this is beginning at term 4 - 23 non-substantive principals were acting in principal positions in October 2019, and in October 2020, there were 21, so there was a variance of -2 there. Substantive principals acting in another principal position: in October 2019, there were two, and in October 2020, 10, so there was a variance of +8. The total was 25 in October 2019, and 31 in October 2020, which was a variance of 6.

Now onto acting assistant principals in schools. Between October 2019 and 2020, beginning of term 4, the total headcount in October 2019 was 93; in October 2020 it was 95. There was a variance of 2 at that point.

Mr DEAN - I want to ask some further questions here. We have here that it is not applicable - well, Queechy is not online yet. They are not referred to here as 'not applicable'. Queechy is coming online at the end of next year. I am not sure what the 'NA' does mean. I do not think anybody can really tell me, quite frankly

I thank the shadow minister for Education for answering the question, and that is the real cost of having one or two students at Devonport High School and the real cost of having four students at the Reece High School. It is more like the figures that have been provided - \$186 000, which I guess would cover the teachers - the 1.5 teachers?

Mr Willie - No, that is separate; there are two separate -

Mr DEAN - That is on top of that? My question is: Is that good value? Does it make economic sense? What does it do for Education where all these other students in the state would be missing out on funding, to provide this money simply for two students at one school and four students at another school?

I support the concept, and I have always said that, but I cannot support it when these schools are within a drop kick of each other.

When New Town High School and Ogilvie High School become co-educational, which is going to happen next year or very quickly, they almost have a common back boundary so will we see both those high schools running years 11 and 12 as well? You can talk to each other across the fence at those two schools.

I am wondering where we are going with all this. Just how much thought has been put into this? Is it good value and what is the real cost of having two students at one school and four at another?

I will leave it at that and other members can take up the argument.

Mrs HISCUTT - In 2022 all high schools will extend and the particular ones you spoke about sharing a back boundary will work together. They will not both offer the same courses; it will be a partnership.

These things are yet to unfold but there is a plan and it is wrapped around that. There will not be duplication.

Mr Dean - Do we have the answer to the question about Don College? Is Don College at capacity? What is the capacity of Don College?

Mrs HISCUTT - Don College is at 67 per cent. Total capacity is 1100 students and it currently has 742.2 students.

Mr Dean - So it still has plenty of capacity to certainly take four students?

Mr WILLIE - My question was around the conciliation conferences. There were 130 in the current year and 15 were with students who had an identified disability.

I hope the system is not penalising students and families for having a disability in terms of their not attending school, possibly because their needs are not being met at school and then they are being thrown into this process, which is the starting point, potentially, to court.

What support is being given to those 15 students and their families in the conciliation conference, and what supports are given to them to reintegrate into school after a lengthy period of absenteeism?

Mrs HISCUTT - During the time we put the Education Act through here, I remember I was talking about that very thing, as opposed to the carrot and the stick.

The reconciliation process is how do the people - social workers, schoolteachers and parents - work together to help this particular child with the needs that are necessary. When we say conciliation, it is more: how are we going to work together to move forward with this particular situation, as opposed to the big stick? It is a carrot. If you can do this, we can do that, and we can help this child get to what they need - so it is working together as to how they can move forward for the betterment of the child.

Mr WILLIE - They are not attending school, possibly because their needs are not being met, so are additional resources provided to the school to help meet their needs as part of that conciliation conference? That is my question. What supports are being given to the families in those conciliation conferences?

Mrs HISCUTT - Each child has an individual package. It is worked through with the teachers. I imagine the child would be part of that, and the parents, as to what the particular student needs to get back into education.

That may involve a range of activities that can assist. The consolidation process is there to identify those, and make sure everybody is on the same page, and then to try to work forward so that the student can then re-enter the Education system and keep their education.

Ms RATTRAY - I am just processing the answer the Leader provided around my assumption that 'NA' meant 'not available', and yet -

Mrs Hiscutt - It was not only your assumption. Other members have said the same thing, so it needed clarification.

Ms RATTRAY - It is not applicable. I just want to make it perfectly clear in my mind that 'NA' - not applicable - means there were no students in 2019 undertaking year 11 or 12, in these schools that have 'NA'. Is that what I am understanding here?

I have not checked my particular schools that are on this list. There is only one actually, and that is my former school, Winnaleah. I just want some absolute clarity around that.

Also, with regard to the number of acting senior positions - principals and deputy principals - how long do those positions remain in the acting arrangement before someone has to make a decision about what they intend to do, so that it either allows somebody else to move into that position in a substantive role, or they go back to doing what they were previously doing?

I am interested in how long the department allows this to go on for. I know it is a bit of a domino effect. Somebody gets another position, acting, and then somebody else comes in to their position, so everyone lifts up. It must be very confusing and, I suggest, somewhat unsettling for people not to know how long this arrangement will take place for.

I understand sickness and illness, but I am not sure that a lot of these numbers - significant numbers such as 93, 95 and the like - would relate to sickness. I am interested in that question as well.

Mrs HISCUTT - We have to remember that what I read out to you earlier, or what you have, is for 2019. All these schools offer extensions, but they may not necessarily have had a student enrolled at their school doing that.

Ms RATTRAY - That is exactly what that means. That in 2019, for instance - let me look at a really good example - there were no students enrolled at Dover District School or Triabunna District School. There were no years 11 or 12.

Mrs HISCUTT - This is a new reporting system, but that is how we understand that. They could have had students the year before or the year after, but this is reporting for 2019.

The other thing was, and we will seek some official advice -

Ms RATTRAY - On the acting arrangement.

Mrs HISCUTT - The acting position is usually months, but it could be up to two years. We will get official advice and follow up that one.

Output agreed to.

Recommittal of Division

Mr DEAN - Madam Chair, I want to raise an issue, if I can. What is the position in respect of recommitting a division we have closed off? Is there any opportunity to do that? I ask that because I believe some information I was given this morning by the Government was incorrect. Is there an opportunity to go back and recommit a division that has been closed off?

Madam CHAIR - I will just clarify the appropriate process. Can you indicate which output group it is?

Mr DEAN - Yes, I can. It relates to Division 2, Sport and Recreation, the North Melbourne position.

Madam CHAIR - Member for Windermere, we do not know how long the rest of this is going to take, but it would be perhaps an appropriate time to do it when the Minister for Sport and Recreation is back in the Chamber, which may be tomorrow, we assume.

It can be recommitted at a time that is convenient. Certainly before the end of consideration of this bill.

Mr DEAN - Thank you. I will wait, then, for the return of the Minister for Sport and Recreation. The shadow minister here again has helped me with that as well. Thank you for that advice.

Mrs HISCUTT - Just for clarification. If the minister for Sport does not return - I do know she is going to her GP - what will happen?

Madam CHAIR - It will be recommitted anyway, and you will be required to answer the question. You will need to get your advisers.

Mrs HISCUTT - Okay, so it does not require having the minister here. Are you okay with that?

Mr Dean - Yes.

Madam CHAIR - We will do it at a later time.

Mrs HISCUTT - Perhaps we could touch base with the member for Windermere, just to make sure we have clarity on your question, so that we can get that answer.

Madam CHAIR - We need to do it before we finish this bill, though, because we have the next bill to do after this one.

Mrs HISCUTT - Member for Windermere, if you are not involved coming up, you might want to pen something to my executive officer. Thank you.

1.2 School Support Services -

Ms RATTRAY - This question was the breakdown of learning services FTEs by north and south regions. I asked the question and have not received an answer.

Mrs HISCUTT - Can the member please ask her question again?

Madam CHAIR - I understand this is a question taken on notice and no response has been provided. It is in the list of questions provided to the minister.

Mrs HISCUTT - I have the answer for the member. The FTEs and the first figure I will read will be March 2019, and the second figure will be March 2020.

For the northern region, for March 2019 and for March 2020, it is 35.20 and 36.90. The southern region - March 2019 is 28.50; March 2020 is 36.04.

Headcount, northern region, March 2019 is 36, and March 2020 is 38. Southern region headcount, March 2019 is 29. and March 2020 is 40.

Output agreed to.

Outputs 1.3 and 1.4 agreed to

Output Group 2 Libraries Tasmania

2.1 Information Services and Community Learning -

Ms RATTRAY - The question I posed through the Estimates process and then on notice, was the total cost of implementing the name change from LINC to Libraries Tasmania is still outstanding. I am overwhelmed by the numbers I received for the Learning Services South.

Mrs HISCUTT - It was \$250 000.

Madam CHAIR - I invite the member for Elwick to ask his question related to TAFE.

Mr WILLIE - The current number of apprentices and a comparison with previous year. That question was put on notice because in Estimates, I highlighted the drop in contact hours for courses and was told that because there was an uptake in apprentices that that would correlate with a drop in hours at TAFE. If that answer could be provided, it would be appreciated because it has not been provided to the committee to date.

Mrs HISCUTT - The number of apprentices and trainees in training with TasTAFE as at 30 September for the past four years - I will start at 2017, 2018, 2019 and then 2020. The first figure for 2017 is 4153; 2018 is 4474; 2019 is 4995; and 2020 is 4898.

Mr WILLIE - Why was the 2017 date picked?

Mrs HISCUTT - Pardon?

Mr WILLIE - Why was the 2017 date picked, to go from that date? I do not think we asked that in the question. I am interested in why that date was picked out and why not further back?

Mrs HISCUTT - Because your question was what were they as at 30 September for the past four years.

Mr Willie - Right. Okay.

Mrs HISCUTT - 2020 working backwards starts at 2017.

Mr Willie - In the Estimates hearing, I asked that, right. The one on notice is different.

Output agreed to.

Output 90.1 agreed to.

Grants and subsidies agreed to.

Capital Investment Program -

Mr WILLIE - My question was: can you provide a list of current school infrastructure projects and their status? During the Estimates hearing I went through a number of schools, school projects, what the completion date was in the 2018 Budget compared to the completion date in this year's Budget and highlighted a number of delays in the way that had been profiled in those budgets. The minister undertook to provide a list of all those schools, an update on their status and an explanation on the discrepancies between 2018 and the current year.

Mrs HISCUTT - I have a heap of schools here with dates completed and those without a date completed, an explanation - East Devonport Primary School, 2018 completed; Riverside Primary School, 2018 completed; Boat Harbour Primary School, 2019 completed; Illawarra Primary School, 2019 - did I say 9 as the last one?

Mr Willie - Just to save some time, sorry, this is not related to the question I asked.

Madam CHAIR - The Leader might like to sit down while -

Mrs HISCUTT - You can talk from your Chair but I am on my feet.

Mr Willie - Sorry.

Mrs HISCUTT - Happy to listen.

