PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Wednesday 18 September 2024

REVISED EDITION

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Wednesday 18 September 2024

The Speaker, **Ms O'Byrne**, took the Chair at 10.00 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

The SPEAKER - Before we commence questions, I acknowledge some people sitting in the Speaker's Reserve today: Rosetta Primary student parliament representative, Deputy Prime Minister, Matteo. Thank you very much for joining us. It is unparliamentary, but everybody wave to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Members - Hear, hear.

The SPEAKER - Upstairs we have years 11 and 12 legal studies students from Rosny College, accompanied by Mr Pill. Is Mr Pill there somewhere waving at us? A little note - I do not know what he is like as a teacher but his parents were excellent educators. Good luck with that.

Members - Hear, hear.

QUESTIONS

Budget 2024-25 - Tasmania's Credit Rating

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.02 a.m.]

You have wrecked Tasmania's finances and now credit rating agencies have you in their sights. Standard and Poors (S&P) have warned that you are now closer to a weaker credit rating than they had expected prior to the Budget. They said it was unusual for a jurisdiction with Tasmania's rating to be running such significant cash deficits and expressed concern that things would be getting worse rather than getting better. They said your Budget contained '… a frank admission that the state is going to breach all of its fiscal targets for fiscal management'. After 10 years in office, has the Liberal Party given up on responsible budget management and put our state's credit rating at risk? Can you confirm Standard & Poors is right and you have breached nearly every measure in your fiscal strategy?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I welcome students from far and wide across Tasmania who are in the parliament today witnessing democracy in action.

I thank the member for his question. Speaking of weaker, he gave a very weak performance yesterday when we were all expecting an alternative budget from the leader and he squibbed it well and truly. Not only did he squib it in terms of the opposition's responsibility but also the will of the parliament requiring the Leader to present an alternative budget. He had the chance yesterday.

He said on early morning radio today that it is a frustrating job, but what would have made it less frustrating for the member is if he had delivered an alternative budget, as per the will of the parliament. Instead, we got a 10-point plan. I can just imagine -

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Speaker, Standing order 45, relevance. The Premier has been going for half his time so far and has not got anywhere near the Standard & Poors issue that is really important to Tasmania's Budget. I wonder if you would ask him to come back to the question.

The SPEAKER - Premier, the latitude given in answers normally is in response to the latitude given in questions. This was a very specific question and I draw you to it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, I will come to the question in a moment. As I lead up to answering the question, the member squibbed it yesterday and presented a 10-point plan which seemed to me like it was written by AI.

Ms FINLAY - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. Can the Premier please address the question?

The SPEAKER - Premier, I have asked you to come to the question. Please do so. You have 45 seconds.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The 2024-25 Budget continues the government's fiscal strategy which was introduced with the 2023-24 Budget. It is a 10-year strategy, not a one-year strategy, and it presented a robust framework to guide budget sustainability over the next 10 years. It is a very measured and purposeful response to the sign of the times, with the significant investment we have made and are making in keeping children safe and the significant investment we are making and have made in the pandemic and the pandemic recovery.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Supplementary Question

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, I imagine you have a supplementary question?

Mr WINTER - Yes, honourable Speaker, just to ask that question again. Has the Premier's minority government breached every fiscal measure in its fiscal strategy?

The SPEAKER - I draw the Premier to the second part of the original question.

Mr Winter - You can just say 'yes' if you want. That is fine.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No. What we are doing is presenting a robust framework to guide budget sustainability over the next 10 years. It was praised by Moody's Investors Service following last year's budget and our credit rating remains at AA2 or AA+.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - The Treasurer and shadow treasurer will listen in silence.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The 2024-25 Budget has been developed with a view to returning the budget to a balanced position by 2028-29 and a net operating surplus by 2029-30.

The member talks about debt but then also makes false arguments about cuts, so what is it? What is your strategy? Yesterday you had the opportunity to present an alternative budget, which was the will of the parliament. You have talked a lot about the will of the parliament in recent times but you squibbed it yesterday. What is it? Are you talking about cuts or are you talking about debt?

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the supplementary question has expired.

Budget 2024-25 - Interest Payments

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.08 a.m.]

You talk about Moody's response to last year's budget. The response to this year's Budget is quite different. Moody's has said that your 480 election promises would have quite a negative impact on the state's financial position. They suggested your rapidly rising debt would require tough decisions, but doubted whether you would have the stomach for dealing with it given your failure to stick to your own fiscal strategy. They said:

> Any time financial parameters are set, the general expectation is that they will be managed too. When an entity steps outside of that, it does create questions as far as the willingness … to make hard decisions to maintain the commitment to those metrics.

Over the next four years, Tasmanians are set to pay $1.4 billion in interest on your record debt. A credit rating downgrade will mean even higher rates of interest. What will be the budget impact of a credit rating downgrade and how much more interest will Tasmanians have to pay on your record debt?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the question. The consequences of the federal settings of high inflation and high interest rates are impacting not only on budgets but everyday Tasmanians and Australians. We are reaching in to support Tasmanians doing it tough and that is why we had significant cost-of-living measures -

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. Just to explain, the Premier might not have understood, the question is talking about interest rates in relation to Tasmania's payment of debt, not interest rates in the cash rate set by the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA).

The SPEAKER - I note that the Premier has only been going for 20 seconds. Thank you for that clarification, which is not an appropriate use of a point of order. I am sure we will be listening to the Premier and hoping we get the answer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, and I hope you are not ignoring the 13 interest rate rises that Tasmanians and Australians have experienced. You squibbed it yesterday. You wanted to come up with a budget reply plan. You searched ChatGPT - artificial intelligence - and what did you come up with? It searched far and wide and came up with the 2030 Strong Plan, page 138, in fact:

> A re-elected majority Liberal government -

Substitute 'Labor' -

> … will also update the act to contain mechanisms to plan, deliver and coordinate large-scale projects.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - I will hear the point of order and we can all settle down a little bit. The Premier practised that one; you can all applaud him and move back to the question in a moment.

Dr BROAD - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. This is very amusing but it needs to be directly relevant.

The SPEAKER - I understand Standing Order 45. The Premier has one minute and, whilst he is very proud of his document and his joke, I will point him to the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I respect you all and you, honourable Speaker. It goes on to say:

> These legislative updates will be developed utilising learnings from the Queensland model of the Coordinator-General and major project facilitation.

They went to AI to develop a Budget reply -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Premier, I am hearing a point of order. I am about to draw the Premier to the question but if you can still make it.

Ms FINLAY - Point of order, Speaker, I was going to reinforce Standing Order 45, relevance. There is a very important fact -

The SPEAKER - No, you do not get to make a statement about it. We have already had three points of order. Premier, you have 30 seconds. I ask you to come to the question, otherwise the time allowed for future answers will be adjusted accordingly. The member for Lyons can stop helping me.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have covered this off in the previous answer. The member, in the point of order, seems to be ignoring the fact of the pain Tasmanians have experienced in our experience as a result of the -

Ms Finlay - These are serious matters.

Mr ROCKLIFF -Yes, it is, and I am explaining it.

The SPEAKER - The member for Bass will cease interjecting. The Premier is going to run out - in fact, has now run out of time.

Supplementary Question

Mr WINTER - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WINTER - You will be shocked to know that I want an answer to the question I asked. It was a simple question. How much more interest will Tasmanians have to pay in in the event of a credit rating downgrade? If he does not know the answer, perhaps the Premier could seek the answer and come back on notice.

The SPEAKER - That was the original last part of the question, as I wrote it down. Premier, I draw you to the impact of an increase in debt repayments. If the Premier wishes to take it on notice, that is a matter for him, and the shadow treasurer will stop using up his time.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, honourable Speaker. The fiscal strategy focuses over a 10-year period, as I have said before, with 11 strategic targets and associated actions. It is not just a one-year plan, and you cannot expect to -

Mr Winter - It gets worse.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You wanted to slash and burn the budget, like you did in 2011, which sent people to the dole queues and Tasmania into recession. Then fill your boots. Yesterday, you had the opportunity to stand up and present an alternative budget. On the one hand you talk about cuts, on the next hand you talk about the debt. What is it? What we have delivered is a sensible pathway to surplus, aligning with our fiscal strategy as released. It recognises the need to build additional budget flexibility, which was vital and allowed the government to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. I do not hear you speaking about the $1.5-$2 billion -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

State of the Environment Report - Government Policies

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.14 a.m.]

In breach of the law, your government has refused to produce a State of the Environment report for a decade. For that decade, the Liberals have put vested interests in big corporations first and the environment last, and now the evidence of consequences is in. Of the report's 29 environmental indicators, over half are getting worse and already in a devastating state. The climate crisis contributes to this decline but all of the massive local drivers are in your control. This includes forestry, threatened species decline, pollution, inappropriate developments, land and water use and invasive species.

Do you now accept that Liberal policies have caused much of the environmental harms outlined in this report? Also, do you believe this is an acceptable price to pay for pursuing your agenda?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member, Dr Woodruff, for the question: an important question. Our government's 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future outlines key commitments to protect our much-loved environment. It is about working sensibly with your natural resources. It is about protecting our waterways. It is about ensuring we do have good soil conservation. It is also about supporting our natural environment, and investing in our parks and reserves, so that Tasmanians and Australians and those across the globe can come to Tasmania in wonder of our natural environment and the fact that we have over 50 per cent of the state in reserves, for example. This is something to be proud of as well as -

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance, I draw the Premier's attention to the question. Does he accept his policies have caused this environmental harm in large part?

The SPEAKER - Premier, I will draw you to the question under Standing Order 45.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I do not accept that.

Dr Woodruff - Did you read the report?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Our Budget commits to real action on climate change and this is made evident by the $21 million in funding we have allocated over the next four years. It builds on significant investment of some $250 million in climate change initiatives already underway across government. There is no one single action to this, and in the report -

Dr Woodruff - It is all the actions that your policies have created.

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Greens, please. That is the fourth interjection in a minute and a half.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are building a circular economy, which will not only reduce waste and pollution in our environment but create jobs and business opportunities for Tasmanians. The Greens have talked about recycling and container deposits for years and years. Where was it between 2010 and 2014? You had the chance to do it. It took a Liberal government to deliver it.

Mr Winter - You have not delivered anything.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - The House will come to order and the Premier will stop inciting that kind of response.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Albeit, not too far away. We have as soon as possible and I thank the minister, Mr Jaensch, for his leadership in this area, which has been significant.

The report also recognises the investments we are making at a very local level. It is a good opportunity for me to thank our local environment groups, Landcare organisations and volunteers. The report points to the importance of investment in those organisations to fence off riparian areas -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time has expired. Sorry, I was noting down whether he had answered it.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - From the Premier's answer, can you confirm that he has actually read the report? You have been sitting on it for ages.

The SPEAKER - I think a simple yes or no might be useful, Premier, I draw you to that as a supplementary. It does come out of your response, I am afraid.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. The report went through Cabinet on Monday and all members availed themselves of the report. I have just highlighted an example of what is contained in the report. It mentions those local Landcare investments and how important they are. You have to acknowledge the significant improvements over decades in the environment, such as landholders working with Landcare groups and other environmental groups on fencing off rivers and waterways from stock access. This protects our waterways and supports our recreational fisheries, which are all important matters.

Having received the report on Monday, through Cabinet, we will be providing a response to the report. There is significant information to absorb -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the supplementary has expired.

St Helens Private Hospital - 2023 Closure

Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, and WELLBEING, Mr BARNETT

[10.20 a.m.]

The 2023 closure of St Helens Hospital was a shocking blow to the health system in southern Tasmania and led to the closure of Tasmania's only mother-baby unit. This valued facility helped thousands of mums and babies with all the challenges faced in the first year, including feeding, sleep, settling and mental health. The government's response to the closure of St Helens was to open three beds in the Royal Hobart Hospital for psychiatric admissions only.

At the time, the Premier said the beds at the Royal were an interim solution while the government worked with stakeholders to establish a more comprehensive service model. Last week's Budget contained two years of funding for the three beds at the Royal and funding for

a mother-baby unit in the north. It appears from the budget papers that you have abandoned your commitment to resourcing an appropriate mother-baby unit in the south. Why?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his interest in this matter. It is an important matter and the government recognises that. I acknowledge the leadership of the Premier and the former minister for Health, who acted very quickly at the time when St Helens Private Hospital closed and that interim solution for a new mother-baby unit was delivered at the Royal Hobart Hospital to meet those immediate needs of Tasmanian families. That unit is now supporting mothers experiencing mental health challenges such as postnatal depression and anxiety with a new model of care implemented by the cohort of staff, including some of the staff from St Helens Private Hospital.

Tasmanian families seeking this type of support can be referred through existing networks such as the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Services and other treating clinicians like paediatricians. It is in addition to other supports that are publicly available to support new parents through our parenting centres at Child Health and Parenting Services.

We recognise that a hospital environment may not be the most appropriate option for all mums. We are aiming to establish a perinatal healthcare model that offers a range of options for the community, public and private system, beyond hospital care. Our Department of Health is investigating a stepped service delivery model focused on collaboration, integration across the government, non-government and the private sector service providers.

The member made mention of Tresillian and the work they have been doing with this government. During the election we announced that commitment to partner with Tresillian Family Care and that will transform the way we support new mums and dads during those all-important first 1000 days for newborn's lives. We will also invest $9 million for a four-bed mother and baby unit in the north in Launceston and that is progressing well. You might have read about it in today's media, in fact. The Mother Baby Centre will have rooms where mothers and babies can stay in the care and expertise -

Mr O'BYRNE - Point of order, Standing Order 45, relevance. I appreciate the information the minister is giving but the question was about the mother-baby unit in the south of the state and he only has a couple of minutes.

The SPEAKER - Minister, you have 28 seconds to address the issue about the beds in the south. Otherwise, I will expect a supplementary.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much. As I was saying, Tresillian is doing some fine work, not just in the north but we are now delivering a statewide free call service, which is 1300 TAS BUB. That covers the state and consideration will also be given to the expansion -

The SPEAKER - The minister's time has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr O'BYRNE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the not unexpected supplementary question on the original question.

Mr O'BYRNE - The question was about the mother-baby unit in the south. I appreciate the minister's information about the mother-baby unit in the north and the facilities and the other effort -

The SPEAKER - You cannot make too much of an argument.

Mr O'BYRNE - but please go to the question on the mother-baby unit in the south. Has he abandoned that commitment?

The SPEAKER - The original question, as I noted it, was about the commitment made about not just having psych only beds in the south. I draw the minister to that question now.

Mr BARNETT - I am glad I have the opportunity for a few more moments to indicate that consideration is being given to the expansion of the Tresillian services in the south. We are continuing funding for the mother and baby unit at the Royal Hobart Hospital with a $4 million investment. In addition to that we have Gidget House - and I was there at the opening just a few months ago - a new perinatal mental health centre recently opened in Hobart as part of the $26.2 million commitment from the Australian Government. That is a net positive as well. We continue to provide that support and acknowledge how important the services are for mothers and babies across the state.

Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995 - Review

Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for BUSINESS, INDUSTRY and RESOURCES, Mr ABETZ

[10.25 a.m.]

The marine and coasts chapter of the State of the Environment report warns that of the 12 indicators, six are getting worse, these being sea surface temperatures, kelp, threatened marine fish, beach change, salt marshes and migratory shorebirds. In addition, the numbers of depleting or depleted fish stocks is now 11 and the Maugean skate and handfish teeter on the brink of extinction. Clearly, our coastal waters are in deep trouble.

The *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995* is 29 years old, does not reference climate change and is not fit for purpose. Do you agree that we need a strong plan for healthy oceans? Will you commit to progressing the living marine act review and tabling new legislation that is contemporary and effective?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I think everybody in this place, including those in the gallery, would agree that it is vitally important we have good, healthy waterways, both inland and around our shores. Everybody would be agreed that it is important that we have our fish stock at a sustainable level. In relation to some of the matters raised by the member, I would say that the suggestions being made about the Maugean skate require a lot more evidence and scientific research before some of the claims that are being made can be substantiated.

Indeed, we have seen a greater level of oxygenation in Macquarie Harbour, noting that the Maugean skate has gone extinct in Bathurst Harbour in circumstances that nobody can explain - no fish farms, no human activity of any nature. Unfortunately, these things do occur, as they occurred in Bathurst Harbour. We are doing everything we can, including a breeding program for the Maugean skate with an investment, if I recall correctly, of $2 million. We are concerned.

With these environmental reports, I wish Tasmanians would celebrate the fact we have the cleanest air and water in the world. We are an exemplar - 50 per cent of our land mass is in reserves. We have a lot to be proud of. Can we do better? Absolutely. We need to do better, but in comparison to other states, to around the world, Tasmania has an exceptionally proud record that every single Tasmanian, irrespective of their political hue, should be willing to celebrate and holding up there and saying to people, 'If you want to do forestry well, do it like we do it in Tasmania. If you want to do fishing, do it like we do it in Tasmania. Mining - do it like we do it in Tasmania'.