Mr WILLIE - My question was about the key deliverables in the Budget, not these schools. They are the schools I highlighted in the Estimates hearing. So, things like the Sorell School, Cosgrove High School - the key deliverables in the Budget, not these schools.

Madam CHAIR - These schools were included.

Mrs HISCUTT - A heap of schools are completed which you are obviously not interested in. Shall I go -

Mr Willie - I am interested in them. It is trite to say that.

Mrs HISCUTT - Sorry, in this answer. I do beg your pardon; I do not mean to say that.

Mr Willie - My question was related to the key deliverables.

Mrs HISCUTT - There are current projects scheduled for completion. Did you want to know the schools and when they are scheduled for completion?

Mr Willie - My question in the Estimates was very clear. I went through the key deliverables in 2018, the completion dates, and then I went through the completion dates in the current Budget and the delays. I wanted an explanation about why these schools are now delayed in the current Budget.

Mrs HISCUTT - We will start with current projects and the scheduled date for completion, then you might be able to keep track of them in the future -

School	Scheduled for completion
Lansdowne Crescent Primary School	2021
Molesworth Primary School	2021
School Infrastructure upgrades	2021
Spreyton Primary School	2021
Education Act Implementation - Capital	2021
Devonport High	2022
Year 7-12 Implementation Plan - Capital	2022
Brighton High School	2024
Springfield Gardens Primary School	2022
Legana Primary	2023
Six new child and family learning centres	2024

Then we move on to -

School	Scheduled for completion
School farm redevelopment, Sheffield	Revised to 2021 due to contract work packages disaggregated to engage specialised contractors

Penguin School, kindergarten to 12	Revised to 2022 due to extended consultation and staged construction to minimise disruption.
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I think this is the part that you want -

School	Scheduled for completion
Cosgrove High School redevelopment	Revised to 2024 due to extended consultation and staged construction to minimise disruption.

Taroona High School	Revised to 2021 - project re-scoped and re-tendered due to market conditions.
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East Launceston Primary School	2020 kindergarten completed, landscaping works in 2021.
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K-12 at Sorell School	Revised to 2023 due to extended consultation and staged construction to minimise disruption
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Southern Support School	Revised to 2021 due to extensive consultation across multiple stakeholders to assess multiple options and determine the best option to support students with disabilities and other site users and stakeholders.
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School farm redevelopment (Brighton/JRLF)	Revised to 2021 due to extended community consultation as a result of the Brighton High School location debate. Land use and environmental planning process have also impacted on time lines.
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Mr DEAN - I asked a question during Estimates in relation to Queechy High about the extra works required at that school, including E-Block, which is in an appalling state. I also asked a question on the numbers at that school, its capacity - I have since found out that the capacity of that school is about 800. I was told that it is probably not that far away and in this coming next year, apparently with the extra students, it will be pretty much on that line.

What is going to be done to ensure this school is able to meet the required numbers of students who will be coming into it? Do we have a future plan for the renewal of, or the extra works required, to E-Block?

Mrs HISCUTT - Member for Windermere, in relation to the Estimates process and your question, there is no more information we can provide at this stage. However, I have just been advised that the Education department will write to you and organise to get the information and have a discussion of what you actually want and how we can help further.

Mr WILLIE - I was going back to find my question about the infrastructure delays from Estimates. I may have missed this but did you talk about Legana Primary and Brighton High School? I think I have the rest.

If possible, could the Leader table that document that she has there?

Mrs HISCUTT - I am happy to table the document. Brighton High School was mentioned as being scheduled for completion in 2024, and Legana Primary School was mentioned as being scheduled for completion in 2023.

Madam Chair, I seek leave to table the document.

Leave granted.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Division agreed to without request and without amendment.

DIVISION 4

(Department of Finance-General)

Treasurer -

Outputs 1.1 to 1.3 agreed to.

Output 2.3 agreed to.

Output Group 3

Government Businesses

3.1 Sustainable Timber Tasmania -

Mr VALENTINE - They have been answered satisfactorily.

Output agreed to.

Output 3.2 agreed to.

Output 3.4 agreed to.

Outputs 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.9 agreed to

Outputs 90.2, 90.3 and 90.8 agreed to.

Grants and Subsidies agreed to.

Minister for Finance -

Output 2.1 agreed to.

Outputs 4.1, 4.7 and 4.8 agreed to.

Output 89.1 agreed to.

Output 90.1 agreed to.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Division agreed to without request and without amendment.

DIVISION 5

(Department of Health)

Minister for Health -

Output 1.1 agreed to.

Output Group 2 Health Services

2.1 Admitted Services -

Ms LOVELL - Thank you, again, I am comfortable with the answer received.

Output agreed to.

2.2 Non-admitted Services -

Ms LOVELL - My question was posed during hearings and taken on notice on who was involved in consultation for the Launceston General Hospital, at the Access Solutions meeting held in the Royal Hobart Hospital and the measures to be implemented at the LGH.

We have received a detailed answer to that question and I thank the department for the information. My concern is the people involved in this consultation are at a fairly senior level in the hospital.

One of the more positive things around the Access Solutions meeting at the Royal is it involves consultation with staff across all levels of the hospital, particularly the Emergency Department.

Will the minister will commit to extending that consultation and involving staff at all levels through the Launceston General Hospital, so we are not just hearing the perspective of senior and middle management?

Mrs HISCUTT - The answer you were provided with was for a particular one-off meeting, but generally speaking the unions, Emergency Department staff and the registrar groups are consulted with. Yes, it is normal process to consult with a many and varied variety of groups at the hospital.

Ms LOVELL - Thank you, Leader. I understand there are various different consultations that can take place and this is specifically in relation to the meeting held at the LGH in relation to those access solutions measures implemented after the Access Solutions meeting for the Royal Hobart Hospital.

So, particularly and specifically, in regard to those measures, will the minister commit to a formal consultation process like the Access Solutions meeting that happened at the Royal involving staff across all levels?

Mrs HISCUTT - There are ongoing and continuing consultations with this group, as well as those involved in that group in relation to the measures agreed to. There is consultation with more than just that list of people there.

Ms WEBB - I am trying to find if answers were provided to question (14). It is on the list I have here.

I asked in relation to women on temporary visas, pregnancy and birth care and how many instances of these being waived for women in this category this year. What is the value of the fees waived and how many instances have payment plans been entered into for women in this category and what is the value of the fees covered?

Madam CHAIR - That is question (15). The numbers were out of sync.

Ms WEBB - No wonder I could not find them. I was trying to check back. Thank you for the clarification.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, I was looking at (15) here and you were looking at (14). I hope I got the right answer for the right question.

Six Medicare-ineligible women had fees waived for pregnancy and birth care provided by the Tasmanian Health Service in 2020-21. The total value of the fees waived in 2020-21 as at the 27 November 2020 is \$62 985. Two Medicare-ineligible women who received pregnancy and birth care from the THS in 2020-21 have entered into payment plans as at 27 November 2020. The value of the fees covered by those plans is \$13 174.05.

Mr VALENTINE - My question has been answered in those answers provided, under a different number.

Madam CHAIR - The answers are there. I was a bit confused too.

Output agreed to.

2.3 Emergency Department Services -

Ms LOVELL - I appreciate that this question crosses over into the purview of the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing. Some questions were put to the minister in the relevant hearing but there is some crossover so I would like to ask the question to the Minister for Health.

The question taken on notice was, what is the average length of stay in the emergency department for mental health patients at each hospital over the last 12 months? What is the longest stay in the emergency department for a mental health patient in the last financial year, at each hospital?

This is particularly in relation to the Launceston General Hospital, where the wait times are not as long as at the Royal Hobart Hospital. I will outline why this is of particular concern.

We have an average length of stay in the Emergency Department for mental health patients at the LGH of 8.5 hours and the longest stay for a mental health patient at the Emergency Department at the LGH of 97 hours in the financial year. That is four days, which I think in anyone's opinion is not acceptable.

My concern relates to the LGH because I understand that the position of a psychiatric emergency nurse in the Emergency Department at the LGH is no longer filled. Perhaps I can seek some clarification on that? There was a psychiatric emergency nurse for some time but that position is no longer funded and filled at the LGH. Can the Leader confirm that?

Are the Government and the Minister for Health comfortable with the level of resourcing, particularly for mental health patients in the Emergency Department? Not only that the staff are adequately resourced and trained to be able to fulfil their duties but are able to provide adequate mental health care for those patients while they are waiting up to four days in the Emergency Department?

Mrs HISCUTT - A 12-month trial was undertaken at Launceston General Hospital with a PEN rostered on a late shift. A PEN is a psychiatric emergency nurse. The purpose of the trial was to determine if a PEN resource would provide additional psychiatric support in the Emergency Department. The minister has been advised that the trial has finished and Statewide Mental Health Services are now evaluating the data obtained during that trial.

With regard to the other part of your question, it is not the remit of this particular output but I do have something that might contribute to the member's thoughts. The Government is continuing to roll out our plan to build a better mental health system with a \$104 million investment to support mental health, including community-based solutions such as the development of the Peacock Centre, the new facility that is to be constructed at St Johns Park, and the work of the Tasmanian Mental Health Reform Program.

I hope those few things can help the member bearing in mind that we have the wrong output advices here for that question.

Ms LOVELL - I appreciate that it is the crossover between Mental Health and the Minister for Health, but we are talking about emergency department services.

I have one further question relating to the data provided in answer to a question from the member for Hobart, which was the number of presentations to the emergency department with mental ill health at each of the four major hospitals. I may be crossing over, but it is difficult to get a straight answer from either minister when there is crossover. Well, not a straight answer, but a fulsome answer.

The answer that was provided in hearings from the minister for Mental Health was that it had been determined that there was not the demand to support a PEN position at the LGH, but the data that has been provided by the Minister for Health is that in 2019-20 financial year there were 2383 presentations to the Emergency Department. On my quick calculation that works out to be, on average, 6.5 presentations a day, or almost 46 presentations a week. My question is from the Minister for Health's perspective, or the Department of Health's perspective: what demand would be required to support a permanent PEN position at the LGH if 46 presentations a week is not enough?

Mrs HISCUTT - The psychiatric emergency nurse evaluation has not been completed yet and will be an integral part of the answer. We do not have that to date, but the idea is to have a longer term hospital avoidance strategy in place for this sort of stuff. The first thing we have to do is evaluate the outcomes of the PEN trial before we can go any further.

Ms Lovell - Do we have a time line for when that evaluation will be complete?

Mrs HISCUTT - There is no time line on it, but it is being currently looked at now. It will not be in years. Does that answer your question?

Ms Lovell - No, not really though. If that is all you can give me, next year?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, it is part of the Mental Health Reform Program and we are expecting some results and recommendations at some stage next year, 2021. Mental health presentations to the hospital will still be properly assessed.

Dr SEIDEL - I would like to follow up on correspondence we received today, based on the question at Estimates about patients who present to emergency departments but do not wait to be seen. I had two questions at the time. The first one was: does the department follow up on patients who present to the emergency department and then leave without being seen? The second question was: does the department receive any moneys for these patients although they have not been clinically assessed?

The advice at the time was the department does not follow up on these. There are over 6500 of them every year and I imagine there is probably a reason they are presenting to the emergency department. The minister also advised no moneys would actually be received from the Commonwealth.

I received a letter today which stated that the department does receive moneys. It is over \$80 per patient who is being registered but then disappears or is not clinically assessed. A substantial amount of money, double the Medicare rebate for standard GP consultation.

Considering we have 6500 Tasmanians presenting every year to emergency departments who then leave without being seen - probably because they waited too long - considering you get \$500 000 every year for those people, is it not appropriate for the department to follow up those patients, at least through a phone call?

My question: is the Government considering setting up a process that ensures the appropriate follow-up of these 6500 presentations who register in an emergency department but then do not wait to be seen?

Mrs HISCUTT - According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare study 'Emergency Department Care 2018-19', in 2018-19 the proportion of Tasmanian patients presenting to emergency departments recorded as 'did not wait' was the fourth lowest of the eight Australian states and territories.

Having said that, when a person arrives at hospital, we all know there is triage with emergencies down to 'have to wait'. We do not know the reasons they leave because it is not reported. The resources to actually follow up on those people are not there. If they decide to leave for some reason, they are going to put a bandaid on their problem; we do not know.

Ms Armitage - Maybe they get surveyed.

Dr SEIDEL - Considering the department receives \$500 000 dollars every year, when you say the resources are not there, is it not appropriate to employ a nurse or clinical care worker to actually follow up on these people? Is not it in the interest of the Department of Health to understand why these people present to the emergency department and then leave without being seen? It might be a waiting time issue. They might be young families with children, who just cannot wait for hours before they are seen. Considering that the department receives \$500 000 of taxpayers' money from the Commonwealth for that registration process, is it not appropriate for the department to follow up on this?

Mrs HISCUTT - That money is already spent, and that is on the triage nurse, to do that work in the triage system.

Dr SEIDEL - It is a generous reimbursement, is it not? It is \$82 for a triaging process.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is used to employ people to do that, on a 24-hour basis.

Ms LOVELL - I have one question in relation to the question on notice about the number of vacant FACEM positions at the LGH. The answer provided was that there were 5.2 FTE vacant currently, and one FTE filled by a locum. Can I seek some clarification on 5.2 FTE vacant, out of how many?

Mrs HISCUTT - The answer is 18 FACEM.

Ms LOVELL - Is that 5.2 FTE out of 18?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes.

Ms LOVELL - Thank you.

Mr VALENTINE - I want to thank the department for providing the information that it has forwarded after the time frame, but it is quite alarming to think that 1.5 per cent of the population of Tasmania is actually presenting for a mental health issue to emergency medicine departments across the state.

Output agreed to.

Outputs 2.4, 2.6 and 2.7 agreed to.

Outputs 90.1 to 90.3 and 90.5 to 90.7 agreed to.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing -

Output 1.2 agreed to.

Output Group 2 Health Services

2.5 Statewide and Mental Health Services -

Ms LOVELL - I am seeking some leniency here, given that I was not on Estimates Committee B, and I do not know whether advice has been provided that this line item would have further questions, but it is related to the questions I was asking earlier. The information provided to us today conflicts with the information provided in the hearing by the minister, Mr Rockliff. I am happy if the Leader needs to take this on notice.

Madam CHAIR - Are you seeking leave to have this line recommitted?

Ms LOVELL - Yes. I am seeking leave to have this line recommitted.

Madam CHAIR - This line was not left open by Committee B. I will allow some discretion, because the advisers are here, rather than seeking recommitment later and having the advisers required to come back. If the Leader is unable to answer it, it can be dealt with through another process.

Mrs HISCUTT - We can take it on notice, if that is possible.

Madam CHAIR - The member for Rumney might like to complete her question.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, I am very happy for the Leader to take it on notice, and appreciate that the right advisers might not be here, as you were not expecting this, but I would like it to be on record.

I am seeking clarification around the advice given by the minister in relation to psychiatric emergency nurses at the Launceston General Hospital. The advice was that -

- A 12 month trial was undertaken at the Launceston General Hospital with a PEN rostered on a late shift.
- The purpose of the trial was to determine if a PEN resource would provide additional psychiatric support in the ED.
- ... [Review of] data from the trial indicating that there was not the demand to support the continuation of a standalone PEN at the LGH.

That is different to the advice we have now been given through the Emergency Department Services output group - which was that the evaluation is still underway, and is not yet complete, and therefore that determination has not yet been made.

If the Leader could perhaps seek some clarification on that? I am happy for you to take it on notice, as I appreciate there are probably two ministers to seek clarification from.

Madam CHAIR - The specific question is?

Ms LOVELL - The specific question is: has the evaluation been completed, and has the decision been made that a psychiatric emergency nurse is not required at the LGH?

Mrs HISCUTT - I am happy to take that on notice and get some good clarity on it.

Ms LOVELL - Thank you.

Output agreed to.

Outputs 90.4 and 90.8 agreed to

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Division agreed to without request or amendment.

DIVISION 6

(Department of Justice)

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice -

Output Group 1

Administration of Justice

Output 1.1 agreed to.

1.2 Magisterial Court Services -

Ms RATTRAY - Just before members in Committee B attempt to make some questions, the Committee received the responses to a number of questions or a series of questions at 1.31 p.m. today. Some members were in a briefing so it has not allowed very much time to really assess the answers and there are some significant answers. That is why these line items have been left open, but I will let other members decide whether they are going to pursue those answers or not in the interests of advising the House that they were genuinely left open for a reason. I have not had a lot of time to look at the responses. I expect that other members have not either but they will make their decision about whether they get up.

Madam CHAIR - We will take it slowly so that members have time to digest it and answer it because it is not the members' issue here not having time.

Ms RATTRAY - That is right.

Madam CHAIR - It is the Government's responsibility to get the responses to us.

Mr DEAN - I thank the Chair for making that comment because it is rather disappointing and I am not sure what has gone on this year, whether there has been extra work within the departments. I have not experienced it as bad as this ever before in my 17 or 18 years in this place. I am not quite sure whether there is extra work there or what really the hold-up has been.

Mrs Hiscutt - There are GBEs and a lot of stuff has been crammed into the end of the year because of COVID-19 so the workload has been enormous and I apologise.

Mr DEAN - I would have thought that even an explanation to that degree might have helped as well rather than us simply floundering, and it is difficult now. I picked it up when I went into my office at lunchtime.

Ms Rattray - After a briefing that we were in as well.

Mr DEAN - I will do my best. I asked a question of the minister during Estimates in relation to a number of family violence matters coming before the Magistrates Court in the year 2019-20. If I had that answer then I would have asked a question and maybe it needs to be taken on notice now, I would like the comparison with 2018-19 and 2017-18 to see whether or not there is an increase - and I suspect there probably is - in these numbers coming before the Magistrates Court.

I notice on the information provided to us that of the total of 2738 - I think I am getting it right - that there were 804 breaches of family violence and police family violence orders coming back before the Magistrates Court.

That is quite a large number of breaches. What has been the position with those matters coming back before the courts? What has happened? Have there simply been extensions? Have these people been jailed, and just what are the consequences of that because where is the deterrent aspect?

I am looking at the breaches of family violence orders. It is a very serious matter and this is a matter causing great concern to victims of family violence and those who are threatened

and involved. I would just like to know what is happening in that area to try to get on top of the breaches that are occurring.

Perhaps some of those questions may need to be taken on notice and I accept that. I do not have a problem with that.

Mrs HISCUTT - With regard to comparisons to 2017-18 and 2018-19, I have information about the number of family violence applications, including applications to vary, extend or revoke family violence orders and police family violence orders in the Magistrates Court. I seek leave to table the document.

Leave granted.

Mrs HISCUTT - With regard to the second part of your question, we would have to go back to the courts to ascertain that information, which can be done. Can we take that on notice and provide that to you later? Thank you.

Output 1.2 agreed to.

1.3 Births, Deaths and Marriages -

Mr WILLIE - I am just reading through the answer that has been given.

The answer that has been provided to the committee today on this output group is that the Attorney-General would prefer to defer the response to this question to make contact with Professor Parkinson. I will have to take that for what it is and perhaps the Attorney-General may follow up at a later date.

Mrs HISCUTT - I have advice that that follow-up will happen.

Output agreed to.

Output 1.4 agreed to.

1.5 Legal Aid -

Mr WILLIE - Again, I am checking the document.

Mrs HISCUTT - While the member for Elwick is checking, I might seek advice as well.

Mr WILLIE - The answer has been provided but I reiterate the Chair's comments in that it is not satisfactory to be given these answers at such late notice. There is no opportunity to go to seek advice about the answers or delve into them further during the debate. I would like that to be put on the record that I am not happy with the response time either.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, I can only apologise for that. I do understand the frustrations and hopefully things will not be so busy next year and we can get some more detailed answers. I apologise to members.

Output agreed to.

1.6 Protective Jurisdictions -

Ms RATTRAY - This was about protective jurisdictions and I asked the question about applications made and approved by the Guardianship and Administration Board in 2018-19 and 2019-20. Some explanation has been provided around that and I will reflect on that and perhaps come back to that another time.

In regard to the number of treatment orders applied for and being implemented by the Mental Health Tribunal in 2018-19 and then in 2019-20, we have received some numbers of treatment orders: 2018-19 is 588; 2019-20 is 548, and the number of interim treatment orders implemented in 2018-19 is 540; 2019-20 is 509.

One thing I am interested in is on the Table - the civil hearings decisions. In 2018-19 the number of renewed treatment orders - and then further renewed - was 158, but in 2019-20, the number has risen to 200. Is it possible to have some explanation of that? These are renewed orders or further renewal orders. I am interested in that significant jump of almost 25 per cent. If that is not available, I am happy to take that on notice.

Mrs HISCUTT - That information will have to be sought from the tribunal, so we will take it on notice and undertake to give it to you.

Ms RATTRAY - That is fine.

Output agreed to.

Output 1.7 agreed to.

1.8 Elections and Referendums -

Ms ARMITAGE - As mentioned by the member for McIntyre, we received the answer earlier this afternoon and I am satisfied with the answer, thank you.

Output agreed to.

1.9 Tasmanian Industrial Commission -

Mr DEAN - The information came back and I am happy with that information. There is no need for further questions to be asked.

Output agreed to.

Output 1.12 agreed to.