In the 30 seconds left, you asked about the review of the act. That is something that I have been speaking to the department about, and I think most people would agree that there is a need for a review of the act. There is the question of resources and time and allocation of effort. That is something that I have been turning my mind to in recent times.

Port Latta Wind Farm - Development Application

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.29 a.m.]

Nothing is getting done under your government. Developments across Tasmania are stalled and it is creating a serious risk that important projects will fall over. Last week, we asked your government about the Port Latta wind farm and whether you would extend their development application. Along with the council, they have been trying to get an extension for months and your government has so far done nothing. We asked your minister about it last week and he said that he hoped an extension would not be necessary, but it is necessary.

There is wide support for the project but if there is no extension, it will fall over. Will your government finally get involved to get this critical project underway, and has your failure to do anything to save this project shown exactly why Tasmania needs a coordinator-general with teeth?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - I have not given the Premier the call. Minister Ellis and the member for Bass probably do not need to have a conversation, but I am happy for you to do it outside if you would like. Premier, you have the call.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I took great interest in his idea - admittedly generated by AI - yesterday. I think it was contained in the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future.

Ms Finlay - A plan is no good without action.

The SPEAKER - Member for Bass, if you wish to get answers to questions, interjecting and encouraging the Premier to go off the answer does not help anyone. The Premier will come to the question and the member will stop interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What I also noted was that there was no plan for health, housing or education. No plan to keep children and young people safe. No plan for cost-of-living relief. Your plan was not a plan. This is a plan.

Ms DOW - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. This is an incredibly important question. I ask you to draw the Premier's attention back to the question and this is all about his government actually getting nothing done.

The SPEAKER - Points of order, whilst actually quite relevant, are not an opportunity to further prosecute the case. The Premier has a two-part question on the intervention in the Port Latta development application extension and the role of the Coordinator-General. I will draw him to those.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are a couple of matters that we welcome in recent times from the Leader of the Opposition. First, the bipartisan support on the stadium. I was there with Catherine King.

Mr Willie - Answer the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is very relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER - I am listening for the relevance, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There was federal Labor minister, Catherine King, this morning on the Macquarie Point site where the Tasmanian government has done its due diligence and the $240 million has been ticked off, which is a welcome development -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Frivolous points of order are not going to go very well. I am trying to hear the Premier's answer. The Premier is addressing the preamble about the development. I will call him for the last 30 seconds to the answer that I have asked him to come to though.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Notwithstanding the copycat response from the Leader of the Opposition about a number of these matters, the member talks about renewable energy and renewable energy investment, when it was only a matter of months ago that you wanted to pull the plug on Marinus.

Members interjecting.

Mr Winter - That is not true.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Pull the plug on Marinus and decimate Hydro and our renewable energy powerhouse. Your hypocrisy is shameful on matters of renewable energy and investments where the key plank of the investment of getting wind -

The SPEAKER -The Premier will resume his seat; his time has expired. A not-unexpected supplementary now from the Leader of the Opposition on the original question.

Supplementary Question

Mr WINTER - On the original question, on Port Latta. Will the Premier finally get involved to get this critical Port Latta wind farm project out of the ground?

The SPEAKER - The original question, Premier, you have addressed one part, about the Coordinator-General broadly, but will you address the issue about the development extension and your engagement, please?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I respect your ruling.

The SPEAKER - You say that, Premier. I do not feel that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have not really touched on the Coordinator-General, but I will come to that in a moment. In fact, I will come to it now. If Labor had its way, there would be no Coordinator-General.

The SPEAKER - Premier, whilst that may very well have been true, the question before you in the supplementary question is the extension being required for Port Latta. You have been handed a piece of paper so I am really hoping you can address it in the last 30 seconds.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will come to the Coordinator-General in a moment. The *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* provides opportunities for a development application to be extended by the council, as the planning authority have advised. I am advised that the planning authority is granted the extensions as allowed under the act. I am aware of the concerns in relation to the Port Latta wind farm development proposal. I encourage the proponents of this development to engage with the council as planning authority in relation to the requirement to substantially commence this project in line with legislated time frames.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time has expired.

Supercars Event - Scheduling Changes

Mrs PENTLAND question to MINISTER for SPORT and EVENTS, Mr STREET

[10.35 a.m.]

I raise concerns about the recent scheduling changes to the annual Supercars event. For over a decade, the Supercars have been held in the first half of the year, a time that traditionally brings strong economic benefits to local businesses, especially the accommodation sector which sees full occupancy during this period. However, this year the event was moved to August, resulting in a large decrease in hotel bookings and a financial hit to the local economy.

In 2005, the event attracted attendance of over 62,000 fans. The event this year attracted 29,000 fans.

Did the government have any influence or input in the decision to move the Supercars event to August? Does the government continue to invest in the same level of financial support towards hosting a Supercars event in Tasmania, despite the change in timing? Will the government engage with Supercars organisers to negotiate moving the event back to the first half of the year? Does the government still believe this event is worth the investment?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Governments of both persuasions have been long-term supporters of the V8 Supercars event. We still believe in the economic benefits of this event for Tasmania. In terms of the specifics about scheduling and the influence we have, obviously we engage with V8 Supercars about the schedule, just as we do the AFL, for example, in terms of the fixtures that come to Tasmania.

As to the specifics of how much we spent on the V8 Supercars event this year versus previous years, I will have to take that on notice and bring it back to the House, but in answer to the member's question, yes, we still believe that the V8 Supercars provides value for money. In terms of the decreased numbers for this year's event, I am more than happy to come back to the House with details on that as well. We think it is a really important event for the winter season as well when we are having more trouble than normal attracting visitors to Tasmania. I imagine that is why we negotiated for it to be held when it was held. If we need to go back to the drawing board with V8s in terms of the scheduling of the event to maximise the benefits for Tasmania and attendance, that is exactly what we will do.

Swift Parrot - Native Forest Habitat Conservation

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.37 a.m.]

This week your Environment minister talked up the private sector's role in protecting critical swift parrot habitat, an important action identified in the new National Recovery Plan for the Swift Parrot. The recovery plan identifies native forest logging as a key risk to the future of the species. It proposes new formal reserves like national parks to protect its habitat. Yesterday's State of the Environment report also identified the impact of forestry on threatened fauna and terrestrial native birds and also recommended expanding the formal reserve network. With the State of the Environment report highlighting the dire consequences of government inaction, apathy and anti-science decisions, will you commit to ending native forest logging and burning of critical habitat on public lands and protect that land in new formal reserves?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for her question. No, I will not commit to that. The swift parrot recovery is a priority for the Tasmanian government, accepting the State of the Environment report, and as I said, we will be doing our due diligence over the next while. We have committed $1 million over four years to support swift parrot conservation and a further $8 million over four years in our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Threatened Species

Fund, which will help species such as the swift parrot. We are working collaboratively on planning tools and activities that protect and restore the species' habitat and identify and mitigate threats.

We are also committed to a national approach to these matters across jurisdictions to manage threats to swift parrots throughout their range. The new National Recovery Plan for the Swift Parrot that the Tasmanian government has agreed to jointly with Victoria, Queensland and the Commonwealth was released at the end of April this year and will be an important resource to guide coordinated future activity and to improve the population trajectory of the species. I commend the minister - who is in the Chamber - for the announcement the other day as well. It is also about balance and ensuring we get the natural resource management right.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Leader and Deputy Leader of the Greens, the Premier has answered this question so interjections are inappropriate.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is about getting the balance right. It is about ensuring we can have continuous improvement in our resource-based industries, which we have. I can point to our farmers, our marine farmers, aquaculture, our forestry industry, our mining industry, where there has been enormous continuous improvement over the course of many decades, and that will continue, as you would expect it to do.

It is about supporting and protecting the environment, valuing our natural resources and our natural environment, and it enhances and builds on our strong reputation as a clean and natural brand, but also our strong reputation which brings people to Tasmania. We are mindful of the State of the Environment report, based on continuous improvement for our natural resource management and there will be a response in due course.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - From the Premier's comments about the industries that the government supports, can the Premier confirm if there are any environmental harms that would stop the productivity of industry?

The SPEAKER - The time for asking the supplementary has expired. Had the Premier just said 'no' and sat down, there would be no basis for a supplementary but I do believe it comes out of the answer. We use the federal rules in the absence of there being a framework for the new supplementary question model, and that is that if the Premier answers and there is a question that comes out of that answer, that would be an appropriate supplementary. Had you just said 'no' and sat down, there would not have been one. Premier, I will call you briefly to answer the question on the boundaries as to where you would seek to intervene, which I think probably you have covered a little bit.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the member for the supplementary. I believe I have answered it with a balance and continuous improvement that all our resource-based industries have undergone very diligently over the last number of decades.

Dr Woodruff - Where is that?

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Greens.

Mr ROCKLIFF - When I think of the improvements in the north-west coast to industry, where we used to drive past Tioxide on the left going to Burnie and on the right was the 'Red Sea'. I cannot even believe that happened back in the 1940s or 50s, whenever it was, but it did. It is about continuous improvement.

Mr Bayley - The industry is not there anymore.

The SPEAKER - The Premier will not invite interjections and the Deputy Leader of the Greens will not -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - If the Leader of the Greens wants to be here at the end of the MPI today she probably needs to cease the consistent interjecting we have had.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is about industry working with its natural resources, supporting the environment and sustainability of industry and natural resources.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the supplementary has expired.

Spirit of Tasmania - LNG Refuelling Infrastructure

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.44 a.m.]

During the 2021 election, your government promised the new *Spirit*s would be refueled locally. Your Deputy said it would support local jobs. Last month you told the House:

> When it comes to LNG, to be very clear, our expectation is that appropriate refuelling arrangements will be in place to support the new vessels when they commence in service.

All that has ever needed to happen for this project to go ahead was for a space to be allocated at the port for this infrastructure. The private sector can take care of the rest, but years on under your minority government, it appears nothing has happened. Last week, the *Spirit of Tasmania* company told media outlets that there is no LNG infrastructure plan for the Port of Devonport at all. What is going on? Is this not exactly the sort of bureaucratic dysfunction that a Coordinator-General with the power to direct action from government businesses could actually sort out?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his paraphrasing of page 138 of the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future. Our expectation, as stated before, is that appropriate fuelling arrangements will be in place to support the new vessels when they commence service.

Supplementary Question

Mr WINTER - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WINTER - Can the Premier and Infrastructure minister update the House as to when the appropriate refuelling will commence construction so that those *Spirit*s can refuel with LNG in Tasmania?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My understanding is, and I know the Minister for Transport, Mr Abetz, could also provide some more information on -

Mr Winter - You are the Minister for Infrastructure.

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, you received the supplementary.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Appropriate refuelling, or fuelling arrangements, will be in place to support the new vessels. I can provide timeframes if the member would like, and the arrangements. They will be in place to support the new vessels. We look forward to the new *Spirit*s sailing up the river.

Mr Winter - Are you taking that on notice?

The SPEAKER - The interjection to take it on notice is something for me to resolve, not other members. Premier, will you take on notice the provision of timeframes when you can?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can look up and provide some more detail if you would like, Speaker.

The SPEAKER - Thank you. I appreciate that.

Hydrogen Action Plan - Access to Resources

Ms FINLAY question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.47 a.m.]

Your hydrogen action plan has to be your most glaring failure to deliver your promises to the people who want to invest in our state. You lured major companies like Fortescue Future Industries, Origin Energy and Woodside to Tasmania on the promise of abundant water and energy, and suitable infrastructure. None of these things were true and now they have all pulled out. Your strategy said green hydrogen production would have commenced by now, export

projects would be well advanced and international exports would begin next year. Clearly, that is not going to happen.

Would sorting out the lack of access to power and water be something a Coordinator-General with the ability to break through bureaucratic inaction help resolve?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Seriously, the hypocrisy in it. You wanted to abolish the Coordinator-General. I will have to recall when that commitment was made. It was pretty soon after the 2014 election, I believe, and maybe taken to the 2018 election.

Mr Winter - What are you talking about, 2014? Are you okay? You have the shakes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I am great. Are you? I am worried about you, Dean. You have spent three years in opposition and already look tired. You talked about the frustration of being in opposition on radio this morning. I hear you. I was there for 12 years and it is a hard grind. What makes it easier is an alternative budget. It would not be so frustrating. I worry about you but I do commend you -

The SPEAKER - All right, the Premier has taken the interjection that should not have been made and made hay with it. We will now go back to the answer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do admire you for expressing your frustration and wellbeing publicly like that. It is important. I say this very clearly -

The SPEAKER - Do you remember what the question is, Premier?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I do. I really had to gather myself when I heard about this boosting up the Coordinator-General caper. Not only is it a policy of ours on page 138 of the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, in terms of strengthening legislation -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members for Bass and Clark.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The hypocrisy of the state opposition once again realigning itself with Liberal government policy in supporting the Coordinator-General is certainly welcome.

Mr Winter - It is not your policy.

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, you get an awful lot of latitude as leader, a latitude that is not being extended to the members for Bass and Clark, who have been warned. Please do not join them. I think that might also go for - it might have been - the Leader of the House who was interjecting. I could be wrong but I will be watching one of you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That was part of old Labor. I know you are new Labor, and very proud of new Labor and all those sorts of things. You have done your best to trash your previous regime and your party and all the things that you stood for at the 2024 election, but it is a case

of flip-flopping and hypocrisy about not only the Coordinator-General but substantive other matters as well.

The Tasmanian government has an ambitious plan for growing our economy and creating more jobs. A renewable energy -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time has expired. Is that a supplementary on your question? I will give the call elsewhere. If anyone is wondering, I am classic Labor but independent in the chair. I call the Leader of the Greens.

EPA Independence from Government

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.51 a.m.]

Your government has consistently issued statement of expectations to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) that binds them to your economic policies. These have spelled out your government's requirement for the EPA's decisions to put economic productivity ahead of economic of environment protections. In short, they have been directed to facilitate mega corporations exploiting the environment for profit, particularly fish farm companies.

The State of the Environment report shows the dire results of your policy for our marine environment and coastal communities. It is not too late for you to start listening to the science. Nothing less than the survival of the Maugean skate and the handfish is on the line. Will you legislate to unshackle the EPA, make it independent of government?

The SPEAKER - Minister Ellis will cease his interjections. He is the first minister, I believe, to be warned in this term of parliament. That is not something you should be pleased about. Could you start the first part of your question again?

Dr WOODRUFF - Premier, will you legislate to unshackle the EPA, make it independent of government directions and turn the ship around before it is too late?

Mr Jaensch - We made a statement of expectation; it is quite clear.

The SPEAKER - Thank you, Mr Jaensch, but I think the Premier can answer it without your help.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for her question. No, we are not going to make any changes. When I recall over the last decade some significant change we have made in legislation, you mentioned marine farming and aquaculture. Some of the significant changes that we made, and I recall, I believe, as minister for primary industries - I stand to be corrected - but we made significant reforms in the monitoring and accountability of the salmon industry and aquaculture, including independence of the EPA.

When I first came into the role following the Labor-Greens government, there was some discussion about the regulation of salmon farms with the Department of Primary Industries,

Water and Environment as it was then and we changed that to ensure that the growth side of the department was not conflicted with the regulation side of the department. We made the EPA independent effectively over a few iterations. I believe Mr Jaensch was part of that as well. He was the Environment minister, if my memory serves me correctly.

We believe that the balance is right and we will not be making any further changes regarding the EPA.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - In relation to the Premier's refusal to make any changes, can you confirm that that has anything to do with salmon companies being major donors to the Liberal Party?

The SPEAKER - The question that the member has asked does arise out of the commentary. I will caution members that if they are going to make substantive allegations about intent, that would be outside of the Standing Order 2, which says that we should not be impugning those kinds of motives except in a substantive motion. I will ask the Premier to respond to the question, but he does not need to address whether anything indicates that his motive is in breach of Standing Order 2. The member has the capacity to do a substantive motion on that issue. I have made it complex to answer, I appreciate that.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I utterly reject the inference of the question. Frankly, I expect more of you, Dr Woodruff. The EPA has independent statutory powers under the act and the powers of the EPA in terms of independence and being arm's length from industry have been strengthened under this Liberal government and, by extension, the parliament.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Greens and Deputy Premier, thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Accepting you were not here between 2010 and 2014, we could talk a lot about those times and what was done and what could have been done, and what was not done is what you speak of today, or even the significant independence of the EPA created under our government.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Budget 2024-25 - West Coast Wilderness Railway

Mrs BESWICK question to MINISTER for TRANSPORT, Mr ABETZ

[10.56 a.m.]

The general manager of the West Coast Wilderness Railway says the $21.8 million provided in this year's Budget is not enough. He has told *The Advocate* the funding will not be enough to finish stage 4 of the reopening process, rebuilding the lower landing to double-barrel section. What is your strategy for the railway? Will you provide enough funding for the full reopening and how can you guarantee taxpayers are getting value for money?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, a little bit of history first. The West Coast Wilderness Railway was part of the Howard government's Centenary of Federation funding to Tasmania. It was a great iconic railway venture that gained the support of the people of Tasmania around the state. If I recall correctly, it has some 39 bridges, it is very challenging terrain, the weather is exceptionally harsh around that way and whilst the initial track allowed the train to go from Strahan to Queenstown and back, the vicissitudes of the weather there and landslips et cetera have occasioned damage to the railway line. As a result, there are now only trips going from Strahan for a short distance and Queenstown, but it cannot do the whole track.

To do the whole track, I estimate - I can get the exact figure for you should you wish - it would be about $120 million to fix the whole show. Given the budget constraints and that certain people are telling this government not to spend too much money, these things need to be balanced. In the Budget, if I recall correctly, we had an allocation of about $21 million for the West Coast Wilderness Railway to help overcome some of the shortfalls and some of the maintenance challenges.

The West Coast Wilderness Railway, or Abt Railway as it used to be called, was part and parcel of a vibrant and vital west coast lifestyle and mining ventures. Historically, it is great. It is a great tourism venture but it is exceptionally expensive to maintain. We as a government are concerned about that. We want to maintain it, but with the current budgetary constraints there are matters of balance and we as a government believe that in the Budget we have the balance right. Be assured, I would love to spend a lot more money on it, but there are other competing issues at stake in the budget.

Whaleback Ridge Wind Farm - Staged Lease

Ms FINLAY question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.59 a.m.]

The proposed wind farm at Whaleback Ridge has been trying for years to get their project started but has been held up at every turn by your government. Under pressure during the election, you finally declared it as a major project, but still, they cannot get a staged lease. The Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry say we are in an energy crisis and Hydro has turned away more than a dozen major investors because they have no spare power to supply them. This project alone would potentially double Tasmania's energy supply but after all these

years they cannot even get a staged lease. Why on Earth is your government still holding up this incredible project?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the question. This is a very large-scale proposal which extends over a large area of crown land on the west coast of Tasmania, north-west of Zeehan. It is a significant project, I agree with the member, with some 500 wind turbine generators with a capacity of approximately 3000 megawatts. The minister for Planning declared Whaleback Ridge as a major project under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act* on 6 March this year and the project is currently undergoing that assessment process with the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

What is important here about investment in wind and solar is the critical nature of Marinus Link, which the opposition did not support, or sat on the fence about.

Mr Winter - That is not true.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You sat on the fence on this, day in, day out.

Mr Winter - I remember it clearly. Do not mislead.

The SPEAKER - If the Leader of the Opposition wishes to make a substantive allegation of misleading, he can do so in another form.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Wanting to pull the plug on Marinus and gut Hydro at the same time with Tasmanian Power Co but -

Ms White - During caretaker we had to authorise you to sign a contract because you had stuffed it up so badly.

The SPEAKER - Member for Lyons, I also tend to give you a bit of latitude, but we are trying to get through the rest of this Question Time.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The member in her question did not mention the rebooting of the Coordinator-General, which they have done in other questions, so perhaps they are embarrassed about the fact that they now realise they wanted to abolish the Coordinator-General a number of years ago. Mentioning the -

Ms FINLAY - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. The question is about why this government has not applied a staged lease for this project to get going.

The SPEAKER - You refer to the staged lease but the question was why it is being held up. The Premier can address that if he has any further information other than it is with the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Honourable Speaker, I go to the matter of the Coordinator-General mentioned in the budget reply. There was no mention of cost of living, no mention of housing or health, no mention of keeping children safe. There were a lot of 'me's and 'I's in there -

Members interjecting.

Ms Finlay - If you wanted to increase the powers of the Coordinator-General, you could have done that when you had already amended the act after the election. Announcing things is not good enough. You have to take action, not just announce things.

Member Suspended

Member for Bass - Ms Finlay

The SPEAKER - Stop the clock for a second. Premier, I did ask you to come to the question and I would appreciate that, but the Member for Bass will excuse herself under the Standing Orders because I have asked you not to interject so many times. You may return at the end of the MPI. We will wait until the member leaves the Chamber before we recommence.

Ms Finlay withdrew.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. His budget reply contained, I believe, 63 'me's or 'I's. It is all about Dean. The member talks about energy and energy capacity. Our economy is growing and has grown significantly over the course of the last decade.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Department of Police Fire and Emergency Management - Workers Compensation Over-Payments

Ms BUTLER question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS

[11.04 a.m.]

We understand that your department has made a massive administrative bungle resulting in over 50 people across Police, Fire and Emergency Management being overpaid on their workers compensation entitlements. Approximately 20 of these people are firefighters on workers comp, including for work-related cancers and PTSD. You are now demanding they repay the money in full. Can you explain why they should pay for your stuff-up? Can you also confirm that in other cases step-down provisions have been applied to injured firefighters' total hours, not their rate of pay, which robs these workers of the leave and super they are entitled to? If so, why are you allowing our firefighters to be ripped off?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, yes, we are aware that there has been some overpayment to members of our emergency services in step-down provisions for those who are off on workers compensation. The department is currently working with each individual member of the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management who is affected - police officers, firefighters and SES. We are working through these sensitive matters as they specifically relate to individual circumstances. More broadly, our hearts go out to all those injured at work, and

we have an absolute commitment to working through these matters sensitively with those people.

State of the Environment Report 2024 - Recommendations

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.06 a.m.]

For a decade you and your Liberal colleagues have called the Greens and the environmental movement kooky, anti-everything extremists, all while you have been trashing our forests, coastlines, protected areas and waterways and changing the law to lock up those who resist your crimes against nature. You have covered up your perfidy, breaking the law and refusing to table this tragic State of the Environment report until it was forced onto you by environmental defenders.

Will you accept and implement all the recommendations in the State of the Environment report? Was that part of Cabinet's decision on Monday, or will you consider business as usual and have your legacy be one of policy destruction and extinctions? If you refuse to change direction, will you today apologise to the future Tasmanians and generations who you are betraying with your political pillage?

Mr Shelton - How many questions can you have?

The SPEAKER - To answer the member for Lyons, there were four questions in that one, so I will call the Premier to answer them. It is annoying when somebody actually writes down the questions, is it not?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the question. For the record, I have not mentioned 'kooky' once today. It was the member herself who mentioned 'kooky'. We are looking forward to the Budget reply and alternative budget of the Greens. We will get one and it may well be left of centre - if I can put it that way. I also say that the State of the Environment report only landed with Cabinet this week and we will give it due consideration. I will take great interest in it.

I also reject the premise of your question very clearly. I know it is good politics for the Greens regarding getting rid of salmon, mining and forestry, but it has enormous social consequences for people's wellbeing, on families and on communities. To do what you want us to do will wreck the social fabric of Tasmania, and we will not do that. We will always have sensible and sustainable management of our resources based on continuous improvement.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - The Premier did not answer the main question.

Mr Abetz - What, the kooky bit?

Dr WOODRUFF - Will he accept and implement all the recommendations of the State of the Environment report that the minister has had for much longer than Cabinet?

Mr Abetz - He has answered that.

The SPEAKER - Thank you, Leader of the Greens. You cannot make an argument in the supplementary question.

The Leader of the House did not need to interject in the way he did during that question and does not wish to be warned, I am sure. I will draw the Premier to the question about whether the government will accept and implement all the recommendations.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe I answered the question. We will seek advice and give the report due consideration.

Dr Woodruff - When?

The SPEAKER - Thank you. You cannot yell out 'When', Leader of the Greens. You get latitude as a leader as well, and I ask that you provide the standard that you expect of others in interjecting.

Scalefish Advisory Committee - Reformation

Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for BUSINESS, INDUSTRY and RESOURCES, Mr ABETZ

[11.10 a.m.]

Before joining this parliament, I sat on an advisory body - the Scalefish Fishery Advisory Committee - for a number of years. The role of that committee was to give the best advice to the minister and the departments coming from the learned fishermen who we have in this state. My question is will, as a matter of urgency, that scalefish advisory body be reformed?

We have a number of fishermen who are really keen to get back on there. We got to a stage where we had a good cross-section of the fishing community on that advisory body before it was disbanded. I might add that if our advice had been heeded on calamari management, we would not be in the situation we are in right now. It is very important that we reform that advisory body.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable gentleman for his question and understand his longstanding interest in all matters fishery, especially in his home area on the north-west coast. I have had private discussions with the honourable member about the importance of fisheries advisory committees in relation to scalefish. This is an area where the department and government can always learn from those who are actually engaged in fisheries.

In a former life when I was federal minister for, amongst other things, fisheries, I found those advisory councils or committees exceptionally helpful in providing advice and balance in relation to the advice that was being provided from the hallowed halls of the public service. They do a very good job in providing advice from their perspective. Having the practical experience and knowledge of that lived experience as fishers on the water, there is a lot to be gleaned and gained from listening to those people who are actively engaged in the sector.

I have raised that, might I add, with the department in more recent times and am seeking to see what we can do not only with a scalefish advisory committee but also with the other fishery advisory committees in relation to other elements of our fisheries. It is very important that we get the parameters right to ensure that we retain sustainability of our wild fisheries. I understand we will be having further discussions this afternoon about a particular fishery. I look forward to those ongoing discussions and learning more from those who actually fish our waters and provide us with some excellent health food.

I encourage everybody to follow what the health advisers tell us, which is that we should have at least one meal of fish per week. Thankfully, because of aquaculture and the salmon that we grow, we are not putting too much pressure on the wild fisheries anymore. Having a balanced approach to all of this and learning from the fishermen who are on the water is part and parcel of the government's approach and part and parcel of my approach. I look forward to seeing what we can do in this space to ensure the further sustainability of our fishing sector.

Supplementary Question

The SPEAKER - Is there a supplementary, Mr Garland?

Mr GARLAND - Yes. He did not answer the question. It was a yes or no.

The SPEAKER - Whilst you gave a wonderful speech about fish, the question was actually about the reconstitution of the body. Perhaps he could address that.

Mr GARLAND - Will we be reforming that advisory body, minister?

Mr ABETZ - If I did not make it clear as I should have done, I apologise. I am giving consideration in relation to reforming the various fisheries advisory committees. They seem to have fallen into non-use in recent times, and the scalefish is just one of those. It is a very good idea, something you have raised with me previously and something that I have socialised with the department to see what we can do, not only in the scalefish sector, but in all the other sectors as well. Good idea, and it is being pursued, and I am sure it will be pursued even further, if I recall correctly, at 4.30 p.m. this afternoon.

Time expired.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Short Stay Levy - Expected Revenue

Mr WILLIE question to MINISTER for FINANCE, Mr STREET

[11.16 a.m.]

One of my constituents in Hobart, Jeff, rents out their shack for tourists when they are not using it themselves. It provides them with extra income in their retirement. He would like to know when your new short stay tax will come into effect and what is the expected revenue now? Has the revenue accounted for in your policy document been revised?

Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area - Upgrades

Mrs PENTLAND question to MINISTER for PARKS and ENVIRONMENT, Mr DUIGAN

I received an e-mail from a concerned member of my electorate about the Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area. Would the minister consider upgrading the area, in particular, the entrance facility at the Kings Meadows connector?

There is currently no parking, no footpath, and users must walk between the highway traffic and the crash barrier. This is an accident waiting to happen. Other upgrades the constituent would like to see carried out are an enhanced and expanded mountain bike trail, and recreation amenities, such as barbecues and rubbish bins to stop people from dumping rubbish in the recreational area.

Mobile Black Spot Program - Update

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY, Ms OGILVIE

Tasmania's topography and often rugged landscapes are not always conducive to strong mobile phone reception. I have recently had constituents from both Sheffield and Tea Tree asking me about the Mobile Black Spot Program, and whether they will benefit, and if so, when. Can you please provide an update on the program and how the government is improving Tasmania's digital infrastructure to give greater confidence to Tasmanians in areas of mobile black spots?

Salmon Farming - Impact on Tasmanian Way of Life

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for BUSINESS, INDUSTRY and RESOURCES, Mr ABETZ

My question is from Brian in Coningham. He says:

I have lived in Coningham for 26 years, and for much of that time enjoyed the peaceful amenity that provided. I truly felt blessed to be able to catch a feed from my dinghy, to swim and kayak in those beautiful waters, but for the last decade, it has left me disturbed and deeply worried about the future of D'Entrecasteaux Channel and North West Bay. The waters are regularly fouled with snot-like weed, the direct result of an increased nutrient load in the waters caused by the finfish industry. I am also woken at 4.00 a.m. most mornings by high-speed watercraft speeding to the salmon pens of Snug Point.

This industry has degraded my beautiful coastal home under your watch and has badly impacted what was quintessentially a Tasmanian way of life, but that can all change if only you rein in this industry and remove it from your waters. When will you listen to people like me, and the experts, and get the pens out of the channel?

Biosecurity Threats to Tasmanian Farms

Mr FAIRS question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Ms HOWLETT

Weeds and pests really worry some of my constituents who have farms or crops. They are concerned about the biosecurity system and how we can safeguard locally against biosecurity threats, and they worry about things like honey mites, having seen the cost of something like fruit fly. What is the government doing about pests and weeds in general, and more specifically, is it taking any steps to prevent our farmers from threats that come from local sources, like other properties or trucks or transport?

Iday Bay - Transformer Project - Progress

Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for TOURISM and HOSPITALITY, Mr ROCKLIFF

Tourism and hospitality operators in my electorate of Franklin want to know what is happening with the Transformer project at Ida Bay. When will construction commence? Is there a funding shortfall? Are there any other hold-ups to this critical project?

Time expired.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Standing Order 149

The SPEAKER - I remind members that I am really disappointed that I have had to use Standing Order 149. I will use it in the future if the House continues to get out of control.

I remind the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, the shadow treasurer, and the member for Bass that you are all still under a warning for the rest of the day. Do not test me today.

PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT (VAPING) BILL 2024 (No. 47)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Barnett and read for the first time.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Joint Standing Committee on Integrity - Appointment of Mr Garland

[11.21 a.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House)(by leave) - Honourable Speaker, I have a number of matters. I move -

> That the honourable member for Braddon, Mr Garland, be appointed to the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity in accordance with section 23, subsection (4) of the *Integrity Commission Act 2009*.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

International Sign Language Day

[11.22 a.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House)(by leave) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

> That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the following from taking place on Thursday 19 September 2024, that is tomorrow -
>
> (a) An Auslan interpreter being admitted to the floor of the chamber immediately following the Speaker taking the chair at the commencement of the day.
>
> (b) Prior to Question Time, the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Greens making a statement to the House for a period not exceeding five minutes each.

The SPEAKER - On indulgence, I will explain that this is to recognise International Sign Language Day. Once we have a fully digitised parliament it may not be necessary, but I thank the Leader of the Standing Orders Committee for their support of this. I say that in preparation for this vote.

Motion agreed to.

Move Motion Forthwith

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House)(by leave) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

> That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent a motion concerning the sessional orders from being debated forthwith.

Motion agreed to

MOTION

Sessional Orders - Amendment

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House)(by leave) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

> That for the remainder of this session, unless otherwise ordered, the Sessional Orders be amended as follows:
>
> In Sessional Order 18(d):
>
> *delete* 'seven' and
>
> *insert instead* 'five'.

[11.23 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I think this is a sensible reform. It is just about the Adjournment, in case that was not obvious to everybody. With extra members in the House, seven minutes speaking time has meant that not everybody has necessarily had the opportunity to do an Adjournment. This simply changes the seven minutes to five minutes to give everybody an opportunity. Although people will have to be more succinct, hopefully, that means that independent members, and anyone else who wants to have a go at Adjournment, now have a greater opportunity.

Motion agreed to.

The SPEAKER - Just for your information, we are still tracking an Auslan interpreter for tomorrow, so, I am letting you know how that goes.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

State of the Environment

[11.24 a.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

> That the House takes note of the following matter: state of the environment

I rise today to talk about a matter of public importance: the State of the Environment report. We are doing this today because yesterday was indeed a milestone day, a red-letter day in the last decade or so of Tasmania's governance of the environment. The State of the

Environment report is a critical piece of work that was initiated in 1993. It reports on the condition, trend and data reliability of 29 indicators over six theme areas. That is coast and marine; land; biodiversity; rivers and wetlands; air and waste. It is a requirement of the *State Policies and Projects Act*, which passed through this House in 1993. Hence, that was the first year it was initiated. Section 29 of the act requires that the commission produce a consolidated State of the Environment report every five years. That includes recommendations for future action in relation to the management of the environment; the achievement of resource management objectives; and conditions, trends and changes. History demonstrates that the Liberals have failed to commission and publish a report in line with the act.