Outputs 2.1 and 2.2 agreed to.

Output 3.3 agreed to.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Minister for Corrections -

Output Group 3 Corrections and Enforcement

3.1 Prison Services -

Mr WILLIE - I asked this question in Estimates. I have been told that this is the arrangements for Ashley remandees. When young people come to Hobart to attend court, they are dropped off by outsourced security contracted staff to the Hobart Reception Prison. They are not technically in the custody of Tasmania Prison Service or police, but they are put into Police Watch House cells. Security staff disappear until pick up.

The Tasmania Prison Service staff are left to provide them with meals, and supervise and manage them. This is not covered by the Tasmania Prison Service MOU. There is no paperwork handed over between the security staff and TPS staff. There is no notification that they are coming; they merely turn up.

That is what I put to the minister. The minister said I was making an allegation and she would look into it. It is a pretty serious matter that I raised in Estimates. The fact that we have not got an answer yet is pretty disrespectful, but also concerning, given the material I have provided. I would have thought the minister would look into that as a matter of urgency and would have been able to update the parliament on those arrangements. If it is true, I do not think that is satisfactory.

Mrs HISCUTT - Just for clarification, a letter was sent to the Chair of Committee B. It is dated 27 November 2020, and I will read what it says and we will see whether you have received that. I should imagine it would have been emailed -

- All TPS facilities are classified as youth detention facilities for the purposes of the Youth Justice Act.
- Young people are transited between one Youth justice facility and another for the purposes of court appearances.
- All TPS staff are declared 'authorised officers' of a youth justice facility for the purposes of the Youth Justice Act and are therefore defined under that Act as supervisors of the young people while they are in the watch house.
- Practically, young people do not enter the reception prisons but are kept in a separate youth designated area in the watch house.
- Young people are received into the watch house from security who are transporting them - under the normal receiving processes and exited under those same normal processes.
- This is not covered within the MoU because it is covered within the Act.

I am checking the question that was asked. That is what the member for Elwick has just said. I do not know whether that answer is satisfactory or whether it has not been received, but

it was emailed on 27 November 2020. I am happy to stand if you want to make comment on that.

Mr WILLIE - I have just looked in my records and I cannot find an email for 27 November. That does not mean it did not happen; I might have missed it through my own processes.

Ms Rattray - What was the date?

Mrs HISCUTT - It was sent to the secretary at 2.07 p.m. on 27 November 2020 and that would have gone to your secretary. The email that was sent is here.

Mr WILLIE - How separate is the separate youth facility from adult detainees? Is there any exposure to adult detainees? I think that would be in contravention of the Youth Justice Act, even just walking past in a facility like that and being exposed. Is it completely isolated?

Mrs HISCUTT - I am advised that they are kept separate within that system. There is a chance that upon entry they may pass an adult, someone held in the Watch House.

Mr Willie - So there could be interactions between adult detainees and youth offenders?

Mrs HISCUTT - I do not think they would be stopping for a conversation, but something could be yelled as the youth is walked past. They are kept in a separate section, but they may have to pass the Watch House cells on their way to the youth section.

Ms RATTRAY - I thank the Leader for reading out the correspondence. I do not seem to have that in my inbox, but I will follow up with that. It is a busy time, as has been indicated by the Leader and everybody in this Chamber. The departments are working hard, but we also know that the Legislative Council staff are working equally as hard. I will follow that up. I thank the Leader but cannot seem to locate it, so that is by way of explanation.

Mr DEAN - I do not have the answer to the question I asked either. I am not sure if that has come in; our secretaries are both extremely astute. I am not quite sure what might have gone wrong. Was my question answered in relation to the overtime also? Sorry, I will ask it here then and so I can get the answer on the record. My question was in relation to the overtime at the prison which, sadly, it would seem only a few people in this place are really concerned about which amazes me.

They have five members on near \$70 000 and plus in overtime. It is absolutely an incredible situation with the average overtime within the prison service in excess of \$30 000 to \$34 000 or thereabouts. That is the average overtime of each employee. My question is: Having investigated this matter previously in 2013, 2014, how is that overtime accrued? For what reasons is it accrued? How much of it is accrued through sick leave and how is this sick leave supervised?

Can Bill go off on sick leave and simply arrange for Tom, his mate, to come in and work his sick leave? Because that is what was happening. I am asking: how is sick leave, in particular, supervised? That is where the majority of it is and I would like some detail.

Mrs HISCUTT - Madam Chair, I will read out the answer to question (2) and think it covers what you are asking. Overtime has remained high primarily as a result of high and increasing prisoner numbers. This includes additional daily posts, increased escorts, constant observations and other shifts resulting from increased prisoner numbers; and TPS responses to the impact of COVID-19 and COVID-19 measures.

Vacant correctional officer positions - this is either through attrition, resignation and workers compensation, notwithstanding regular recruitment processes increasing correctional officers to nearly 200 from May 2016, and security classifications of prisoners requiring additional staff. The highest overtime earners for the 2020-21 financial year to date are as follows. There are not names, just officer A, B, C, D, E. I will quote you officer A and then I will give you the 2020-21 earnings to date followed by the 2020-21 hours to date. Correctional officer A - \$48 917, 520 hours. Correctional -

Mr Dean - That is only six months. He is going to be up around the \$80 000 - \$90 000 mark.

Mrs HISCUTT - Correctional officer B - \$38 952, 446 hours; correctional officer C - \$36 511, 427 hours; correctional officer D - \$35 977, 389 hours; and correctional officer E - \$35 985, 455 hours. There is a total of \$196 253 and a total of 2237 hours. The specific reasons for overtime in the 2019-20 financial year were as follows. I will give the overtime reason and then the percentage. Escorts, 1.4 per cent; incidents, 0.8 per cent; other, 10.3 per cent; sick, 13.1 per cent; training, 2.4 per cent; unscheduled leave, 2.8 per cent; vacancies, 46.7 per cent; workers compensation, 7 per cent; and COVID-19, 15.4 per cent. That was the end of the answers supplied. There was an answer here for the member for Elwick when he wants to stand and ask question (3).

Back to the member for Windermere, if someone is sick, the rostering officer reassigns the shift during business hours. Outside of normal business hours the superintendent of each prison is responsible for making a reassignment. There are internal policies that guide this process.

Mr DEAN - I am staggered as to those figures already for this current financial year 2020-21. We are only part way through the year and we have officers earning \$40 000 something for not even a six-month period, which is quite interesting. How is that supervised for some personnel to receive such a high income from overtime? The average for 2019-20 was about \$34 000, from memory. That was the average overtime with some of the top performers bringing in over \$70 000, a wage that many people would like to be on. That is a normal salary.

How is that supervised if you can have people earning that salary? Others would only be on the \$20 000 mark or \$15 000 on the lower end. How does that happen? Is it the persons responsible for controlling that? How is that done? Do we have some people simply putting their hand up and saying, 'I will work whenever overtime is available.'. That is fair enough if a person wants to do that, but how is it supervised? How is it controlled? Where is the equity applying to this or giving a reasonable opportunity to work the overtime?

They do this because this is what came out of the inquiry in 2013-14 but there were problems. There were real issues and we were told it would be fixed. It was not fixed and it is now worse.

Mrs HISCUTT - The past six months have been significantly affected by COVID-19 and the need for split rosters. Overtime is not mandatory. It is a voluntary system and if they are free, they can make themselves available for the overtime.

The process of doing it is the same as I said earlier. If someone is sick, the rostering officer reassigns that shift during business hours and outside of normal business hours the superintendent of each prison is responsible for making the reassignment and there are internal policies that guide that decision-making.

Mr WILLIE - During Estimates we had a discussion about operational capacity of a prison and also the design capacity of the prison. We know that there are cells with bunk beds. Sometimes up to three beds, I think, in a cell. My question was related to the design capacity of Risdon prison and the operational capacity.

The Government talks a lot about the operational capacity but I am interested in the design capacity.

Mrs HISCUTT - The number of cells designed for single occupancy plus the number of designated bed places in shared cells or dormitories - with the exception of a small number of 'buddy cells', all cells are designed for single occupancy.

Design capacity does not include temporary beds. Design capacity excludes bed places used for special purposes. For the TPS, this includes dedicated inpatient, observation, crisis support and disciplinary separation. Design capacity also excludes decommissioned areas of a prison and off-line cells - that is, for maintenance or refurbishing. The design capacity can therefore fluctuate based on the number of cells off-line.

Based on the Report on Government Services definitions as at Wednesday, 25 November 2020, the TPS design capacity was 701; that is 755 designed beds minus 54 off-line beds; 18 in Hobart Reception prison; and 36 in Ron Barwick prison.

In the 2019-20 reporting year, the reported design capacity of all TPS facilities was 717, that is 700 secure and 17 open cells.

Mr WILLIE - My question specifically related to Risdon prison. You are talking about other facilities in that answer. What is the design capacity of Risdon prison?

Mrs HISCUTT - In the 2019-20 reporting year, the reported design capacity of all TPS facilities was 717.

Mr Willie - That is facilities on top of Risdon?

Mrs HISCUTT - Across the board. I will get some clarity. To finish up, this includes all TPS facilities. We do not have figures for the Risdon prison site only. I am happy to take that on notice if you particularly wanted that one.

Mr Willie - Yes, if you can provide that to me and take that on notice. The design capacity of Risdon prison, which is the question on notice that was provided to the Government by our committee.

Mrs HISCUTT - That is not what we have received here. I am happy to take that on notice and provide that at a later date.

Output agreed to.

Output 3.2 agreed to.

Capital Investment Program -

Mr DEAN - This question was also answered in the information that came back to us in relation to the date of the contact that was made with the Attorney-General regarding the offer by a private organisation to build the premises, either build and sell or build and lease, or what have you. Can the date be provided? There are a number of other questions coming but they do not really come from that question I asked during Estimates. I will take the option of putting them on notice because they could not be answered here.

I want to know if there is still any interest in that and whether there has been any further discussion or any further conversation with this organisation, because they are interested. I have spoken to them. If I can be given the answer to the question I asked.

Mrs HISCUTT - The question we have and I will just put it for clarity to make sure that was the question you put -

The date on which an approach was received from a private developer in respect of construction of a northern correction facility.

The answer was '11 October 2018'. It is not being pursued. I know that because you have just said it is not being pursued. The Government will build and operate the prison.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Minister for Building and Construction -

Output 1.10 agreed to.

Outputs 4.1 and 4.4 agreed to.

Output Group 90

COVID-19 Response and Recovery

90.3 - Rent Relief Fund -

Mr WILLIE - Apologies to the staff, but when we convened our meeting, this answer had not been provided so we left it open and now the answers have been provided and I am satisfied with those. I apologise, but we had our meeting and we needed the answers. That is the explanation.