This is the first State of the Environment report for 15 years. That is why this is a red-letter day. I thank the dogged advocates, scientists, community groups and past Greens who have pursued the government and ultimately forced it to commission this report, after many years of cajoling. It was released yesterday, being published early after a successful motion in this House. Thank you to all of those people who took action to force this report and all the people who contributed to developing the report. I also thank those people involved in protecting our precious environment because it is incredibly important: private landowners, Landcare, volunteers and activists. Activists are consistently flying the flag for environmental protection.

Even with only 24 hours of review and analysis, it is clear why the Liberals were reluctant to commission and release this report. It paints a dire picture of degradation and highlights the fact that it is government policy driving this. It is ignorance, apathy and active decisions that ignore science driving some of the environmental destruction. Worse than that, this government has teamed up with the Labor Party to pass draconian anti-protest laws that punish people who stand up and fight for the protection of the environment.

Some of the highlights of the report - or the low lights - are that of the 29 indicators, 55 per cent are deteriorating, 21 per cent are stable, 7 per cent are improving and 17 per cent are unknown. It is a shocking indictment on a decade of Liberal policy and funding priorities.

The report makes 16 recommendations, including: to develop a long-term vision and strategy for Tasmania's environment; to explore opportunities to collaborate with the Aboriginal community; to establish more marine protected areas; to remove protections for wild fallow deer from regulatory frameworks and to implement a strategy to control feral cats; and to invest in and expand the terrestrial reserve estate, new national parks and reserves. There are more recommendations but I highlight those.

The report is going to be a challenge for the government to read and respond to, but respond it must, because the pressures are increasing. There is climate change, there are pests and weeds and there are the human and industrial impacts that we, ourselves, are causing.

On that, I highlight that forestry is listed as a pressure in eight of the 29 indicators. That includes soil stability, land use intensification, native vegetation fragmentation, threatened fauna, terrestrial native birds, water quality, riparian zones and particulate matter. For all the debate in here where people accuse us of unfairly targeting the forest industry, it is fairly and squarely identified in this report as being a problem.

The consequences of not acting are dire. Environmental health will degrade, the community will get frustrated, and business and brand will be damaged. I will conclude with a quote from the report:

> Tasmanians look to their political and community leaders to ensure the environment is properly cared for, and that the social and economic needs of current and future generations of Tasmanians are met.
>
> …
> As a starting point, taking actions on the recommendations of this 2024 SoE report will position Tasmania to rise to the significant challenges identified.

It is disappointing to already hear the Premier rule out one of those recommendations, which is to increase the terrestrial reserve network. If the government, all the way up to the Premier, cannot accept and implement these reports, our environment will continue to go downhill.

Time expired.

[11.29 a.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Housing and Planning) - Deputy Speaker, it is pleasure to rise to make a contribution on the State of the Environment report. I tabled it in parliament yesterday and our government will be working on a response to the recommendations across government. There is a range of recommendations for the whole of government and specific ministers for Environment and Industry, and a small number for Planning. We will be working through that process in due course.

Our government clearly has a strong commitment to ensuring we get the balance right. That is jobs and the economy, and making sure we can grow opportunities for Tasmanians, as well as protecting our natural environment. The State of the Environment report is an important means of documenting baseline data, trends and risks across our state. The independent Tasmanian Planning Commission carried out this important work and provided this report to government. We thank them for that.

The report makes 16 recommendations in a range of areas, including managing our waterways, protecting threatened species, fire management, biosecurity and invasive species. The government recognises this is a significant body of work. It has taken about two years to complete. We are committed to the sustainable management of our environment while also continuing to pursue economic development opportunities for the Tasmanian community. That will ensure Tasmania remains the best place to live, work and raise a family. Our government is currently reviewing the report, which has detailed findings and recommendations. We will prepare a thorough, whole-of-government response to all the recommendations in due course.

I reiterate that we remain steadfast in our commitment to protecting Tasmania's natural environment and protecting our unique species. We have more than $736 million in funding for Parks and Environment initiatives over the next four years. This includes more than $44 million in the next year for environmental management, analytical services and threatened species. That is $14 million more than the previous year. Our 2024-25 Budget commits to real action on climate change, evidenced by $21 million allocated over the next four years. It also builds on significant investment of $250 million in climate change initiatives already underway

right across the state. We are committed to sustainable management of our environment, balancing protection with sharing our unique places and growing our economy.

I had to laugh at some of the Greens' approach as part of this week of debate regarding this matter. The report clearly notes that climate change is a big challenge that affects the world. Tasmania, despite our net zero emissions, is not alone because we share the Earth's atmosphere with the world's big polluters. It has been interesting, in this week where we note the state of the environment and climate change's impact on Tasmania, that the Greens would be proposing we pull the plug on one of our largest hydro schemes, one of the largest renewable energy generators in Tasmania.

Members interjecting.

Mr ELLIS - The Greens are proposing we pull the plug not just on the power coming from it, which is renewable baseload, low emissions, high-reliability power, but that we get rid of it completely. That will make our emissions worse in this state, contribute to global climate change and drive up electricity prices for everyday Tasmanians, who we know they do not really care about. Surely, they can recognise they are opposed to renewable energy generation and that they are willing to fight tooth and nail to ensure we get rid of it. That is a crazy position to take. There are no recommendations in the State of the Environment report that we should be blowing up hydro schemes. Do you know why? That would only contribute to climate change in this state.

It was interesting that Bob Brown was the proposer of a coal-fired power station in the Fingal Valley to displace renewable energy. It has been interesting to watch his career since, where he opposes just about every wind farm proposed in Tasmania. People from the mainland have interviewed Dr Brown and said, 'Doesn't it seem weird that you are the father of environmentalism in Australia and yet you are opposed to all these renewable energy developments? He said, 'Of course not. Anyone who has been paying attention would know that my entire career has been built on opposing renewable energy'. I thought that was very honest and revealing of Dr Bob Brown. It demonstrates that we need to get the balance right in all of these discussions. We need to grow our economy, back jobs and ensure we look after our environment.

Time expired.

[11.34 a.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin - Leader of the Opposition) - Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise on this matter. The State of Environment report is an important document. I must admit I have not read through it all in the less than 24 hours we have had, but -

Dr Woodruff - They have had it the whole time.

Mr WINTER - Very good, Leader of the Greens. I do intend to get through it all. I believe in climate change and I believe Tasmania has key risks it needs to address, and also key opportunities to help the entire world if we act appropriately. The report says that Tasmania is experiencing significant impacts from climate change. It says these impacts include the warming of seas around Tasmania faster than the global average, sandy beaches showing signs of erosion due to sea level rise and the disappearance of kelp forests iconic vegetation

communities have undergone, concerning losses from bushfire and increased bushfire threat in the future.

In addition, the number of native species close to extinction continues to grow and that is due to climate change, which is a huge risk to the whole globe, including Tasmania. Those forecasts globally are frightening, and there needs to be global action taken on climate change, which is why it is fantastic to finally have an Australian federal government that has a coherent energy policy.

There is a policy that supports the development of renewable energies and there is an Australian federal government, a Labor government, which believes in climate change and believes that renewables are the answer to that problem. It is a government that believes in renewable energy in Tasmania, a government that believes that we need to act through projects like project Marinus, which Tasmanian Labor supports and has never not supported as the Premier falsely claimed today.

It is a federal Labor initiative and it is the federal Labor government that is now pushing this project. We had last week the incredible statement from the Treasurer of Tasmania that he hopes Marinus goes ahead. Eleven years after the Liberals announced the policy, you have the Treasurer of Tasmania giving his investment signal to $25 billion worth of investment in renewable energy in Tasmania to say he hopes it goes ahead.

This government either needs to get out of the way of the project or get on with it. Tasmanian Labor is concerned about the impact and the risks of climate change on our coastlines. Local government is dealing with this issue every day, dealing with issues of erosion in my electorate of Franklin, around North Bruny, erosion at Snug, at Coningham, erosion further down at places like Middleton, which is now starting to impact on our roadways.

This is an issue and risk for Tasmania. Local government is not going to have the capacity in the long term to deal with this - the financial capacity- and it is going to be a risk for the budget and a risk for the whole state to deal with it. That is about the risk and there are ways to mitigate risk if you have a plan and that is what the report is calling for; a plan from this government.

We also need to act. We are in the unfortunate position where South Australia has just taken the mantle as the leading state for renewable energy in this country and that is due to a lack of renewable energy investment. We have seen the Port Latta wind farm, we have asked about that today, a company that is desperate to get building and needs this government to intervene to allow them to build.

I do not know if the Greens opposed this one. I am not sure if they opposed Port Latta. There is no comment so far. I am not sure if the government supports it. The Premier today did not seem to know much about it but it is critical that there is intervention. The local government cannot intervene in this matter: it needs intervention from the state government and probably from this parliament to get it moving ahead.

Whaleback Ridge has the capacity to double Tasmania's energy generation. It took four years for them to figure out whether they want it. They say they want it but they cannot provide a staged lease to the proponent, who wants to get going.

Climate change is real, we have a lack of energy in Tasmania and it is leading directly to things like the combined cycle being fired back up at Tamar Valley, where we are now literally burning gas or we have been over the last couple of months.

Mr Ellis - I thought you supported the gas pipeline.

Mr WINTER - In fact, you may forget, but it was you, I think, who spoke about how we did not need the Tamar Valley combined cycle when I argued this at the end of 2021, when I fought to keep that asset for emergencies. It was you, I believe, Mr Ellis.

Mr Ellis - I do not reckon it would have been me. I am a gas fitter.

Mr WINTER - You did not seem to be a real gas man at that time, minister Ellis. You seemed to be questioning the need for that infrastructure. It is vitally important, but it should not need to be used just at any old time.

[11.39 a.m.]

Ms BADGER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, this report is a decade late and it is an absolute shame on this government to let it get so far and to then have the audacity to rise today and talk about the steady improvements over a decade. This report clearly shows how absolutely terrible Tasmania's environment is actually doing. As much as this report articulates the terrible state of numerous ecosystems, it also has some absolutely tremendous recommendations - recommendations that have been called for, for many years. It is like a blueprint straight out of the Greens' policy handbook. These are things that environmentalists have been calling for.

Recommendation 4 is particularly important in relation to Tasmania playing its global role in mitigating climate change. I spoke about this last night on the Adjournment. I might have accidentally said recommendation 14 because I was doing it off the top of my head. If I did do that, I apologise; it is recommendation 4, which is to update Tasmania's Resource Management and Planning System (RMPS) objectives to reflect those of the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) agreements. These are based on biodiversity principles, that is, incorporating the importance of intact, functioning ecosystems and rich biodiversity into all the decisions that we are currently making. It is looking at land use strategies.

I am so glad Mr Ellis has an interest in the Pedder debate. That is 57 megawatts for 242 square kilometres of otherwise carbon-sequestering endemic peat soil. Is that the best use? There are other ways to mitigate climate change. It is not 100 per cent about renewable energy. We also need intact, functioning ecosystems. That is the balance that we need. That is what some of these recommendations are helping us to achieve.

Recommendation 10: increasing terrestrial protected areas. That is the role that Tasmania needs to be playing on the global front. In this state, we have some of the most magnificent, ancient, carbon-sequestering forests in the takayna that should be protected as part of the World Heritage Area. Leaving them unprotected is neglecting the role that Tasmania has to be playing. We cannot point the fingers elsewhere if we cannot even do what we are supposed to be doing in Tasmania. That also includes areas like the Spero-Wanderer Wilderness, which has so much that has been left untouched due to its wild nature. These are intact ecosystems on the island that we do not have much of elsewhere, and they need protecting.

We need to do an incredible amount of work on invasive species. I am looking forward to Budget Estimates to drill down into exactly what this government is investing. Recommendation 13 of this report is to remove protections on fallow deer. It is so obvious. You can pour all the money that you want at it, but if we cannot do the basic fundamentals like remove those ridiculous protections, we are not going to get progress at the speed that we actually need.

Recommendation 8 is also really important, and that is to improve native vegetation mapping. We currently have massive holes in some of the areas, including our wetlands, which are absolutely critical in terms of helping naturally mitigate things like the increasing rising tides and flooding that we are going to be seeing under climate change. We have to be monitoring these ecosystems so that we know what the baseline is, and so that, moving forward, we have goals and ambitions to protect and maintain them in their natural functioning system.

All of these recommendations are really good, and it is in this government's best interest to ensure that they recommend them, implement them in full and fully resource them. That is the duty that we have, not only to future Tasmanians, but also to all future generations on this planet.

[11.43 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, the State of the Environment report raises some issues. The key question is: what are we going to do about it? There is the thought that everybody should think global and act local. A lot of the impacts that we are seeing and that have been mentioned today are ones that we cannot directly control - things like ocean warming, sea-level rise, and the increased frequency of storms, floods and fires. This is a complex issue.

What can we do in Tasmania? We cannot by ourselves address sea-level rise and ocean warming, or indeed reduce the ferocity of things like storms and floods, but regarding how to address these issues, we have to have a balanced approach. What we see from the Greens is a blinkered approach that is based on a political approach, which is that the only way to protect the environment is to shut down a particular industry or to increase Tasmania's reserve estate. They are basically the two strategies that the Greens campaign on, and when you dig even deeper, it comes down to trees. The Greens want to protect as many trees as they possibly can. That is why we see a big component of their political narrative over a term will be about trying to protect as many trees as possible.

We need to think global and act local. How can we do that? We can do it by promoting projects that could have a national impact, such as renewable energy. The vast majority of renewable energy projects that are named, the Greens oppose. The Greens' fundraising arm, which is the Bob Brown Foundation, oppose every single renewable energy project.

When we want to think globally but act locally, we have to think about what a massive renewable energy project like the Whaleback Ridge project could do nationally and globally. Nationally, it could offset a whole bunch of emissions from coal-fired power stations on the mainland, and, for example, reduce the need for future gas peaking stations. It could also lead to a massive industry being created in Tasmania to produce e-fuels. We could see the use of heavy bunker oil in container shipping, which is the most polluting fuel in the world, reduced by producing a clean version of fuel at either the HIF project or the one out at Bell Bay.

Instead of acting locally to have a global impact, the environment movement will say 'We do not want to see any of those renewable energy projects, whether that be on land or at sea'. That is not thinking globally and letting Tasmania act locally. What the environment movement should also do to think global and act local is promote the environmental achievements that we have had in Tasmania. Half our state is in reserves already, and we are net zero carbon emitters. The Greens should be going around pointing to Tasmania and saying, 'This is the type of performance that you should be living up to', not bagging out Tasmania as if the last tree is about to be cut down.

There is one thing that this environment report does, and I will back it in. As a scientist, data is essential. If you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it. I have been involved in a project looking at nutrients moving from land into water, so I really appreciated recommendation 14, which is the development of a broader water policy monitoring and reporting approach. The collection of data for nutrients in rivers has been absolutely slashed, and that is something that we can no longer monitor because there is now a huge gap in the dataset.

We see that as well with other things like strengthening the statewide soil monitoring program. After every major rainfall we see a whole heap of soil going out to sea - plumes of topsoil heading 40 kilometres or 50 kilometres out into Bass Strait. That sort of thing needs to end. No doubt there was a soil scientist somewhere involved in these recommendations. They absolutely love soil, as you would imagine, but if we cannot collect the data, we cannot monitor it. That is something that I would encourage the government to have a good look at.

However, we have to think global and act local, and not just have one approach of shutting down industries.

Time expired.

[11.48 a.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Minister for Business, Industry and Resources) - Deputy Speaker, the State of the Environment report is a body of work that is interesting and informative, as is the Eslake report on the economy, as is the commission of inquiry report looking into the needs of our most precious asset: the next generation, our children. The task of government is to have a look at those reports, but then consider them in total.

Too often there is a discussion in this place and in the community at large that one should only look at matters economic or one should only look at matters environmental. Indeed, if you were to only look at matters environmental, none of us would have used footwear, a bike or a car to get ourselves into this place this morning. There are always trade-offs in relation to sustainability matters, and that is why we as a government seek to take a commonsense approach to these matters. That is why these hundreds of pages, 666 pages - which some people tell me is the devil's number; I have not checked to see if it is exactly 666 pages, but it is a substantial body of work - nobody would expect a government to respond to this overnight. You look at it in detail, you give consideration and you then have to balance some of the competing interests. This government makes no apology for the fact that it does support, for example, the forest industry. If you do not use timber for building houses and construction you use other materials such as steel, concrete, and the one that the member for Braddon, Dr Broad, always likes to mention is tiles, that I have not put into my list, but it is hugely energy intensive.