Output agreed to.

Minister for Planning -

**Output Group 1
Administration of Justice**

1.11 Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal -

Madam CHAIR - This was my output group and we got the information after our meeting also. The answer satisfied the request.

Output agreed to

Outputs 4.2 and 4.3 agreed to.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Division agreed to without request and without amendment.

**DIVISION 7
(Ministerial and Parliamentary Support)**

Premier -

**Output Group 1
Support for Members of Parliament**

1.1 Support for Ministers and certain Parliamentary Office Holders -

Ms WEBB - Thank you. I am happy with the answer we received subsequently.

Output agreed to.

1.2 Support for Members of the House of Assembly -

Ms WEBB - On this output I am less satisfied with what we received, which may have been a function of the question not being as granular as it could have been.

In relation to more detail about that output item in 1.2, in Estimates itself, I said I wanted to understand in more fine detail what the breakdown was for that output. The Premier in Estimates indicated that would be possible and provided some FTE details about staffing. Then the Premier said -

If it suits you, if you were to write and ask in terms of 1.2 and Budget Paper, page 200, we could provide a breakdown of the allowance of staff across travel and office facilities in line with what is in the line item. I would be happy to provide that to you while we can.

A question did not then go with as much detail as that so what has come back is just a very non-detailed answer about the broad categories which was already in the Budget Papers.

I am interested to hear and have the detail the Premier had alluded to being made available when we were in the Estimates hearing if you are able to provide that.

Madam CHAIR - Do you have a specific question?

Ms WEBB - I would like details and a breakdown across the different things it covers, particularly in terms of staffing and as the Premier had alluded to, allowances for staff including travel and office facilities in that line item.

Mrs HISCUTT - With regard to travel, there is routine disclosure. With regard to offices, there will not be any persons described but the figures are available.

My advisers do not have that information at the minute because the question sent to them was -

Ms WEBB - Yes, was less granular than what we had discussed in Estimates.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, so it can be taken on notice and provided later.

The advisers have undertaken to send the member an email. If you could clarify between the two parties exactly what you want to know, they can provide the information for you, the information that they have available to them.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, that is fine.

Output agreed to.

Division agreed to without request.

DIVISION 8

(Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management)

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management -

Output Group 1

Public Safety

1.1 Support to the Community -

Ms ARMITAGE - I appreciate the answer that 31 per cent of officers had taken up MyPulse since it started on 2 December 2019, but I am interested to know if there are any uptake targets or projections in order to get better engagement, and how that strategy might look if MyPulse is voluntary? That is my first question.

Mrs HISCUTT - They are aiming for a 100 per cent uptake, and doing extensive marketing to increase that uptake.

Ms ARMITAGE - Is the department looking at mandatory annual psychological assessments for all staff, and not only those in critical areas such as forensic and crash

investigation? Do you consider the department is doing enough in the preventive stakes that is worthwhile?

Mrs HISCUTT - The Tasmanian Government is committed to supporting the physical and mental health for all Tasmanian emergency service responders, both career and volunteer. This commitment is evident in the department's health and wellbeing program, which provides a mix of proactive preventive and intervention measures.

These include -

- **MyPulse.** As at 30 September 2020, 460 individuals had completed the physical and/or mental health screen. Those emergency service responders who flagged red and amber were eligible for face-to-face coaching services. In excess of 1000 coaching sessions have been conducted across the state.
- **Ready for Response.** Well over 1000 individuals participated in phase 1 and/or phase 2, and 645 are participating in phase 3.
- **Critical Incident Stress Management.** In the last financial year, 319 critical incidents were responded to, with over 2100 individual contacts made; 111 individuals were referred to psychologists, and 11 group interventions were conducted. So far this year, 80 critical incidents have been responded to, with 754 individual contacts made, with six individuals referred to psychologists, and six group interventions conducted.

Ms Armitage - Could you answer the question I asked, which was not what you have just read out?

Mrs HISCUTT - A number of mandatory wellbeing checks, and considering how we can best extend these checks.

Ms Armitage - Could you read that part again, please?

Mrs HISCUTT - There are a number -

Ms Armitage - The mandatory part.

Mrs HISCUTT - There are a number of mandatory wellbeing checks, and considering how we can best extend these to move forward. Are they mandatory -

Ms Armitage - My question was - I only have one speak after more questions - is the department looking at mandatory annual psychological assessments for all staff, and not just those in critical areas - as you say, flag red or whatever - such as forensic and crash investigation? Are you looking at mandatory? You have already said that you are looking for 100 per cent uptake.

Mrs HISCUTT - While I am on my feet, no. The answer is no, we are not looking at mandatory uptake. We are looking at encouraging everyone to do it.

Ms Armitage - How would you do that? Apart from marketing, and how would you market it? If you are going to encourage, how are you going to encourage them?

Mrs HISCUTT - There is a wellbeing plan being put together, and everybody has been consulted on it. There have been 48 mental health and wellbeing check-ups across the state. There have been online education modules, information and resources to help understand and improve and maintain the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the officers.

Ms ARMITAGE - Apart from all that you have said, I am not really sure how it is actually going to encourage people to voluntarily take it up, but what other strategies, other than MyPulse, are being considered as preventive and prophylactic measures?

Mrs HISCUTT - There are also face-to-face educational sessions aimed at increasing physical and mental health and wellbeing literacy. There are face-to-face health clinic consultations, measuring the individual physical health indicators. There is also face-to-face lung function tests for firefighters only. There is also physical health screen, mental health screen and cancer risk assessments for firefighters, with follow-up personalised coaching supports for eligible employees.

With regard to volunteer emergency service personnel - are you interested in that?

Ms Armitage - Absolutely.

Mrs HISCUTT - They have access to the following MyPulse services: online education modules, information and resources to help understand, improve and maintain physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Also, online cancer risk assessment and face-to-face lung function consultations are available to volunteer firefighters.

There is also the access to MyPulse physical and mental health screens, and personalised coaching support for eligible volunteers.

Families of emergency services employees and volunteers can also access the MyPulse online hub for information and resources that help them to support the health and wellbeing of their family member.

Ms Armitage - I look forward to asking these questions again in September next year to see how it has changed.

Ms SIEJKA - I had a question to which I received a really thorough answer, so I appreciate that. It was about offences against the person, definition of it and varying information about numbers north and south. Having looked at that, in Launceston there seemed to be significantly higher number of offences against the person in the table of the answer. Is there a reason for that?

Mr Dean - Terrible people live in that part of -

Ms SIEJKA - Yeah, I know. I am not going there anymore. Dangerous.

Mrs HISCUTT - Launceston is 984 - that includes the whole of Launceston, whereas Hobart is broken up into Glenorchy, Hobart and Kingston.

Mr DEAN - I think it was a judge who referred to Launceston as being a little Chicago at one stage. It was not me.

In relation to the MyPulse program, what is the cost of that to Tasmania Police? How do we measure the success of that program? It would not be simply by contacts. Are we measuring the physical condition of those police officers that have attended those programs or their mental health?

Mrs HISCUTT - We know that police, firefighters and other emergency service workers are susceptible to mental illness both on account of the severity of incidents they attend and the cumulative effects of the incidents attended over a long period of time. Emergency service work is by its nature confronting.

The mental health of staff is of fundamental importance to the department. Considerable effort is being extended to increase both the proactive, the preventative services, and the reactive, the intervention services, with the Government providing funding of \$1.5 million per annum to support these services.

Additionally, the department has concluded consultation on a wellbeing strategy and action plan and will shortly release the final version.

Edith Cowan University is doing a three-year evaluation. Regarding the cost of MyPulse and the measure of success, as I have said, \$1.5 million is coming in to support that. I do not have anything to report until the evaluation is done in three years time.

Mr DEAN - Post-traumatic stress disorder is a matter that is really impacting police. Of the emergency services, they are said to be the most impacted by post-traumatic stress disorder.

Is MyPulse getting access to those police that I suppose it should be? What does this program do to identify the police who are at the coalface and are confronting emergency situations every other day?

Ms Armitage - They will not unless they have a red flag.

Mr DEAN - They are facing atrocious and violent situations all day long on some occasions. About four police, I think, are assaulted on average each week. What is being done by this program to get out there and target those police that I believe, and others believe and the association believes, it should be?

Mrs HISCUTT - I think your question is, by way of interjection from the member for Launceston, how do you get a red flag? Is that what you are asking? How do you identify those people? It is not what you are asking?

Mr Dean - No, it is not exactly that question. I think I have asked the question clearly enough. I can repeat it if you want me to.

Mrs HISCUTT - No, I think we are right. We will just wait for the answer.

Since the program commenced in September 2019, 31 per cent of police officers have sought assistance through the MyPulse program. As at 30 September 2020, 460 individuals

had completed the physical and/or mental health screen. Those emergency responders that flagged red and amber were eligible for face-to-face coaching services. In excess of 1000 coaching sessions have been conducted across the state.

When members go to critical incidents, there is also critical incident stress management support which is enacted to assist that member.

Mr DEAN - I obviously did not make my question as clear as I should have done. Whoever is involved in the running of this program, and I am not quite sure how many are but maybe that is a question as well, how many are involved in the running of this program? Police are like a lot of other people - they do not come forward when they should, or seek assistance or advice. What I am asking is whether this program gets out to the police who are involved in the day-to-day control of the state to hear from them as to what is going on, what is happening, and to make some suggestions to those police as to what they ought to be doing to look after themselves?

Mrs HISCUTT - I will read this answer and see how we go.

Mr Dean - You have not read it before? Don't repeat it for goodness sake.

Mrs HISCUTT - Some of it is repetition. A lot of the people are referred to the critical incident stress management team after they have attended a confronting situation. I think I read out those figures. In the last financial year, 319 210 individuals made contact; 111 were referred to psychologists; and 11 went to group interventions. We responded to 80 critical incidents; 754 individual contacts have been made. There have been referrals to psychologists and group interventions.

We are talking about wellbeing support officers, clinical, psychological and counselling services. That uses 70-plus practitioners across the state. The wellbeing support averages an increase of 35 new clients per month, inclusive of family members. As at 30 September 2020 there are 379 active clients. Last financial year 312 persons received external psychological assistance. The departmental psychologists average seven new clients per month. That might be more to what you are looking for.

Output agreed to.

Output Group 2 Crime

Outputs 2.1 and 2.2 agreed to.

2.3 Fisheries Security -

Ms ARMITAGE - The answers I have received to the marine offenders by category. I will look at 2019-20 - 1335. Out of that, marine and safety offenders were 746; fishery offenders were 600. On those figures alone, less than half the claimed total marine safety and fishery offences relate to only the marine safety area. This means that at least 60 per cent or thereabouts relate to expired flares, out-of-date life jackets and so on, and do not directly contribute to fishery protection, which from my understanding was the Budget Estimates category we discussed.

My first question is: do you think that ratio is acceptable and if so, can you explain?

Mrs HISCUTT - Marine policing activities include extended sea patrols by larger police vessels, routine sea patrols by smaller police vessels, shore-based inspections and the investigations of breaches of fisheries legislation on a statewide basis. Drones and ATV trail bikes are also used in remote coastal areas.

During the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, a total of 7437 sea patrol hours were completed by Tasmanian police vessels. The member asks, with regard to your table there, is it acceptable or words along those lines? Things that are out of date like flares the member mentioned can be a safety issue, so yes, compliance is paramount.

As part of the fisheries protection, other offences are also detected. But I have a breakdown of the types of offences for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 financial years. They are extensive.

Ms Armitage - Can you seek leave to table it?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, I will. It talks about MAST offenders, what happened there. It is interesting. I seek leave to table the document, which breaks down the types of offences for the 2018-19 and 2019 financial years.

Leave granted.

Ms ARMITAGE - A couple more questions. During Estimates it was said that around 1300 marine offenders contributed to fisheries protection. My question is with regard to the asterisk notation in the answer on the notice.

Can you clarify if there is some double counting of offenders with both the fisheries offence and marine safety offences detected? Were there fewer individuals by headcount detected for both - for example, if police detected one person with no life jacket and a dodgy craypot, would that be counted as two offenders or two offences? The asterisk seems to indicate that -

Please note that the totals may be less than the sums if an offender commits marine safety and fishery offences in the same incident.

If that is the case, a further question, do you consider that somewhat disingenuous with statistics and the real story not being told?

Mrs HISCUTT - I will seek some clarification on that.

Ms Armitage - If they are double-ups?

Mrs HISCUTT - I do not think it is duplicitous.

Ms Armitage - It does have the asterisk there. I am asking the question.

Mrs HISCUTT - There would be a method of reporting and I will just seek some advice on that. We are talking about one offender with maybe multiple possible offences.

Ms Armitage - While you are on your feet, it says 'Total marine offenders, 1335. So that is not quite accurate then? It does not say 'offences' - it says 'offenders', so if one has multiple, there would be fewer than 1335 because it indicates each is a single one. Just checking.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am sure we are looking at the same table. That records offenders not offences.

Ms Armitage - I know but I am just going by the asterisk that is all. Okay.

Output agreed to.

Output 2.4 agreed to.

Output Group 3 Traffic Policing

3.1 Traffic Policing -

Ms RATTRAY - Just in regard to my interest in unregistered vehicle offenders and I asked the question in Estimates, the number of unregistered vehicles detected for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. The answers came back 2017-18 - 5133; 2018-19 - 4985, so a slight decrease; and 2019-20 - 3602. I presume that is to 30 June, so I want to ask that question. That is correct.

We would have had three months of that period where because of COVID-19 it was essential travel only so perhaps there was not as much police activity. With the asterisk in this table as well, it excludes vehicles detected by speed cameras so that is another number as well.

I am interested in whether there is some thought about reissuing of the registration sticker. I can see that there has been a decline since we no longer have to display a rego sticker. I hear the argument, 'Oh well they can do a log it in with a gun or police officers can just go onto their computer and pick up straightaway.'. I still am not convinced that this decline is not about not displaying a rego sticker. I am interested in the Leader's views on behalf of the Government as to why there is that significant reduction? From 2018-19 to 2019-20, a reduction of 1383. That is significant - maths was not my strong point at school, but I think it might be around 30-something per cent.

Mrs HISCUTT - The simple answer is that traffic policing was impacted by COVID-19 duties, which meant fewer vehicles on the road.

Ms RATTRAY - But only by three months, though. There is still nine months of data included in that 3602.

Mrs HISCUTT - Three months is a quarter of a year. That was a significant section. It is a chunk out of the year.

Ms Rattray - The minister believes that significant reduction is completely attributed to COVID-19?

Mrs HISCUTT - It also includes unroadworthy vehicles, unregistered vehicles not driven on public streets so there is less activity all around.

Output agreed to.

Outputs 4.1 and 4.2 agreed to.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Division agreed to without request and without amendment

DIVISION 9

(Department of Premier and Cabinet)

Premier -

Output Group 1

Support for Executive Decision Making

1.1 Strategic Policy and Advice -

Ms LOVELL - Just a clarification on information given by the Premier in relation to roles and salaries in the Premier's office. Another question was put to the Premier at a different time through Estimates as to whether he has a deputy chief of staff in his office. The advice given was that he does but there is no deputy chief of staff on the list of roles. I am wondering which of those is the deputy chief of staff and why that is listed under a different title?

Mrs HISCUTT - That is because at the date of reporting there was not one.

Ms Lovell - But there is now?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, there is now.

Output agreed to.

Output Group 2

Government Processes and Services

2.1 Management of Executive Government Processes -

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Just to clarify some detail on questions (1) and (2) under this output group we have put through. The first question was on the Government's protocols or guidelines for the publication of public consultation submissions and the answer provided just directs to a document online which is just the policy that says, 'We will publish submissions.'.

I am looking for an understanding of the protocol or guideline on the time lines for publishing submissions or the point during a consultation process that these submissions are

made public. Could you clarify that for me? That follows on to the second question, and it was just an example to illustrate that first question, with the public consultation submissions provided back in February this year in relation to the future gaming markets and the fact they have not yet been made public. The answer to that second question provides the comment that -

The consultation process has been paused. However, the submissions from the first public consultation round -

The one for February -

... will be published once consideration of the submissions has concluded.

Is that the protocol, that submissions are made public once consideration has concluded of those submissions? Perhaps you could clarify.

Mrs HISCUTT - The general consensus is there is no hard and fast rule, except they will be published at some stage. As the member probably knows, being the chair of committees and things like that, there is a lot of deliberation and consideration has to be taken before these things can be released publicly. We are in a government and it moves very slowly, as you would know, with all parliamentarians. It has to be considered carefully and to make sure that what happens is correct at the time and is the intention and general rule, but the decision is to be made on the day.

Ms WEBB - To follow up for more clarity - the reason I would like a bit more clarity is because at the moment the Government is trumpeting the release and the public publication of submissions to consultation as a key element of transparency. It is repeatedly put out as something they are to be congratulated on in terms of transparency. I would like to understand why there is not a hard and fast rule about at what point public publication of submissions that are made for consultation are actually released. Therefore, there could be circumstances in which they are never released or it is delayed for quite some time.

It is quite clear in the document you pointed me to in question(1), there are very clear circumstances in which submissions are not released or things that need to be redacted. Presumably whenever public consultation submissions are made, you can very clearly apply these rules, so I am not sure what consideration needs to happen. The public has made submissions to a consultation; you have them - you can apply these rules. They could be immediately made available. Under what circumstances could they not immediately be made available as per the rules?

Mrs HISCUTT - Madam Chair, I do not think there is anything more we can add. You have been given an answer and I think that is what the answer is. Everything has to be considered carefully by government before any moves are made or any decisions are made and the answer -

Ms WEBB - It is not about decisions. It is about release of public submissions.

Mrs HISCUTT - The answer that has been supplied is the answer.

Ms WEBB - It is about the release of public submissions, not about decisions of government.

Madam CHAIR - There is no-one on their feet.

Ms WEBB - Perhaps the Government should consider if it would like to trumpet transparency and use the public publication of submissions to consultation as a key pillar of that, that there is a clearer protocol on when and how those are released and actual accountability to do so. We know right now there are at least two examples of public submissions made that have not been released for months if not years. Will the Government clarify its position on when public submissions are actually published?

Given there is no government decision involved, it is not about government policy, it is about, 'Here is a submission made by a member of the public, we will put it up on the website.'. Nothing very transparent about holding them back. Perhaps it is just the ones you do not like that you do not want to put up on the website.

Mrs HISCUTT - In particular, to the particular project that you are talking about.

Ms Webb - I am talking about more than one, by the way, but by all means use one example.

Mrs HISCUTT - That is correct. The Government is focused on the pandemic economic recovery and response, but remains committed to its Future Gaming Market policy, and others that are on the go. The consultation process has been paused; however, submissions from the first public consultation round will be published once consideration of the submissions has concluded.

Ms Webb - Why does consideration need to happen before they are put in the public domain?

Madam CHAIR - Order.

Ms Webb - Publish them on the website. No transparency in that whatsoever.

Ms LOVELL - Madam Chair, I have a question in relation to the question that was asked about the number of staff in the Protocol Office, and whether the staffing profile had changed.

The answer provided - and this is connected I suppose to my previous question - was to a particular date. As at 30 June there were five staff who undertook duties relating to protocol. The staffing profile has not changed. I am just wondering if there has been any change since 30 June up until now.

Mrs HISCUTT - Not that we are aware of.

Output agreed to.

Outputs 2.2 to 2.4 agreed to.

Output Group 3
Electronic Services for Government Agencies and the Community

3.2 Management and Ongoing Development of Service Tasmania -

Ms LOVELL - Madam Chair, those answers were received late yesterday, and I am satisfied with those.

Output agreed to.

Output Group 4
State Service Management

4.1 State Service Employment and Management -

Ms LOVELL - My questions have been answered. Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Those answers have been received, and I am fine with those.

Output agreed to.

Output 5.1 agreed to.

Output Group 90
COVID-19 Response and Recovery

90.1 State Sector - Casual Worker Support -

Ms LOVELL - Those answers have been received, thank you.

Output agreed to.

Output 90.4 agreed to.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Minister for Science and Technology -

Output 3.1 agreed to.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Minister for Local Government -

Output Group 6
Local Government

6.1 Local Government -

Ms RATTRAY - Madam Chair, thank you for your indulgence. With regard to the question I asked and received an answer for, the number of fines issued to local governments in the 2018-19 financial year. I received a response, but it actually talked about 2019-20.

I am not sure whether the breakdown provided by local government areas belongs to the 2019-20 financial year, or the 2018-19 financial year. I am interested in which one it actually is. On the answer that came back, it says that -

The director does not have the function of issuing fines under the act. Accordingly, no fines were issued in the 2018-19 or 2019-20 financial years.

A couple of questions arise from that. What is the point in having this process if you cannot follow it up with any action? There were 27 breaches, and it says -

... 19 of those were undertaken in response to formal complaints, with the remaining eight of the 27 being conducted in accordance with the director's own motion powers on the basis of informal complaints and the exercise of his general regulatory functions.

I asked for the general nature of those breaches and offences. Five of them were a breach of confidentiality; governance, 9; conflict of interest, 8; meeting regulations, 3; and functions of counsellors, 2.