What do you do? Do you say we will just get rid of houses, or do you say when we can use wood we will, because it is a carbon sink and it avoids those other building materials that rely so heavily on energy, which creates the CO2 emissions. With forestry, if we harvest the trees for good, sensible purposes, you then have to replant. That is what we in Tasmania have done exceptionally well and we are improving all the time.

There are many matters that I encourage people in this place and the wider community to consider, and that is to celebrate the environmental achievements we have in this state. In recent times, a number of threatened species have been taken off the list. That is something to celebrate. If there are other species that are still threatened, then that is something we need to work on to the very best of our ability, but this Armageddon view of the environment worries me. It is needlessly scaring our children.

It is doing a disservice to the children but also a disservice to the science that is being developed and the continual improvements that we as humanity make in relation to balancing our role in nature. One thing that has to be put into this debate is where does humanity fit into nature? If you are a beaver you are entitled to chop down a few trees and create a dam for your own habitat, and that is a wonderful part of nature, whereas if humans want to engage in damming a river or chopping down the odd tree, it is a huge environmental sin. Why do beavers have more rights than humans? I am being a bit flippant with that, but I hope that when you come up with analogies and considerations, there is a need for balance in these debates and consideration as to what humanity needs for its survival. This report is welcome. The government will look at it in considerable detail.

[11.53 a.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, we have waited a long time for this State of the Environment report: too long, a decade longer than we should have. Throughout that time, we know that the Tasmanian environment has been deteriorating. We know that Tasmanians have been watching the deterioration, expressing their concern and noticing the changes in our environment around the state, noticing our coastlines deteriorating, forests disappearing, waterways deteriorating and the marine life in our waterways decreasing.

This has been troubling to see, and here we have in the State of the Environment report confirmation of this deterioration. What we have seen with our eyes has been confirmed by data. Unfortunately, there is not enough data for all that we needed to know about our environment. I note that recommendation 3 points out the need for us to develop an environmental data strategy. We need to know what is happening in our environment to be able to address it. This report goes a long way to us understanding what is happening, but we need to continually be gathering data so that we can keep on top of things, make plans and work out what we need to do to stop the deterioration of our environment.

It has been interesting listening to the conversation in here this morning about the environment and how we value it and how we view it. Minister Abetz just now said it is interesting to think about humanity being in nature, but so much of our conversation this morning has focused on nature's value to us and what it gives to us. It helps our tourism, it boosts our economy, it has all these so-called positive impacts on us where we take from nature. The problem is that we are taking too much from nature. Perhaps the beavers knocked down a few trees, but we humans have overtaken the earth and are knocking down too much. We are taking too much out of the earth and we must pause, look at the evidence and change what we are doing if we want our environment to last and our natural, wild places to be able to continue.

Beyond that, we need our environment to be healthy for our own health and safety. We are not humanity in nature constantly drawing from nature just for our own benefit. If we continue to do that, we are destroying ourselves as well as destroying the Earth. We are part of the web of life, not over it, above it, able to suck everything out of it. We are part of the web of life and until we can find that balance where we exist in harmony with nature, we are sunk as a species and as a society. We are destroying this place and we are destroying our future.

The young people know that. They are not just sitting here scared because we are scaring them. They are scared because we they are looking at the evidence before us and they can see it. They are not stuck like we are, with old ways of looking at things. They are coming with fresh eyes and they know that action must be taken if they are to have any sort of future in this place.

The Greens welcome the State of the Environment report. We are grateful for the work that has gone into it and we want to listen to the recommendations in it and call on the government to implement the recommendations and do what is necessary to care for the environment in Tasmania for its own sake, because it has value and worth and because we need it also.

[11.58 a.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, as has been said by my fellow Greens, this is a welcome report. It is a long overdue report but there are clear recommendations for a government who would care for the environment. We have heard today from the Premier and minister Ellis about getting the balance right, but I argue that it is not about getting the balance right because the balance has not been right for a very long time. I want to read into the record the information where we see the environment has been deteriorating, because it is important to have this on record.

We see deteriorating sea surface temperatures, kelp, threatened marine fish, beach change, salt marshes, migratory shore birds, pests, soil diversity and conditions -

Time expired.

Matter noted.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2024 (No. 39)

Second Reading

Resumed from 17 September 2024 (page 118).

[11.59 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Deputy Speaker, I acknowledge that we are on land stolen from the muwinina people, the original owners and custodians of this place. I pay my respects on behalf of the Greens to the palawa/pakana and their elders, who never ceded the island of lutruwita to colonisers. Repairing the promise of a treaty with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people is pressing unfinished business and I recognise the strong and enduring community of Aboriginal Tasmanians today who uphold law and practices, who continue to care for country and protect heritage landscapes that are shaped by tens of

thousands of years of living. The Liberals have fallen into a shameful place of inaction. Since they have been in government there have been no land returns. There are no effective protections for ancient heritage, even burial places, against the ravages of developments and four-wheel driving.

Indigenous protected areas - the land tenure needed to hand over management of national parks to Aboriginal people - has not progressed. Despite promises and a commitment to establishing a pathway to truth-telling and treaty, there is no legislation to start this process.

As well as a commitment to work for the return of more lands, effective Aboriginal heritage law reforms, an end to the destruction of ancient middens and burial sites in takayna and the creation of indigenous land tenures, the Greens also commit to the consultation and community engagement needed to work towards truth-telling and treaty legislation. Ensuring that the truth of colonisation is told and delivering on a centuries-old promise should be the goal of this Liberal government, and the Greens will do everything we can to remind them of that.

For a decade we have seen Liberal politicians selling out Tasmania, its people and the environment. This government patted themselves on the back for years about delivering a golden age, but while big corporations and special interests lined their coffers, public services were starting to fall apart. A decade of Liberal neglect has had huge consequences.

Everyone knows about the shocking state of our health system, the cost of living and housing crisis, the damage being done to the environment and the problems in education. With all that happening, what is Jeremy Rockliff's priority project in this Budget? A billion-dollar stadium. That is Liberal priorities for you, and they are totally cooked.

The Greens say things do not need to be this way, and change is possible. We are proud to have developed an alternative budget. It is a plan that shows how Tasmania can do things differently. Our vision is to fund things that will make a positive difference to the state now and with an eye the future. We prioritise building more homes, taking real climate action, hiring more nurses and other health staff, valuing and protecting the environment, and providing relief to people struggling with cost of living that will actually make a difference.

This might sound ambitious, but it is totally possible if we stop the stadium, make big corporations pay their fair share and end the huge subsidies to native forest logging and the racing industries. It is time the Liberals got their priorities straight and started focusing on the things Tasmanians actually need, not a billion-dollar stadium.

The Rockliff Government's Budget was an opportunity to respond with reforms that would change the direction of Tasmania for the better. Economist Saul Eslake's assessment of the Liberals' finances points to their massive underinvestment of about half-a-billion dollars a year in providing Tasmanians with the same level of public services that every other Australian has. The harms of a decade of their gouging money from the public service are so obvious, for the people who rely on those services, and our environment that needs proper protection.

The level of social disadvantage and real suffering among the majority of Tasmanians is hard to comprehend. Housing insecurity and the financial screws it is bringing are so extreme that 50 per cent of Tasmanians are skipping a meal every day to cut costs. Across the public

service, nurses and midwives are striking and resigning. They cannot bear the pressure of working in a chronically under-resourced health system, and the extra service cuts that they know are coming down the line in Minister Ferguson's 'efficiency dividends'.

On behalf of the Greens, I thank unions like the Community & Public Sector Union, the Health & Community Services Union, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, the Australian Education Union, and the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union of Australia. They are the voice for public sector workers who cannot speak out without them. It is thanks to them that Tasmanians are being told of the dire conditions of staff who are at breaking point and the services that are not being delivered. Their voice is powerful.

This enormous social need could have been responded to in a meaningful and not a bandaid way. Instead, the Treasurer has delivered essentially the same budget the Liberals have rolled out for a decade. It is a status quo budget. It means workers who are on their knees after a decade of starvation resourcing, and who now have added efficiency cuts, will get no meaningful relief.

There is no more urgent and challenging issue for Earth's inhabitants than checking our carbon emissions and preparing for the rapidly changing climate instability already with us. Over the last month, the volatility of an overheated climate gave us just a taste of the extreme flooding and winds that we know will become more frequent and serious unless we end business as usual. Affected communities - and I know members here have gone and spoken to the people in those communities - those people have been frightened, disrupted and in danger. The cost of recovery for them is enormous. The sacrifice of volunteers and emergency responders was enormous.

We are in a climate emergency. Strong action is urgent. However, instead of reining in the emissions that are feeding planetary heating, the Liberals are flattening and burning our native forests, and releasing vast carbon stores every year. The uniqueness and beauty of these forests is mostly used to make temporary woodchips, paper and cardboard. The Liberals have promised to go in further and harder into the forests, all being paid for by taxpayers. The Liberals no longer have any meaningful climate focus. At a time when speed is essential, our state's emissions are rising across many industries. The Liberals have abandoned their post.

Purposeful delay on climate action is the latest policy employed by corporations that refuse to change business as usual and miss out on some profits on a dying planet. The Liberals are willing enablers of those industries' interests. The Liberals have dumped the position of minister for climate change and the legislated soft guidelines for industry cuts in sectors like transport have whizzed by unmet.

The government should be helping people prepare for much more extreme weather as the normal new state it is, but they are still acting like each flood and storm is just a blip. That is why the Greens' alternative budget invests in carbon reduction and storage through ending native forest logging and the enormous emissions that clear-felling and burning generates. We have emission-reduction targets for all industries and we invest in the funding needed to roll this out.

We focus on preparedness, with 30 extra rapid response firefighters to stamp out bushfires in remote places fast and keep regional communities and wild places safe. We make sure there is funding for local councils to develop micro local emergency networks for all

residents in their communities so that every person can understand exactly how to prepare for hazards, how to protect themselves and how to be connected in post-event recovery.

Renters in Tasmania are often caught in a cruel trap: people cannot afford to buy a house, but they are left paying almost a housing deposit's worth of rent every five years. The Australian Greens have used federal agency data to reveal that none of the top 10 common professions in Australia can afford to buy a home and avoid housing stress. It is a generational stain on us as a society. It would take over 10 years to save a mortgage deposit on the salary of an average Australian primary school teacher or nurse. Wages are even lower in Tasmania but, unfortunately, rent prices are not.

Renters in our community are acutely vulnerable to price rises they cannot afford and holding onto a secure home. In Tasmania, renters can be evicted without cause. Under the Liberal government, there are no minimum standards for rental properties. People can cop massive rent increases at the whim of the homeowner because there are no regulations to control it. It is nearly impossible for everyday people to save for their own home. Renters are living under massive anxiety and cost-of-living pressures.

However, they are the lucky ones. Too many Tasmanians are homeless or couch surfing because the public housing waiting list has over 4500 people on it. Women are sleeping in cars with their children to escape family violence, and many more remain in abusive households because there is nowhere to go.

In the first three years of the Liberals in government, they did not build any new public housing stock. In the second three years, Airbnb boomed and thousands of homes were steadily lost from the rental market. Despite the short-stay crisis created for Tasmanians, the Liberals still refuse to regulate this sector. They are more focused on catering to the interests of property developers and investors, which they did in the budget, than to Tasmanians who deserve a secure home.

That is why our alternative budget prioritises the investments Tasmanians need to drive down rents and we regulate the short-stay sector. To match the urgency of the housing crisis all around us, we prioritise a massive infrastructure investment pipeline of $1 billion towards building 1000 homes every year and $40 million in youth-specific accommodation. This is the scale of investment that housing insecurity, poverty and homelessness in Tasmania demands. This is where we should be spending our money to support a construction jobs pathway for the future, instead of frittering it on the money hole of a billion-dollar stadium.

We have just found out today from the Macquarie Point Development Corporation submission to the Tasmanian Planning Commission on behalf of the government that it is going to cost $60 million more than they expected. It is only just starting and now it begins. Of course, it was always a joke that it could be built for $715 million. Let us be real: $3 billion is the ultimate price tag that something like that would take to build.

The cost-of-living crisis has been brutal and it is getting harder for many Tasmanians. For these people, trips to the supermarket have gone from being a bit of a headache to being a nightmare. Many skip meals every day. Paying the rent or mortgage is a fortnightly feat. Power prices have gone through the roof. Trying to pay other bills is often impossible. People are struggling. This is not what life should be like. The government has taken some modest

measures to tackle the cost of living and we welcome them. They do not go nearly far enough. What about doing more for people in need?

I think Liberal politicians would genuinely say that the government cannot afford to give more on cost of living and that they have done the best they can with the budget. The Greens say it is about your priorities, and there is more money to give. On top of their stadium folly, the Liberals' budget gives nearly $200 million in taxpayer funds to the racing industry. These are huge subsidies for a cruel industry and they only benefit a tiny number of people.

The Greens are proud to put forward an alternative budget that makes cost-of-living relief a major budget priority. Our plan would halve the cost of car registrations for struggling Tasmanians. We would make public transport free across the Metro and regional bus and ferry network. We abolish public school levies for everyone. We bring down power bills by significant investments in solar, house insulation and double-glazed windows. We boost the food relief being provided by community organisations and Neighbourhood Houses. All of this is possible. It is just about your priorities.

The Treasurer said on Friday that the government was very pleased with the public response to the budget, but then he acknowledged, 'it is not possible to please everyone'. I was at the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (TCCI) budget breakfast last Friday morning when he said that, and it could not have been clearer who the Liberals' budget is aiming to please. The business community in the room were very chirpy. The budget has multi-million-dollar handouts for property investors and developers as a pipeline for their construction wish list. There is nothing in this budget that challenges the profits of multinational corporations or gets them to tighten their belts. Under the Liberals, corporations continue to get our public resources for a song and budget incentives to boot.

In stark contrast to the faces around the TCCI breakfast table, the faces of people from community organisations that exist to support the most vulnerable and poor, were desolate. Some had tears in their eyes, telling me of the dire situation their organisation faces after a decade of starvation funding under the Liberals - organisations refused even CPI funding over that period. New Tasmanians who have never asked for help before are reaching out to their organisations every day. These are two-income families who need help with food because they cannot pay housing costs.

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service's (TasCOSS) budget briefing later that Friday was more grim news. Three-quarters of that sector are preparing to cut staff because of the Liberals' underfunding. Most have already started cutting services that desperate Tasmanians need.

The amount needed to take this sector from starving to well-nourished is pathetically tiny. The Greens choose to prioritise the $7.5 million per year that is needed over the budget period to give the community sector the indexation formula they have been asking for. It is not much to help the people who do some of the most important work in this state. Nurses, paramedics and allied health staff are the glue of Tasmania's hospitals. The Greens are proud of the spotlight we shone on the life-threatening failures of the Liberals, who have created an ambulance ramping and emergency department crisis in all our major hospitals.

The ambulance ramping inquiry gave courageous and caring paramedics, nurses and families who were affected a place to voice their heartbreaking stories of health system failures.

The failures were directly sheeted home to a decade of under-investment by the Liberals in the real, increasing costs of the health system; the lack of planning to recruit and retain new nurses, paramedics and allied health staff; and the incompetence and inaction that has led us to the worst ambulance response and emergency department times in the country. The Liberals' deliberate choice to under-invest in health delivery for a decade has culminated in avoidable deaths and suffering; worse health outcomes for so many patients; and mental health breakdowns, enduring trauma and everyday stress for so many of our staff.

We are especially proud of our work with the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU), the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) and grieving families to make the desperate situation of ambulance and emergency departments a state election priority. The Liberals were forced to step up, and we welcome the budget commitments they have made to substantially increase long overdue funding for new paramedics and ambulance staff, and for ambulance stations. Given the Liberals' blatant history of underspending on budget line items and the efficiency dividends that they are still planning to take from Health, we remain sceptical that there will be the substantial increase in actual people on the job that is needed. I am putting the Health minister on notice that we will be watching the employment process for these positions very closely as the years unfold.

The Liberals' budget has none of the investment we need to reverse the critical shortage of nurses and midwives, or the dangerous situation at the Royal Hobart Hospital maternity ward, which is one of many examples. Our alternative budget increases nurses and midwives to 480 over the forward Estimates. These include community nurses, specialists in palliative care, psychiatric emergency nurses, clinical educators and clinical coaches to support new graduates.