Significant issues there for the director to inquire into, but again the question comes back: with those 27 alleged breaches, and no function to issue fines, what is the point? That is my question.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am advised that for 2018-19, no fines were issued.

The 27 complaints are for the 2019-20 year, so the director can refer matters to the DPP for prosecution. The DPP can issue fines or press charges.

Ms RATTRAY - To refer something to the DPP and have charges progressed is going to be a significant process. Why does the director not have some discretion around being able to act on those complaints, particularly if the breaches have been found to be what they are? Is that a concern that there is no ability for the director to progress, or at least put a sanction of some sort on, whatever pertains to those breaches of confidentiality, governance, conflict of interest, meeting regulations, and functions of counsellors? I would like some indication of what the director does.

With regard to meeting regulations, is there some training that needs to occur with regard to that compliance? With the functions of counsellors, I expect some sort of training. Governance, I am not sure. There would be a policy around conflict of interest for local government.

I am interested in what the director does to address the issues that have been brought forward under this particular area?

Mrs HISCUTT - I am advised that the Government has undertaken a review of the Local Government Act and this is a matter that is current. There is currently a draft form. The director also has the ability to advise the minister to issue a performance improvement direction or initiate a board of inquiry. The director is also working with the local government sector to improve performances.

Mr DEAN - You mentioned that it is current. It is being worked on and this area is being reviewed because there has been a lot of concern about it and its unwieldy nature. When is the parliament likely to see the legislation tabled? Local government members have been on to me and I suspect on to most other members about what we are doing about the current situation concerning acts of misconduct.

Mrs HISCUTT - Madam Chair, while I am waiting for some advice, we have had a look at our schedule and we are going quite well. I have been advised by my executive officer that if we were to keep going until we get to the minister for Sport we may be able to adjourn for the evening instead of taking a dinner break. How do members feel about that?

Madam CHAIR - As long as there is a limit, Leader, I would suggest, because the dining room needs to know what time we are going to finish.

Mrs HISCUTT - They do. Are members prepared to work through or will we stop at 7 p.m.?

Madam CHAIR - Until what time, Leader?

Mrs HISCUTT - We anticipate another 30 minutes, 45 minutes at the most. I am happy to be led by the Council.

Madam CHAIR - There is not really a question before the Chair at the moment other than the question that is about to be answered. We need to dispense with that first and then we can -

Mrs HISCUTT - We will dispense with the answer to the question. Regarding the question, I am advised that an exposure draft for the consultation will aim to occur in the second quarter next year, depending on the feedback. It will be introduced into parliament then. We all know that with legislation, consultation will go backwards and forwards until everybody is happy. That is the plan.

With regard to the question at hand and a dinner break, Madam Chair, did you wish to take that conversation over?

Madam CHAIR - It is perhaps a personal explanation as to what they believe is appropriate.

Mrs HISCUTT - Is that my personal explanation?

Madam CHAIR - You have made your explanation, yes. The member for McIntyre wanted to comment.

Ms RATTRAY - I am confused. It was my understanding that the Leader wanted to finish this this evening. I was not aware that we were dealing with the Budget into tomorrow. I will leave the Leader to give an explanation of what she, as Leader for the Government, intends to do.

Mrs HISCUTT - I apologise if you did not understand. By the end of Wednesday I had to have this done and another bill done, so we are going to work through this to enable that to happen. We are moving very quickly through it so -

Madam CHAIR - There are still a lot of open items.

Ms Armitage - Where are you suggesting we get to?

Mrs HISCUTT - Until the Minister for Racing. What page is that one? Division 10.

Mr Dean - It is only about two pages.

Ms Armitage - Yes. We can get that done.

Mrs HISCUTT - It will be the end of page 18 in our books, I believe.

Mr Dean - Yes, it is only two pages away.

Mrs HISCUTT - Division 9 and Division 10.

Madam CHAIR - Let us keep going, but let us not go beyond a reasonable hour, keeping in mind the needs of the dining room and the staff there. The rest of us have been sitting here all day.

Mrs HISCUTT - That is correct. I am happy to call it quits at any stage that members say.

Madam CHAIR - Let us consider the dining room staff.

Output agreed to.

Minister for Climate Change -

Output 1.2 agreed to.

Minister for Strategic Growth -

Output 7.1 agreed to.

Division agreed to without request and without amendment.

DIVISION 10

(Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment)

Output Group 1

Land Tasmania

1.1 Lands Titles, Survey and Mapping Services -

Mr DEAN - The question I asked here is clear during Estimates and we have an answer back and that was the number of consultants engaged by the department, the total cost and the reasons for engaging them, and whether the reports they have produced have been useful.

I must admit I was taken aback when I received the answer. I am not sure whether they were having a shot at me or somebody, or whether it was a tongue-in-cheek response.

We were talking here of one contract of \$541 582 and another contract of \$351 000. The question I asked was, what value did they get from these consultants reports. The answer came back that 'the consultancies have been useful'. That was the answer. I thought we could have had some other explanation. I am thankful that the \$541 000 contract was useful.

My question here is, what do we get out of it? We get these consultants in. I know of a number of consultants. I can refer to the Launceston City Council as a good example. Getting consultants in costing a fortune and doing absolutely nothing, sitting on a shelf and now they are doing another one to try to revise the one done previously, and so on.

What value did the department get out of those contracts in the circumstances? What changes were made and new things occurred? What happened? To simply say they were useful, I think is really -

Ms Armitage - Insulting.

Mr DEAN - Insulting, you are right.

Mrs HISCUTT - I apologise if the member found any insult in the answer.

Mr Dean - Well, I did.

Mrs HISCUTT - I have just been advised by the adviser that it was certainly not the intent. I will apologise on behalf -

Mr Dean - No, you do not have to apologise.

Mrs HISCUTT - There was no intent there at all.

Many of these are technical in nature and represent work that cannot be done by the department. The department takes the use of consultants very seriously. With regard to your specific questions:

- Cultural Business Innovations was awarded a contract of \$351 000 ex GST to undertake a desktop analysis of the Aboriginal cultural values in the Arthur-

Pieman Conservation Area. This work is a critical requirement of a Commonwealth Government Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act controlled action decision. The decision obliges the states to undertake specialist Aboriginal cultural heritage investigation to inform the public environmental report process and this was one of them.

- Taylor + Hinds Architects Pty Ltd was awarded a contract of \$541 582 ex GST as the lead architects for the design and documentation of the new visitor centre at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. It is a significant multimillion-dollar capital works project. It requires specialised architectural design input from concept to practical completion. That is what that one was for.
- Urban EPS was awarded a contract for \$64 800, ex GST, to establish a policy rationale and determine any impacts of introducing legislation for a waste levy in Tasmania, as committed to in the Tasmanian Government's Draft Waste Action Plan. This consultancy was the only one awarded to a mainland firm.
- SGE Consulting Pty Ltd was awarded a contract of \$200 000, ex GST, to provide expertise on essential building services and maintenance for our iconic PWS building portfolio properties. These services include fire detection and sprinkler systems, remote alarm monitoring, electrical reticulation and installations, heating ventilation, air conditioning, and disability access compliance services as directed by the Director of Building Control. Buildings include the Salamanca Arts Centre, the Theatre Royal and the Powder Magazine at the Queens Domain in Hobart.
- Cumulus Studio Pty Ltd was awarded a contract of \$137 025, excluding GST, following a fire that destroyed the park's visitor shelter in Ben Lomond National Park in May 2018. The state received insurance funding to redesign and replace the shelter. Cumulus Studio was the successful tenderer in a call for suitable architects to deliver the design and documentation process for the redevelopment. Cumulus is a Tasmanian firm and was awarded the contract in late 2020.

There was no disrespect meant when they said that they were useful and you can see that, yes, they were very useful.

Ms RATTRAY - That was an extensive amount of detail that could have been included in the answer. It would have helped not only the member who asked the question, but members of the committee, including me, who were astounded that anyone would receive a consultancy of \$541 582. It says it is for 'consultancy services for the visitor centre and associated works'. So with the associated works, does that mean that is to complete the project, or is there someone who is going to be the project manager who will also have that component of the project built into it as well?

I understand it is the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, certainly an icon in Tasmania and a significant part of Tasmania, but that is well over half a million dollars. That is a lot of money. As for the Ben Lomond public shelter replacement, the cost of the architect, it does not matter whether it is an insurance claim or not, half of that, if they had something more

reasonable, could have gone towards the cost of the building replacement. That is a comment, not a question. My question relates to the Royal Botanical Gardens.

Mrs HISCUTT - To start with, Chair of Committee B, we certainly acknowledge what you have said, and your point was taken.

With regard to the \$541 000, it was for the lead architects for the design. This is a project that is worth in excess of \$7 million. It is Taylor + Hinds Architects Pty Ltd, and we consider it to be good value for money in this \$7 million project and the department certainly does not have the resources to do that and the associated works related to project management.

Ms Rattray - That means that in the build of that particular facility, there will be no additional costs for project management?

Mrs HISCUTT - I cannot guarantee that but I have been informed that the cost here is standard for a project of that size.

Ms RATTRAY - We have just heard that this new visitor centre will be in excess of \$7 million. Does that then mean that there will be a project management fee that will be included in that \$7 million on top of the \$541 582? Taylor + Hinds Architects will not necessarily be the project managers for the building of the visitor centre, so what are their associated works? What is their role in that consultancy service, and what does it relate to because it definitely says 'associated works'? What do they consist of?

Mrs HISCUTT - That figure accounts for the architect-designed documentation and project management for the building works.

Ms RATTRAY - So there will not be any additional cost of a project manager? If project management is included in this amount of money -

Mrs HISCUTT - A project manager is included in the building works. This is the design and the building works.

Ms RATTRAY - Okay.

Mrs HISCUTT - The whole project - there may be something else but not in the building works. There may be fittings or a garden around the outside, but this is the actual building of the structure so the project manager is included in that.

Ms RATTRAY - In the consultancy and the build?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you.

Output agreed to.

Output 1.2 agreed to.

Outputs 2.1 to 2.3 agreed to.

Output Group 3

Natural and Cultural Heritage

3.1 Resource Management and Conservation -

Ms RATTRAY - With regard to this particular area, Output Group 3 - Resource Management and Conservation, I asked for a list of recipients of Landcare grants and the amounts awarded and the response was:

Please be advised that the department is currently preparing a response to this information request. In line with the application process, permission is required from each of the grantees before inclusion in the response to the committee. Obtaining this information will take several weeks.

If a person applies for a grant under this particular area, Landcare grants - and they are really important, I understand that, particularly around resource management and conservation - then why would they not be informed at the beginning of the process that there would be some scrutiny about the granting of public funds?

That is my question initially. We have to go back to the grantees and seek their permission for the information to be provided to a scrutiny committee of this parliament.