Many of our hospitals continue to lack the quality health care needed to keep people safe. We invest in 24/7 radiology and pathology services to the LGH, which the Liberals promised to fund under a coroner's investigation, but shamefully chose not to prioritise in this budget. The aim of a health system should be to keep people out of hospital and well for longer, and to make sure that there is care in the community so they can be discharged when appropriate. We have expanded allied health training and the baseline salary for these essential workers to help with that.

We invest in small rural hospitals to give them teleconference facilities. With assistance from specialist doctors and nurses for GPs, emergency patients can be assessed and managed there to take the pressure off major hospitals. We prioritise money into community-based preventative health programs and safe drug education.

There is no way that Tasmania's hospitals are fit for purpose. They cannot meet the capacity of our patient load today, let alone in 20 years. Staff at the Royal Hobart Hospital recently discovered that the Liberals only plan to fund a cheap, woefully inadequate upgrade for the long-promised ED. They were appalled. When it is done, the Liberals' shortcut build will not even be able to address the patient load on the day it opens, let alone have capacity for the future. Instead of prioritising public money on a stadium, our budget includes the extra $50 million that is needed to fund the Royal emergency department that the Liberals initially promised.

There is a wide gulf between the majority of Tasmanians, who want to see our wild places protected and our rivers and oceans kept healthy and full of abundant life, and the values and

choices of Liberal and Labor politicians in this place. Both are prepared to consign species like the Maugean skate and the swift parrot to extinction in the service of short-term company profits. That is a problem.

The natural world is the source of all life, and that includes ours. It is the foundation of our brand and our tourist industry, which is one of the biggest employers in the state. Without healthy soils and rivers and a healthy water table, agriculture is barren. Extreme climate flood events have far worse impacts when catchments and riversides are stripped of natives and choked with weeds.

The 10 years' overdue State of the Environment report that the Liberals released yesterday by order of parliament paints a dire picture of lutruwita/Tasmania's environmental health. More than half of the major indicators show nature on our island is in bad shape, with almost everything trending to worse. The sick state of our environment is deeply concerning, but after a decade of the Liberals in government, it is not a surprise.

The Greens, community members and scientists have long recognised and spoken with alarm at the declining state of our environment. Liberal politicians have not just failed to protect our environment, the business interests of their corporate mates have supercharged them to unravel environmental regulations, monitoring systems and transparency. They have made a virtue out of gifting public land and waters to developers. Free real estate has never been easier to get if you are a Liberal Party donor. The Liberals' forest ideology and a debased Reserve Activity Assessment system have ravaged Tasmania's native forest estate and trashed ancient high conservation value landscapes. It is all being paid for by the public purse. This is an industry that cannot stand on its own legs.

Yesterday the Labor leader made a commitment that brings both parties into lockstep, we believe, with a bleak vision to a hyper-industrialised Tasmania. Mr Winter's vision is to fast-track developments and skip past environmental assessment processes to unleash the private sector.

The State of the Environment report shows just how many challenges our island's unique environment is facing. As well as climate change, there are threatened species in decline, pollution, inappropriate development, and damage caused by invasive species and land clearing. That is just the start of the list. The State of the Environment report makes clear recommendations for the state's steps forward. The Liberals should sit up and take notice, but the Premier's comments this morning were deeply disappointing. It is clear that he intends to double down with the same environment-damaging policies his government has had over the last decade.

The recommendations in the report are measures that the Greens have been highlighting for years. They show the meaningful action that we need to take to protect threatened species, expand our reserves, better manage waterways, eradicate invasive species and create more marine protected areas.

At the top of its many important findings, the State of the Environment Report also shows that there is so much about lutruwita/Tasmania's environment that we have no idea about. That has to change. We have to monitor our life-giving soils and rivers, and the waste we produce. That is an urgent priority.

Our alternative budget invests in looking after what is precious, threatened and essential, including:

- Nature-based tourism: a sector that values and respects our wildness and beauty

- Parks protections, maintenance and infrastructure, and rangers and field officers

- A massive restoration effort for wetlands and coastal areas, and support for volunteers in Land Care, Coastcare and Wildcare

- Making sure that threatened species have plans to keep them off the pathway to extinction and resourcing to protect their habitat

- Marine life preservation through establishing 10 per cent of our coastal waters in marine protected areas

The Liberal and Labor parties are presenting a binary choice to Tasmanians: jobs or fish farming, jobs or native industry. In reality, we can do both, and we have to. A caring government would support regional jobs by transitioning the forest and salmon industries into sustainable futures that are better for our environment. Unless we do this now, the Maugean skate, the swift parrot, the masked owl and others will become extinct within a few short years. We can end native forest logging and focus on an alternative industry in the plantation estate.

The community fight to hold back the incoming tide of Liberal-funded senseless trashing of threatened values is resolute. The Greens stand with and salute the defiance and strength of everyday Tasmanians who make up a movement to protect what is wild and beautiful about this island. It has endured and grown over more than half a century, alongside and supported by Greens in parliament.

We count the successes in the amount of public land that has been saved for wildness and for its world-renowned values and in the momentum across the state for protecting our environment in all its beauty. Community organisations like the Bob Brown Foundation, the Wilderness Society, the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, Neighbours of Fish Farms, the Tree Project, Fishers and Walkers, the Tasmanian National Parks Association and Environment Tasmania are all an established and healthy part of our social fabric.

New groups form all the time in response to local threats to highly valued and loved areas like groups in the Dial Ranges, the Franklin Forest, the Tasman Peninsula, the Blue Tiers, takayna and kunanyi. For Aboriginal people, you can never separate culture and country. They are loud and vocal in protesting the destruction of lutruwita and its wild places and we stand with them. Instead of demonising these Tasmanians, Liberal and Labor politicians should see them as the great resource they are: good folk with energy and spirit who stand against a mindless trashing of irreplaceable values. There is no budget item that can adequately value the contribution of these people to the prosperity of future Tasmanians, but there should be.

This year we are spending more than the Liberals on what Tasmanians need and we are delivering a smaller deficit. In future years, we are funding a big expansion of essential services and critical infrastructure in a fiscally sustainable way. That is because the Greens know money

does not grow on trees. It is all about priorities. We would pay for our plan by ending native forest logging and winding up the loss-making Forestry Tasmania, taking back $72 million over the forward Estimates. We would set a tax on developer windfalls on the profits of rezoning land, a 1 per cent vacant property tax, and we would scrap the developer handouts of the Liberals.

The Greens would make the big end of town pay their fair share of restoring the casino tax rate, increased rents and licence fees for big salmon and, just like Saul Eslake recommended, we would increase mining royalties by 40 per cent, in line with the national average, no more. We would cut funding to the cruel racing industry, saving Tasmanians more than $40 million a year. We would abandon minister Ellis's controversial youth strike force. The Greens would bin the Liberals' land tax reduction, the defence advocate and, unlike the Labor Party who have done yet another backflip, we would bin the Coordinator-General's office as well.

Not only would we expand our reserves, we would protect our wild places by scrapping the Liberals' cable car Trojan horse for kunanyi, the Cradle Mountain experience and the trashing of takayna coast by four-wheel drive vehicles. We would reduce spending on roads and pay for our hospital and housing infrastructure and we would scrap the more than billion-dollar Macquarie Point stadium, a Liberal vanity project, an ode to the AFL and a millstone around the necks of a generation of Tasmanians.

As usual, we expect the Liberals to dismiss this alternative budget as kooky. We know why they do it. It is because they know change is possible and they do not want change. They want to keep business as usual with cosy deals with mates and donors.

As they say, budgets are about priorities and we hope ours are broadcast loud and clear and in stark contrast to the government's. We want hospitals, homes and schools, not a billion-dollar stadium or a chocolate fountain. We want safe and prepared communities and a government that protects its people in a time of climate change while doing everything in its power to mitigate it.

We want young Tasmanians to have quality education and food on their tables and not end up in a child prison. We support the Liberals' funding in their budget for the commission of inquiry, but we know there is so much more that needs to be done and spent on supporting children, which is why we bring forward and fund the closure of Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

Last year, Ms O'Connor in her budget reply - and I recognise Ms O'Connor, who is in the Chamber with us at the moment - accurately predicted the mood of the electorate is changing and there would be much more diversity in the next parliament. She was spot on. The Greens have returned as a party with five members in the House and our first MLC, Ms O'Connor, in the Legislative Council seat of Hobart.

Power-sharing parliaments have become the norm and what a great thing it is for Tasmania and our democracy. We just have to look at the inroads made in six short months since the Liberals' most recent snap election where they do not have a majority. The warnings and fear-mongering were an attempt to prevent the power sharing and collaboration we have had ever since. It is a good thing governments are forced to consider the diversity of views in

the community when they pass laws and the outcomes in this new parliament have been so positive.

The Greens have made sure begging is finally erased from the statute books. People who were criminalised for expressing their true self will be able to seek justice through redress. We strongly supported Labor's move to make industrial manslaughter the crime it has always been. Another of the new opportunities was proposed by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday. He has rightly called out the Liberals' pork-barrelling over successive elections, their shameful shovelling of taxpayers' money into election promises selected behind closed doors by a Liberal Party politburo of unelected officials - elected bribery, the Integrity Commission has called it.

The Liberals have used public moneys to suit their own electoral and political interests and often we have seen MPs and their families benefit from pork-barrelling personally as well, some of whom are still in the Chamber today. It is a rod on our democracy and the Greens have long called for it to stop. We look forward to working with the Labor Party and other members to legislate an end to this practice. It will be fairer for all the worthy groups in the community who need a hand. They would get an equal chance to plead their case for funding and it would be much better for government budgets in the future.

Unlike the Liberals, our integrity bodies have been gutted and kept toothless. It is little surprise they have no real capacity to call out the Liberals' rorting and the hiding of information from Tasmanians. Our alternative budget dramatically increases funding for the Integrity Commission and the Ombudsman. Shamefully, the Liberals have walked away from their promise to fund the Weiss recommendations designed to investigate and prevent child sexual abuse. We fund this work fully as is needed by the Integrity Commission. Honourable Speaker, on behalf of our historic six Greens in parliament, I am proud to present our costed alternative budget. I table it to the House now.

It prioritises support for people struggling with the costs of life and for public and community sector workers who need to know that the government has their back. It puts resourcing their needs above handouts to big corporations and developers. We make a clear-eyed, unapologetic choice to prioritise funding into critical health and housing and climate resilience infrastructure.

We stand up for our environment and for all its beauties and wonders we have a solemn responsibility to care for. We will protect them from corporate greed and profiteering and from Liberal and Labor party short-term self-interest. Ours is a real alternative vision for this island. Our alternative budget puts lutruwita, its people and future generations first, and I am proud to table this Alternative Budget in the House today.

[12.35 p.m.]

Mrs PETRUSMA (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I am pleased today to rise to speak on the Tasmanian government's 2024-25 Budget. I thank the Treasurer, Premier, Cabinet and the departments for all their hard work and efforts in delivering this important budget for Tasmanians.

The 2024-25 Tasmanian State Budget drives the delivery of our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future - a plan designed to act on the issues that matter most to Tasmanians and to make life more affordable.

As the Treasurer outlined, the 2024-25 Budget acknowledges our central frontline workers who keep us healthy, educated and safe; our hard-working community organisations and volunteers who make so much possible; our business community who invest and employ; the thousands of families who work hard to pay their bills and raise the next generations of Tasmanians. Also, Tasmanians who are doing it tough and need a helping hand, and Tasmanians who have suffered the trauma of child sexual abuse.

The Budget also delivers on the Government's 2024 election commitments, invests in new infrastructure, contains additional outlays for stronger public services, and secures record investment in critical areas such as cost-of-living relief, health, housing, education and community services, whilst laying the foundation for a stronger and more prosperous future.

At the heart of our 2030 Strong Plan is a commitment to keeping Tasmania's economy strong, creating more jobs and making our state the best place to live, work and raise a family. Moreover, in my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier I am particularly pleased to see the significant allocation of $423 million towards the full delivery of actions as part of the government's response to the Commission of Inquiry, as well as increased support for victim-survivors, to improve protective systems and to keep our children safe.

Institutional child sexual abuse has caused enormous harm to many Tasmanians. To all survivors of child abuse who shared your personal experiences through the Commission of Inquiry, and to all those who spoke out on behalf of others to ensure their voices were heard, we thank you all for your strength and courage. Our state is deeply indebted to you for your bravery and coming forward in speaking to the commission in the hope that this abuse and injustice you have suffered never happens again.

Since this government was elected in 2014, Tasmania has come a long way, but we know that there is more work to be done. We must keep moving forward to ensure that we continue growing our economy and delivering the infrastructure and services Tasmanians need and deserve.

Over the last six years, Tasmania has been the strongest-performing state economy in the country, growing by 19 per cent. Our labour market remains incredibly strong, with unemployment at a near-record low of 4 1 per cent, and wages grew by 5.1 per cent in 2023-24, leading the nation. Our population is now at a record high, with nearly 575,000 people calling Tasmania home, and 47,000 more Tasmanians are employed than in 2014.

Despite this progress, high inflation and rising interest rates continue to place significant pressure on Tasmanian households, which is why the 2024-25 Budget takes significant steps to ease the cost-of-living pressures facing our community. We understand that many Tasmanians are facing financial strain, and addressing the rising cost of living is their main issue. This is why this Budget delivers targeted relief to help families and individuals to navigate the rising costs of everyday life. This Budget delivers record investments in cost-of-living relief and supports for our most vulnerable. We are providing $118 million over four years for new housing, energy and public transport concessions alongside an additional $344 million already committed to existing concessions.

At the forefront of our efforts is energy bill relief. We have already provided a $250 credit for every Tasmanian household and a $300 credit for small businesses through the Supercharged Renewable Energy Dividend. Additionally, we are extending our annual

electricity concession and the Energy Saver subsidy, making it more affordable for Tasmanians to purchase energy-efficient appliances.

Transport costs are also being addressed, with all public transport fares cut by half until 30 June 2025. This measure alone is saving commuters hundreds of dollars each month. Additionally, we are expanding the no-interest loans network to offer up to 2000 more loans each year to support low-income Tasmanians in need of financial assistance.

We also recognise the importance of supporting families, particularly those with young children. That is why our Healthy School Lunch program, which provides nutritious meals to students, is being expanded from 30 schools to 60 schools over the next two years. This program not only promotes the health and wellbeing of our children, but also helps families save up to $950 per year in food costs.

In addition to these relief measures, the Budget extends concessions and subsidies for water and sewerage, vehicle registration, and travel on the *Spirit of Tasmania* and Bass Strait Island air travel for eligible Tasmanians. These targeted concessions are designed to ensure that Tasmanians, especially our most vulnerable, have the support they need.

To further assist, the 2024-25 Budget takes decisive action to make housing more affordable and accessible for all Tasmanians. We understand that owning a home is a dream for many, which is why this Budget introduces key measures to help more Tasmanians to achieve that dream. This includes stamp duty being abolished for first home buyers purchasing existing properties valued up to $750,000, saving them up to $28,900. This crucial relief will help more Tasmanians to break into the property market, making home ownership a reality for many who have found it out of reach.

Our successful MyHome shared equity scheme has also been expanded, allowing people on low incomes to buy their first home with just a 2 per cent deposit. By lifting income limits and increasing the equity share, the program will open doors for more Tasmanians to secure their own home.

Additionally, we are accelerating housing construction through our new $35-million Homes Faster! Partnership Incentive Fund, which will deliver more affordable housing options. This includes key worker accommodation in regional areas, rebates for residential land lots and incentives for medium high-density developments. We are also bringing forward apartment developments, with Homes Tasmania guaranteeing the purchase of affordable rental units and making it more affordable to get new developments off the ground through no-interest loans for headworks charges.

For renters, the Private Rental Incentive Scheme is being expanded to include 200 more homes for low-income Tasmanians, offering them reduced rent. We are also addressing the pressing needs of those escaping family violence by making up to 100 more rapid rehousing homes available.

Our long-term goal is clear. We are committed to delivering 10,000 new social affordable homes by 2032, including 2000 social housing units by 2027. This is why the Budget dedicates $45 million each year to help Tasmanians find safe and secure housing, with additional funding for critical services like Jireh House in my electorate of Franklin.

Through these initiatives, we are not only providing more affordable homes, but also ensuring that housing support is comprehensive, addressing the deeper challenges that prevent many Tasmanians from securing stable housing.

To secure Tasmania's future as a globally unique place to live, work and visit, this Budget continues our strong investment in infrastructure. Building on the success of our existing infrastructure agenda, we will invest an additional $5.1 billion in job-creating projects including new hospitals, schools, training facilities, roads and bridges, which will not only support the state's growth, but will also improve everyday life for Tasmanians.

With major projects like the $786-million Bridgewater bridge and the $605-million Midland Highway Action Plan nearing completion, the government is focused on the next phase of infrastructure development through the $5.1-billion investment so as to continue the Tasmanian government's long-term agenda of delivering modern assets to support future growth.

I am very pleased to see that the 2024-25 budget is making significant investments in a number of projects in my electorate of Franklin, ensuring safer roads, smoother commutes and better access to public transport. These projects are a key part of our commitment to delivering real improvements that make everyday life easier for everyone in our community.

One of the key infrastructure projects in the Franklin electorate is the next stage of the South Arm Highway Upgrade. This $60-million project will expand the highway from two lanes to four, significantly improving traffic flow and safety. The upgrade begins at Pass Road in Glebe Hill and continues through Rokeby, Clarendon Vale, Oak Downs and ending at Acton Road in Lauderdale. Additionally, the intersection of South Arm Highway and Acton Road will be upgraded, further enhancing accessibility as well as easing congestion and increasing safety, especially for Lauderdale Primary School students, staff, families and visitors.

We are also delivering $20 million in funding for the Mornington roundabout upgrade. Working with the federal government, this project will address safety and congestion issues at the Mornington roundabout. The improvements will create a safer, more efficient and reliable road network by minimising congestion and ensuring smoother traffic flow, benefiting both local communities and businesses in the area. We are also boosting the Derwent ferry service with the construction of a brand new terminal at Lindisfarne. This will make it even easier for commuters to hop on the ferry and avoid the traffic altogether while enjoying the scenic journey across the beautiful Derwent River.

On the other side of the Franklin electorate, we are investing in the Olinda Grove Roundabout upgrade to improve traffic safety and reduce delays, particularly during peak morning hours. By implementing roundabout traffic signals that operate only during peak times, the project will enhance traffic flow and reduce queuing and a major black spot on the Southern Outlet.

We are also investing in the Huon Highway Corridor project. This development spans 90 kilometres between Kingston and Southport and aims to enhance road safety and efficiency. The improvements will include the Grove intersection upgrade, road widening, better overtaking opportunities, intersection and access upgrades, curb adjustments and enhancements for pedestrians and public transport. These upgrades will not only make travel

smoother and safer for both locals and visitors, but also enrich the driving experience in this beautiful and glorious scenic region of Tasmania.

The 2024-25 Budget represents a significant investment in Tasmania's health sector, focusing on both immediate improvements and long-term enhancements. The 2024-25 Budget allocates substantial funds to hospital services, including hiring 44 additional doctors and 25 nurses for the expanded emergency department at the Royal Hobart Hospital. The GP Now Rapid Response Unit will also be introduced, equipped with 10 GPs to address sudden shortages, while $100,000 is being provided to 40 new doctors to incentivise their relocation to regional areas.

Additionally, 78 new paramedics will be employed, including 27 community paramedics and four new ambulance stations to be established across the state, with two of these located in the Franklin electorate at Snug and Cygnet. Major upgrades are also underway across hospitals, featuring expanded emergency departments, improved operating theatres and new maternity care beds.

This Budget also supports the development of a public diagnostic breast care centre and a cancer wellness centre with a new $40-million medical equipment fund, which will enhance the capacity for elective surgeries and endoscopies. Furthermore, mental health services are being strengthened with over $32 million directed towards supporting vulnerable children and young people, as well as the construction of dedicated mental health precincts.

The 2024-25 Budget is making significant investments into Tasmania's education and training sectors. We are embarking on a transformative journey with our school building blitz, providing new and improved facilities for 15 Tasmanian schools across the state. In Franklin, this will see Clarence High School, Lindisfarne North Primary School and Risdon Vale Primary School upgraded as part of this building program. Our commitment to education also extends beyond infrastructure with our $9.5-billion investment in education and skills, including actions such as the School Improvement Program to respond to school maintenance and improvement needs; establishing the VET Futures Fund to enhance vocational education and training facilities with industry-standard equipment at colleges, secondary schools and trade training centres; the building or upgrading of teacher housing in rural and remote communities; and the upgrading of playgrounds and sport courts.

To support students living with disability, we are providing $5 million for new or increased educational adjustments and, recognising the importance of early childhood education, we are also investing $32 million in four new Child and Family Learning Centres across the state. I am absolutely delighted that one of these will be built in Huonville. These centres will offer free wrap-around services such as psychologists and speech therapists, giving families greater access to essential support. We are also launching the Early Years Workforce Development Fund to attract and upskill the workforce, including scholarships for psychology and speech pathology students and incentives for remote areas. Furthermore, to equip young Tasmanians for the future, we are turbocharging VET in schools, with $30 million for new facilities and cutting-edge equipment.

Our Regional Jobs Hubs will continue matching Tasmanians with training and employment opportunities, and the new Workforce Participation and Trading program will further support vulnerable individuals into meaningful employment. Together, these

investments are laying the foundation for a brighter future, ensuring that our education and training systems are among the best in the nation.

The 2024-25 Budget provides a vital boost to community services with a strong focus on supporting Tasmania's 34 neighbourhood houses alongside essential organisations like Foodbank and Loaves & Fishes. Each neighbourhood house will receive $50,000 in operational funding as well as continued investment in the Community Connector Program and a new upgrade initiative, ensuring that these hubs can better serve their local communities. With growing cost-of-living pressures, these organisations play a crucial role in offering emergency food relief and essential support to vulnerable Tasmanians. This additional funding strengthens their capacity to meet increasing demands and to foster resilient, connected communities.

The 2024-25 Budget also ensures Tasmanians young and old will have access to more sporting and community wellbeing opportunities than ever before. Community and sporting clubs are the cornerstones of our communities and this government knows how important local community clubs are to Tasmanians, as they play an enormous role in keeping Tasmanians of all ages fit, healthy and connected with their local community.

They also need future-proofing for years to come. This is why we are investing in generational infrastructure, ensuring the ongoing viability of these community clubs, as well as the provision of new equipment and the upgrading of infrastructure for local clubs and councils right across the state.

This includes, in my electorate of Franklin, the Warrane Mornington Community Centre, which will receive $150,000 for its Hood in the Hub project which will fund the construction of a new facility at the Warrane Community Garden for garden and community wellbeing related activities. This development will also reduce ongoing operational costs and provide income generation, contributing to the sustainability of this beautiful garden.

Kingborough Community Missions will receive $20,000 to support their food aid programs for the homeless and families in need, and the Young Leaders of Tasmania (YLOT) will receive $1.55 million over the next five years. YLOT is an innovative organisation that focuses on building individual capacity by providing young people with disability access to social role modelling, skill development activities and the opportunity to learn from a similar age peer buddy.

Other investments in Franklin include improving local facilities such as football and cricket clubs, upgrading community halls and parks, installing disability-accessible amenities, as well as enhancing recreational spaces such as bike tracks, bowls clubs and tennis courts.

Additional initiatives support environmental restoration, cultural heritage, safety improvements and upgrades to public amenities. Some of these investments include $25,000 to help fund the installation of additional Mobi-Mat turf at Bellerive Beach, which will enhance wheelchair and impaired mobility access; $85,000 to assist in funding accessibility upgrades and building works to improve amenities and access at the Geeveston Town Hall; and $150,000 to develop a new half-court basketball facility within the Dru Point Reserve as part of the Dru Point Reserve Master Plan.

These investments are just a few examples of the many commitments made to support the three councils, community and sporting groups across Franklin in the 2024-25 Budget. By

providing targeted funding to these grassroots organisations, the government is ensuring that our local communities are strengthened and equipped to meet the needs of their residents. Whether through improving infrastructure, supporting food relief efforts, or promoting health and wellbeing, these initiatives reflect our broader commitment to building stronger, more connected communities. I also note the significant investments under the implementation of the government's $100 million Family Sexual Violence Action Plan, Survivors at the Centre 2022-2027, our coordinated whole-of-government plan to respond to family and sexual violence. This is a matter of national and state importance, as we need a Tasmania where all are safe, equal and respected, and our homes, families and communities are free from all forms of violence, including family and sexual violence.

I know there is significant additional funding towards boosting support for Tasmanians impacted by sexual, family or child abuse-related violence, including $5.6 million to support victim-survivors and the establishment and management of the Victim-Survivor Advisory Group; $6.6 million towards the development of a whole-of-government approach to identifying, preventing and responding to harmful sexual behaviours in children and young people; and an additional $1.4 million for Tasmanian Legal Aid to support its commission of inquiry response with dedicated resources to provide legal services and advice to people impacted by child sexual abuse.

There is the expansion of the Just Healthy Families program with additional funding of $1.2 million to provide easier access to legal advice for those impacted by family violence; funding of more than $3 million to secure our Arch services, including the establishment of a new centre in Burnie; $4.6 million to manage information for the protection of children through the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM); and an additional $1.2 million over four years to provide greater access to the Victims of Crime Assistance Scheme.

There is funding of $423 million to ensure the recommendations of the commission of inquiry are met, including $1.4 million to continue the rollout of audiovisual communications equipment in the Supreme and Magistrates courts of Tasmania, particularly in regional areas; $4.2 million per annum for the Office of the Independent Regulator; $700 000 to the Office of the Ombudsman to speed up the right to information investigation, review and education processes; and $9.6 million in additional funding to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to increase capacity to respond to the commission of inquiry investigations. Significantly, $650 million has been allocated for claims of historical sexual abuse in recognition of the independently verified estimate of the cost of legal claims related to historical sexual abuse in state care.

Time expired.

Recognition of Visitor

The SPEAKER - Before calling the member for Clark and minister, I acknowledge the presence in the Gallery of Mrs Sasha Nayar, who is here as part of an official visit by the Singaporean High Commissioner.

Members - Hear, hear.

[12.56 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Science and Technology) - Honourable Speaker, I realise I will just get a few words in before the break but I am absolutely delighted to speak to the State Budget and to provide my response here today. This government's Budget drives the delivery of our Strong Plan, which takes action right now on the things that matter to Tasmanians and makes life more affordable.

We are delivering record cost-of-living relief of more than $550 million as we support Tasmanians through the everyday challenge of affordability. From our supercharged renewable energy dividend supporting families and small business, to our half-price bus and ferry fares, Tasmanians' back pockets are benefiting. Our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future keeps the state's economy strong and makes Tasmania the best place to live, work and raise a family.

It is without a doubt that this Budget is very good for jobs in Tasmania, ongoing investment in economically productive infrastructure and Tasmania's frontline services. We are focused on growing our economy so we can face global challenges from a position of strength. We are proud of our economic record. Under this government, more Tasmanians than ever before are employed, giving them more opportunities in life to do the things they want. Thanks to our responsible budget management we are growing the economy, creating jobs and increasing productivity.

I will start with the electorate of Clark. I thank those who put their faith in me and backed me in this past election. It was really good and so many great friends in Clark-land have been built up now over the years. I really feel very privileged to represent the people of Clark and I am pleased that this Budget delivers on many of the items I have been advocating for.

We have 44 additional doctors coming, 25 nurses at the Royal Hobart Hospital's expanded emergency department, and a $15 million investment into a new diagnostic breast imaging clinic, which is going to be located on level 8 of the Liverpool Street clinics and Cancer Wellness Centre. This new service will increase capacity, reduce wait times and ease the financial impact on Tasmanians requiring these services. I was very honoured to be able to attend with the minister for Health the day of the opening and speak to people who had been using that service and, in particular, the medical professionals who were delivering that service, to hear about what a big difference that will make to everybody.

We have a new 27-bed mental health and eating disorder facility at St. Johns Park, new ferry terminals at Wilkinsons Point and Sandy Bay, and we are upgrading facilities at Princes Street and Rosetta primary schools as part of our School Building Blitz program. As fate would have it, we had in the House this morning a student from Rosetta Primary, who is part of their school parliament, and he was the Deputy Prime Minister of Rosetta Primary School Parliament. It is very good to see everybody engaged in what happens in this place and in their democracy.

Delivering the revitalised Cosgrove High School and Hobart City High School campus is important and is happening. We are also building a new 40-bed older persons' mental health complex and supporting our most vulnerable with funding to Jireh House, McCombe House and Saint Vincent de Paul's Loui's Van.

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

Resumed from above.

Ms OGILVIE - Honourable Speaker, Clark has a vibrant multicultural community. With that said, we are providing funding for the Festa Italia, Estia street festival, Chinese Lunar New Year festival and Diwali festival. I look forward to attending these, or as many of them as I can, and enjoying the festivities each one brings.

We are commencing the Macquarie Point urban precinct project. We are supporting Incat's expansion plans, which means more and better paying jobs for investment and a greater focus on the goals local businesses are achieving. We have 24 new paramedics for the greater Hobart area, which is wonderful news. We are supporting 16 community sporting clubs and facilities, including the Glenorchy Knights Football Club, South Hobart Football Club, Claremont Bowls and Community Club, Claremont Football Club and the Nepalese Football Club, just to name a few. Locals will also benefit from items including the expansion of the Ticket to Play program. It has been highly successful and everybody loves it. It has helped families with the cost-of-living issues, with $100 vouchers now available for children of people who received the Family Tax Benefit Part A supplement in the previous financial year.

We are expanding access to everyday medications available over the counter, which will have the effect of reducing trips to the GP. That will take a bit of pressure off. There are also over 100 different types of concessions, including energy bill relief and concessions, council rates relief for pensioners, and water and sewerage concessions.

Most importantly, the people of Glenorchy have spoken and they want their pool fixed. That is why we are investing $5 million to get the Glenorchy pool open again. I was delighted to present the letter of confirmation on this important project. To say it is all happening in Clark is an understatement.

In relation to the Science and Technology portfolio, most here and also in the sci-tech sector know my passion in this space. As the minister responsible, I am committed to delivering alongside industry to advance Tasmania's capabilities and potential, which we know is unlimited. This Budget will further leverage the rapid advances in the science and technology field globally. We know Tasmanian businesses and researchers are doing incredible things. It drives the delivery of the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, with our plan for sci-tech including the development of a whole-of-government advanced technology industry strategy. A lot of work has gone into that and it is a very good strategy. There is $30,000 for TasICT to enable its cybersecurity conference, which is a big hit every year - it just gets bigger and bigger; workforce development; and student engagement initiatives. We are continuing the multi-million-dollar funding across government to build ICT and cybersecurity capacity and to deliver those transformational digital projects we know we need across a number of portfolio areas and supporting the growth of Tasmanian ICT businesses.

Those opposite chastise us now and again about our plan to back our scientists, innovators and small businesses. However, as a government, we recognise the importance of supporting Tasmanians to participate in research and to develop inspiring industries that encourage our

children to stay in school, perhaps study STEM and pursue global careers from in Tasmania. We know Tasmania has a bright future ahead in our science and technology sector.

Unlike Murphy's law, Bernoulli's law of fluid dynamics or even Kepler's law - none of which I actually fully understand, not being an engineer or a physicist, I posit my own law, which I test-drove the other night at the TasICT drinks with some trepidation. It seemed to be well received at the networking event on Monday, so I will run it out here again and it is the exact opposite of Murphy's law. It sets out that in any field of endeavour, anything that can go right will go right if you give it a go. Left to themselves, things will always go from good to better. If there is a possibility of several things that could go right, the one that will go right is the one that will cause the best outcome. Nature always sides with the hidden benefit. Finally, if everything is going well, you have obviously considered everything well. Take some comfort from that.

However, we recognise that investing in our business sector and in innovation, ideas, optimism and confidence makes such a difference. It makes a huge difference in the sci-tech sector and makes a huge difference across the state.

Confidence is king, as they say, and as we bring together our business sector with those national and global supply chains, digital technology and our capacity to sell and transmit our digital products from here across the world, we know the things we do here can have a resounding impact on humanity and, as my new Ogilvie's law posits, things will go from good to better and go right for Tasmania. We know that our export sector injected almost $6.4 billion into the state's economy last financial year and our science and technology sector is a significant contributor on the global stage.

I want to remind ourselves every now and again that our very own university owns an array of radio telescopes across the nation, the only university that does. That array is central and critical to the global GPS system. Without the work that our scientists do here and that array of radio telescopes, we would not have the GPS that shows where you are going in your car and helps you do map finding on your phone. We are right at the centre of this stuff, which is fantastic.

The achievements and goals of our innovators and researchers may not be celebrated or may not even be recognised because people might not know they are happening, but our government will not shy away from recognising the hard work of Tasmanian innovators. To live the life of an innovator and entrepreneur is hard. They need confidence and we hope to give them that confidence. By investing in our growing export market, we will ensure we can continue to promote a business-friendly environment with more and better opportunities for Tasmanians.