Ms Webb - Why is it not built in at the front end when they applied?

Ms RATTRAY - Exactly. When they applied, why wasn't there information that this will be scrutinised by the parliament at some time? I was very surprised to read that we need to have permission from each of the grantees before inclusion in the response to the committee.

If this is going to be the continued process, I suggest, and I know the Leader will take this on board, that the minister reassess because that is not good enough. If you are going to accept funds from the Tasmanian people, then you need to have your name provided for scrutiny under this parliamentary scrutiny process.

Mrs HISCUTT - To start with, it is not administered by the Government. The TFGA and Landcare Tasmania deliver the program. We will certainly take that comment you have made back to the TFGA and Landcare. The information can be obtained through the RTI process and is the process we will use to get that information. Yes, same standard.

Ms RATTRAY - My follow-up question is, why should a member of parliament have to go through an RTI process to be able to gain information? It does not matter who is administering it.

Mrs Hiscutt - We have to go through the same standards to get the information and that is what we will be doing to get that information. You do not have to do it.

Ms RATTRAY - Okay. The Government will do it on our behalf.

Mrs Hiscutt - Yes, we will do it for you, to get that information, but it is the same standard. The member makes a fair point and we will take that back to TFGA and Landcare Tasmania.

Ms RATTRAY - Why does the Government need to go through an RTI process? That information should be readily available.

Mrs Hiscutt - It is their program, not ours.

Ms RATTRAY - But it is a line item in our budget. If it does not belong to us, then why is it in the Tasmanian Government Budget? That is the most relevant question. Why is it sitting in the Tasmanian Government Budget if the Tasmanian Government has to put in an RTI request to find the list of recipients and the amounts awarded? What a nonsense, Madam Chair. It is getting late in the day and many of us did not have any lunch and I might be 'hangry', but that beggars belief.

Madam CHAIR - They might reflect on this *Hansard* at a later time and see how silly it looks.

Ms RATTRAY - Whatever the Leader might add to my concerns, I certainly would be appreciative. If this process is going to continue, then it needs to be looked at. That should be available just like that.

Ms Webb - It should be disclosed without even having to be asked.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, you should not have to even request it. But, certainly, with a request it should be available. There are plenty of members in this place who know how difficult it is and how long it takes to receive information under the RTI process. That is no disrespect to the people who work in that area because we know they are inundated with requests for information. Please take that as a genuine comment on that.

Mrs HISCUTT - For clarity, it is not an RTI. What we are doing is the same standard as an RTI. This is tradition. This particular line item has traditionally been done like this for many, many years - long before the current Government became the Government.

Your point has been picked up, and it is a fair point. We will certainly go back to the TFGA and Landcare Tasmania and say it needs to be done before then.

To be clear, it is not an RTI. It is an RTI process. We will be using the same standard that an RTI uses. The time is for the organisations to contact all their respective grantees, so that they are aware that that request is going to be made.

Ms RATTRAY - What if one of the landowners decides they do not want their details and the detail of their grant made public? What happens then? Who looks at that process? I am interested. I will be looking at this next year through the Estimates process. As we know, just because something has been done that way in the past, does not make it right. This is about an open and transparent process. It is about members of this House being able to scrutinise a budget. That is what I am here for. I believe the question is valid. What if they say, 'No, I do

not want to provide that, I do not want anyone to know how much money our particular initiative received through these Landcare grants'?

Mrs HISCUTT - The program guidelines currently state that the details of each project may be made public only with the permission of the proponent. If it is this particular one that we are now talking about, there may be someone who chooses not to disclose that. There is nothing we can do about it.

Madam CHAIR - It could be all of them.

Mrs HISCUTT - Maybe, but we have acknowledged that you have made a fair point and we will be looking at getting those guidelines sorted.

Output agreed to.

Output 4.1 agreed to.

Output Group 6 Biosecurity Tasmania

6.1 Biosecurity -

Mr DEAN - I will be very quick on this. I had a ring from the department this morning to ask me what my further concerns were. I have given my concerns to them. The department has said they will come back to me with those answers in due course. I am happy with that. Thank you.

Output agreed to.

Output 6.2 agreed to.

Outputs 90.2 and 90.6 agreed to.

Grants and subsidies agreed to.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Minister for Environment and Parks -

Output 3.5 agreed to.

Output Group 7 Environment Protection and Analytical Services

Output 7.1 agreed to.

7.2 Analytical Services -

Mr VALENTINE - The answer has been provided, albeit it was late, as we know. I do not have any further questions. The link has been provided, and I have many results that I will be able to absorb as I dream about them at night. I thank the staff for providing those answers.

Output agreed.

Outputs 8.1 and 8.2 agreed to.

Outputs 90.5 and 90.7 agreed to.

Grants and subsidies agreed to.

Capital Investment Program agreed to.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs -

Output Group 3

Natural and Cultural Heritage

3.3 Aboriginal Heritage -

Ms WEBB - I have questions here, because it will be noted that we did not have time during the Estimates session to complete asking questions. I now have two questions I would like to put to this output group.

The first one relates to the context of a reset relationship with the Aboriginal community, which is intended to be effected through recognition, advancing reconciliation, and working to achieve real outcomes. The Government, however, has committed \$300 000 towards reopening four-wheel drive tracks directly over sites of cultural heritage significance to the palawa, the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

Given the context, more broadly, of the Juukan Gorge disaster we saw on the mainland, how is this commitment of \$300 000 for the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area access consistent with resetting the relationship with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, when the Tasmanian Aboriginal community has repeatedly and very clearly expressed its opposition to opening those tracks to four-wheel drive vehicles? That is the first question, about the consistency of those two actions.

The second question I will put as well, so you can answer them both together. There does not appear to be money in the Budget to establish governance arrangements that provide a role for a non-government Aboriginal organisation in the joint management of the Aboriginal cultural values of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. That is a key desired outcome under the TWWHA Management Plan 2016, on page 26, of that plan - that there would be a role for a non-government Aboriginal organisation in the joint management of the Aboriginal cultural values, and other cultural landscapes as well, such as the Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Landscape.

What steps is the Government taking to action the joint management of sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance?

Mrs HISCUTT - The Government is committed to continued access for recreational off-road vehicle track use within the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area following careful consideration of natural heritage and recreational values. The Government is determined to strike an appropriate balance between existing recreational activities, such as four-wheel driving, and the protection of the significant Aboriginal heritage values in the area.

The Government will make decisions based on evidence and has commenced the work required to prepare the public environment report required by the Australian Government assessment process.

The Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment has determined the provision of access to the tracks for off-road vehicles will be subject to assessment as a controlled action under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - EPBC Act- through a public environment report. The Tasmanian Government has committed to this process in order to ensure that the proposal undergoes robust assessment and provides the opportunity for public comment.

The additional ecological and cultural heritage assessment that will be required for the public environment report was already committed to as part of the proposed management actions documented in the referral under the EPBC Act.

The avifauna report has now been completed and demonstrates that impacts to migratory bird species can be mitigated through monitoring and operational management of four-wheel drives on open beaches.

The cultural heritage survey work has been undertaken for over 12 months and is being led by a Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage Officer and several field specialists. The final report is due before the end of November and is being delayed due to the ill health of a team member. These investigations will inform what further actions are taken to progress the public environment report.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to developing joint management arrangements with Aboriginal people, particularly in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The cultural management group of Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania has developed a number of ground-up projects focusing on Aboriginal people to contribute to the joint management outcomes contained in the TWWHA Management Plan 2016. The project includes facilitating a series of Aboriginal community access visits during 2019 to cultural heritage sites and landscapes in the TWWHA; providing opportunities for Aboriginal people to access and record rock marking sites in the TWWHA and contribute to their conservation and management; providing cultural heritage awareness training, which will provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and businesses to develop and deliver course material to TWWHA land managers; and providing opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate in a national Indigenous fire workshop in conjunction with contemporary fire training by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service to build skills required to complete cultural burning within the TWWHA.

The draft TWWHA Tourism Master Plan, once approved, proposes that the cultural heritage decision protocol is developed in partnership with the Aboriginal Heritage Council to establish a procedural framework to promote Aboriginal involvement and engagement in

decision-making for cultural heritage presentation and interpretation in the TWWHA. The protocol will integrate with relevant approvals and other processes.

The Government is committed to working with Aboriginal people to facilitate cultural burning and in supporting the development of a cultural burning policy and will trial a grants program totalling \$100 000. This is in addition to the Working on Country Aboriginal Trainee Ranger Program delivered through Parks and Wildlife Service, which provides Aboriginal people with the ability to engage with land management of our protected areas. It is important to note that developing joint management arrangements that are agreed and accepted by the Aboriginal community and government will take some time to deliver.

The Aboriginal Heritage Council and broader Tasmanian Aboriginal community will be consulted on potential joint management arrangements which are being considered.

Ms Webb - Is there a time line on that?

Mrs HISCUTT - The time line on which particular part, the tourism master plan or the -

Ms WEBB - No, I am talking about the formalisation of joint governance arrangements to involve the Tasmanian Aboriginal community who are not part of just the Heritage Council. The time line for those structures to be in place so that there are governance arrangements there around joint management. So, a time line. Is there is a budget allocated for that to be put in place and then undertaken?

Mrs HISCUTT - Funding is not allocated because it is already there with PWS and the general heritage budget. Regarding the time line, consultation has started. It is in its infancy and it will be worked through without rushing it. It has to be done right. We are working with the community constantly and we are waiting for further instructions from the community.

Ms WEBB - My last follow-up. In terms of consulting in order to develop this joint management structure, I hear you say that that is underway with no specific time lines but it needs to be done right. That is somewhat of a cop-out. Is there a time by which the Government would like it to be in place? If the budgeting sits within those government department areas, will the Tasmanian Aboriginal community be funded to be joint partners in this once the arrangement is put in place?

Mrs HISCUTT - Basically the answer is yes. I could give you examples but the answer is yes and they are all refunded. We are already funding the Aboriginal community on a number of joint programs. I can read them out if you so desire.

Ms Webb - No, it is not the programs. It is the governance, the joint management.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is the same thing.

Ms Webb - It is not the same thing.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is not the same thing, but the answer is the same. We hope to have this well progressed by the end of the calendar year next year.

Output agreed to.

Outputs 3.2 and 3.4 agreed to.

Grants and subsidies agreed to.

Minister for Racing -

Output 5. 1 read -

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT

[7.35 p.m.]

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

That the Council at its rising adjourns until 11 a.m. Wednesday 9 December 2020.

Mr President, I remind members of the payroll tax rebate briefing tomorrow at 9 a.m. followed by the Brickmakers Point Landslip Bill briefing straight after. These briefings will be in Committee Room 2.

Motion agreed to.

The Council adjourned at 7.36 p.m.