I turn briefly to STEM and in particular the University of Tasmania Sandy Bay campus. Most will know my underlying desire is to see Tasmania stand proudly amongst the nation's science, technology, engineering and mathematics greats. That is exactly what a STEM future at Sandy Bay will achieve. In my ongoing conversations with the university, we are making good inroads on the path to realising this vision, but I must stress that this is predicated on the federal government coming to the party, coming to the table and stumping up with the required investment of $500-plus million. Without this, the futures of our own children will be thwarted by an ability to stay in Tasmania to further their careers in this important sector.

It is really important that we get this right. That is why I will continue to call on the opposition to lay down their negativity and advocate alongside government for the betterment of Tasmania's children and industry and, in particular, a STEM future to assist the university with their desires and projections.

In relation to the arts, as we know, Tasmania has a vibrant arts, cultural and creative sector. Today at lunchtime, in between starting this speech and recommencing it, I was very fortunate to travel to Mount Carmel College in Sandy Bay to look at some of the works that our important arts community is providing into the school sector. It is incredible that we have such a vibrant sector in the arts and they are so engaged with our schoolchildren. Our arts sector is full of wonderful engagement, talent, passion and aspiration, values which are espoused by this sector the world over.

As part of our plan for supporting a stronger arts and creative sector, released during the 2024 state election, the Tasmanian government committed to developing stronger communities and delivering creative sector opportunities across the state. This included two major funding commitments for the arts which are funded in the 2024-25 Budget; a $1 million youth arts grants funding program; and a one-year uplift of $1.5 million for arts organisations. An arts grants program of $1 million over two years for young people to provide an outlet for engagement and creativity has been established.

Work is underway to deliver on these objectives through a range of competitive funding opportunities and initiatives that includes $160,000 for emerging professional development and $150,000 over two years to the Tasmanian Performing Arts Centre consortium to pilot a capacity development initiative focused on technical and back-of-house skills: very important. The Budget also includes a $1.5 million uplift for arts organisations that will further support our arts community, including a new $600,000 strategic initiatives and service organisations competitive funding program. Guidelines for this program will be released in October 2024.

There is also a new $85,000 capacity development initiative for Tasmanian arts organisations which is focused on building knowledge about accessibility and inclusion, and increased funding of $635,000 to support arts organisations through existing programs. As we know, our burgeoning screen industry is doing remarkably well. We have put $500,000 into video game development as an election commitment and we are delivering on that promise. The skills and potential in this area is absolutely remarkable. Soon we have our Level Up Tasmania games showcase coming; I hope you can all get down to that.

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery is another beneficiary of our budget injections, including $11.028 million, rising across the forward Estimates to $12.229 million. This includes $1 million additional funding towards forward Estimates for priority works and we will continue working with TMAG.

As you all know, I love our unique cultural heritage in Tasmania; it is such an amazing thing. It brings tourists, it brings people to visit and is something that is so ingrained in the Tasmanian DNA that it is really part of being Tasmanian to love your heritage. We have put $5.7 million for activation and conservation of our historic heritage, a key investment. We will put in $3 million over the next two years to our Built Heritage Grants Scheme, again putting much-needed money where it is needed and quickly. We have a conservation program and we

have recently announced some other investments which are important, including $175,000 allocated to the Holy Trinity Orthodox Church which needs some help.

Our Heritage grants scheme has already supported important projects like Claremont House; Hobart City Mission in Davey Street, where we looked at the stained glass window and the repairs that need to be done there; and $16 million for infrastructure upgrades at the iconic Port Arthur Historic Site over two years, in keeping with our desire to make sure places are accessible and looked after, both for the local community and Tasmania's thriving tourism sector. It is a story of looking after heritage.

In my Corrections and Rehabilitation portfolio, there is so much we could talk about, but what I really want to talk about is our focus on the transformative change we need to make in our correctional system: the investment in innovation, rehabilitation and people. That is at the core of the work we are doing, with a series of initiatives including $4 million over the next four years to expand our nation-leading electronic monitoring program and our 24/7 unit which continues to grow in strength; $38 million towards our new 52-bed maximum security offender unit at Risdon designed to meet future bed demand; and $15.9 million over the next three years for the Ron Barwick Minimum Security Prison and that will help us deliver drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs and new facilities for more intervention programs. We are putting $4.1 million over four years to enhance drug and diversion programs, new residential treatment facilities and to strengthen early release services and reduce recidivism. We are expanding opportunities for education, training and culturally specific programs, particularly for Aboriginal prisoners. We are putting $12 million towards the electronic security and mobile alarm system replacement project, which is incredibly important.

With respect to my portfolios of Women and the Prevention of Family Violence, I will speak on each area separately. Time may defeat me, but I will quickly touch on the Women portfolio.

The 2024-25 Budget secures record investment and opportunities for Tasmanian women. We continue to deliver the Equal Means Equal Tasmanian Women's Strategy and we want to foster a society where women and girls have equal opportunities to thrive in all facets of life, including politics, as I should point out. It is important that women and girls are able to participate in their democracy on the same footing as everybody else. We aim to increase social and economic participation of women and girls, promoting gender equity.

We have measures to boost female participation in the workforce - we have Women on Boards strategy, women's leadership programs, a grant program for International Women's Day and executive support for the Tasmanian Women's Council.

In relation to prevention of family violence, there is so much that could be said, but I will point to the record amount of funding that is being injected into this important area, and the fact that it is now a national conversation that is happening through national Cabinet. It is so significant, this point in time in which we find ourselves, and this government is determined to do more and make more of a difference. We want to reflect a deep commitment to creating a safer, more supportive environment for all Tasmanians, and our government's focus and response remains dynamic and responsive.

Time expired.

[2.46 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Deputy Speaker, as a rule of thumb, when measuring the merits of a government Budget, we look for a number of telltale signs:

(1) Deficits, where expenditure exceeds revenues. This is often a sign of financial mismanagement. This Budget is all about deficits.

(2) High debt levels usually indicate a state Budget is not sustainable in the long term. We know, as leading economist Saul Eslake has stated, we do have very high debt levels and they are not sustainable.

(3) Neglecting critical services, which will impact the community's quality of life. We know this when we look at the inadequate housing, health systems and the increase in crime.

(4) Lack of transparency. When a budget lacks clear explanations and is not honest about source of revenues and expenditures. Interestingly, cuts to the Integrity Commission funding, and will often talk about a path to surplus without explanation, really feeding into that lack of transparency.

(5) Inadequate reserves - Lack of emergency reserves during economic downturns. Basically, there is no fuel left in the Tasmanian economy tank. We are borrowing from Peter to pay Paul.

(6) Inequitable distribution - When the budget favours certain groups over others. The billion dollars in election commitments, Deputy Speaker. When you keep calling early elections, the pork-barrelling also becomes very unsustainable.

(7) Failure to address long-term challenges such as demographic shifts, ageing infrastructure, educational outcomes and housing, ageing port infrastructure, water and sewerage issues. Look at the *Spirit* debacle. Look at the potholes. Look at the below-building standard fire brigades, police stations, school infrastructure we see all around our beautiful state.

All of these telltale signs are within this Budget. It is precarious, unstable, unsafe and, frankly, very disappointing.

What really lies behind the state's finances is another matter entirely. If this is the outlook we know about, what will we inherit when this unstable minority government finally falls?

It is prudent to ask - given the limited accountability, poor performance indicators, and the pressure to ignore issues displayed by this minority Liberal government - what the true state of our government finances really are. What is the real spending situation? We know this minority government have ducked the difficult decisions they have and will continue to put self-interest and party decisions ahead of the good of the people of Tasmania.

Unfunded commitment after unfunded commitment, time and time again, the scale of this government's overspend has been revealed by experts: borrowings after borrowings accruing more and more debt, now at an estimated $35,000 per household. Again, with the lack of transparency culture, cover-ups, daily announcements of unfunded vote catchers, dodgy

language, aggressive and pathetic responses to sound questions in this House, garbage and waffle in media releases.

One of the sayings that really irks me is when the Premier and the Treasurer and other members of the Liberal minority keep saying, 'Do not talk Tasmania down.' That saying has really worn so thin, because when you know the truth and you are gaslit with slogans such as this, it leads to a feeling of distrust and hopelessness within that situation.

When I was a teenager living in Howrah, our family home burned down. It was an electrical fault and we stood out the front and we watched as gallant firies saved whatever they could from our burning house. I often think of that feeling of absolute hopelessness, and the relief that we were all okay, except for the family cat. My point is in relation to the dismal forecasts for our economy created by the Liberal policy decisions, or lack thereof. I liken the term 'don't talk Tasmania down' to watching a house burn down and, as the dedicated firies turn up, the owner of the property admonishes the firefighter with, 'Nothing to see here, mate, the house isn't really on fire. Don't talk about my house burning down, don't talk my house down. That doesn't help with confidence. We've got to be positive. Don't talk about the house burning down.' This is despite the fact the house is burning to the ground and if the firie does not look at the situation honestly and take decisive action to put out the flames, there will be nothing left. Please stop with those platitudes about talking Tasmania down. We are not talking our beautiful state down. We are just being honest.

I shudder to think of what the real state of our economic outlook is. There are no actionable steps to return us to surplus. There is no consideration or consequences under the minority government leading this downward spiral. Compounding problems will only lead to an even more challenging scenario for our state, an even direr situation.

This is a job-destroying budget at a time when Tasmanians are really struggling to keep our heads above water in a cost-of-living crisis. There is a pending collapse, a significant decline in the quality of life for many Tasmanians as a result of this government's priorities over the last 10 years. That was named up by renowned economist Saul Eslake in his latest report. I attended his briefing and the outlook is grim. As predicted by him, this government did not do anything to fix the mess they had made. Basically, they signalled to us that they are more than happy to let the house burn down. In fact, you are adding fuel to that house.

People do not feel safe and, as the shadow minister for police, fire and emergency management, I can see why. Crime is on the increase. Serious crime has increased by 28 per cent, family violence has increased by 14 per cent and total offences are up by 26 per cent. However, the Liberal minority government is cutting $35 million from the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management.

On 16 June 2024, the Tasmanian Police Union called on Treasurer Michael Ferguson to quarantine the police service from any spending cuts in this Budget, saying fewer resources would result in more officers suffering stress-related illnesses or quitting the force altogether. Police Association of Tasmania President, Shane Tilley, said that with 14 per cent of the state's police service currently on active workers compensation claims, any reduction in government funding would only heap extra pressure on those officers already playing vital roles across a number of services. Mr Tilley said it was crucial the government focused not only on recruiting more police but on retaining those offers already serving. Mr Tilley took on his role following the resignation of former president, Colin Riley, who quit citing the police service's

failure to deal with officer burnout. Mr Tilley said it was not just officers on the beat feeling the strain, with workers compensation claims being lodged by police from across the service. He said:

> Our frontline workers are not the only ones affected because we've got members off work from Forensics, Prosecution, CIB and the drug squad. They are all down and all working on the bones of their backsides, but we would not be having this conversation if we had the numbers and could find ways to retain people in the organisation.

Despite the warning shots across the bow from police, the government has handed down what can only be considered a capricious, irresponsible and mean budget. We also know from RTI documents that the 2023-24 Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM) budget will be subjected to slashing of $12 million on wages and superannuation alone. That represents 100 workers from the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management this financial year alone. Let us be honest about this budget: there is no path for surplus. That is waffle. The house is burning down.

We can also see from your budget that over the next four years, public order safety will also be slashed by $170 million. Our police are by far the best in the country and they are stretched already beyond capacity.

Speaking of the excellent work undertaken by Tasmania Police and other service providers, I cannot speak highly enough about Arch services in Launceston and Hobart. The services provided by Arch are Laurel House at Northern Arch, Sexual Assault Support Services at Southern Arch counsellors, Tasmania police specialist investigators, Family Violence Counselling and Support Service, family violence workers, Strong Families Safe Kids advice and referral line; child safety and wellbeing workers and child safety service, and child safety officers. The service really is a credit to all those involved and it is saving lives. We look forward to learning of when the north-west Arch will be open, as the service is needed.

As a state we have recently witnessed an unprecedented weather event and significant impacts on our regional communities. Our State Emergency Service personnel did an incredible job. Flooding led to evacuation, gale force winds, road closures, and property damage. Thousands of Tasmanians had their power cut off for days on end. Our emergency service personnel performance was impeccable. It showed how vital this service is to our community. Cutting jobs and funding for services is not acceptable.

In the past three years, 30 statutory notices for work, health and safety breaches have been issued to the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. Lack of funding and allocation is an issue. In July 2024, Leigh Hills, branch secretary of the United Fire Union, warned efficiency dividends could leave the state fire service ill-prepared to battle a horror bushfire season. Job cuts to the fire service would necessitate the transfer of frontline resources into support roles. Building replacement stations for our volunteer fire brigades across the state have stalled. Many do not meet the standard of building, let alone appropriate stations for our volunteer firefighters to serve from.

Reading through the 2023-27 Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Strategic Asset Management Plan for Land and Building provided some insight into departmental asks which the government has not funded or prioritised. It seems the government

have not communicated what the cuts will mean. We know the promised replacement of SES vehicles will not come into effect this financial year as well. The house is burning down.

As crime increases and our judicial system continues to become more congested, we understand the impact on our corrections and rehabilitation system and the dire need for reform in this area. Tasmania faces challenges within our correction systems. The aim should be not only to manage offenders but also to understand the underlying issues that lead to criminal behaviour. This government does not focus on rehabilitation or develop appropriately funded investment strategies to reduce recidivism.

As of 2022-23, 62 per cent of prisoners returned to corrective services within two years of release. Cost per prisoner per day is about $484, excluding prisoner health cost. That is, on average, about $3388 per week. It is safe to state the cost per prisoner is about $176,000 a year on average, excluding their health needs. My information is that it is probably more about $200,000 a year per prisoner.

Recidivism is expensive socially and economically. There is no money in this budget to address recidivism. There is no real money for rehabilitation reform. In-cell tablets, I think was the rehabilitation announcement that was recently made by the minister. Instead, we have a minister more interested in taking selfies for her social media with correctional officers at Risdon Prison than actually looking at addressing and appropriately funding strategies to reduce recidivism.

Regarding education opportunities for those in prisons, other states such as Victoria and South Australia have established comprehensive rehabilitation frameworks with increased funding which, in the long term, is more cost-effective and increases society safety and wellbeing. Mental health services are also in dire need within our prison services. Alcohol and drug rehabilitation is lacking, with long wait times. There are also constant lockdowns due to staff shortages. There is currently a large number of correctional officers on workers compensation due to mental health concerns, which I look forward to prosecuting during the Estimates.

This government fails to implement effective therapeutic rehabilitation. As our recidivism rate increases, with over 60 per cent of prisoners reoffending within two years, at about $200,000 a year per prisoner, it is not hard to see where the work is required. We know this government have blown at least $6 million on their failed build of a northern prison: three sites, six years, completely botched due to poor community consultation and lack of transparency. We all know politics was put way before policy. Other sites outside of Launceston, closer to hospital services and public transport, were put forward but politics before policy was again at the forefront.

As the shadow minister for women, I see this year's Gender Lens Budget as a great initiative and very positive. However, I believe lack of housing is the main problem. We now have a situation where the bulk of our crisis accommodation for women fleeing family violence is full due to lack of housing. One shelter I spoke to has an 80 per cent rejection rate for women seeking crisis accommodation, as they are full. They are full because there are no housing options for the women already in the shelter. For that shelter, crisis accommodation has now become semi-permanent because there is nowhere else to go, meaning there is no room for any actual crisis accommodation. This is just another insult added to injury. The number of women turned away in Tasmanian shelters is double the national figures, with eight out of 10 women

and children seeking accommodation turned away due to lack of space. Only one in every 20 women experiencing family violence and identified as needing long-term housing in Tasmania received long-term housing. With nowhere else to go, women face a choice between homelessness and returning to a violent partner.

Let us be clear: these are policy decisions of this government. The lack of housing stock is a result of government priorities in its decision-making. I cannot see anything in this Budget, especially in the Women's portfolio, that will address this huge issue.

I also have the honour to look after the veterans' policy area. I was disappointed to learn that RSL Tasmania's budget request for their veterans' housing policy was not funded by this government. Tasmania has the highest number of veterans per capita in Australia at 17,219. Veteran homelessness here is nearly three times higher than the broader population. RSL Tasmania's wellbeing team sees homelessness in approximately 34 per cent of its cases. There are up to 50 Tasmanian veterans homeless at the moment, or at immediate risk of homelessness.

Research by RSL Tasmania and the University of Tasmania highlight significant gaps in the wellbeing of veterans. Notably, 40 per cent have experienced trauma during service, 55 per cent suffer from mental illnesses and 39 per cent live with ongoing disabilities. Furthermore, veterans face challenges in accessing community transition health and human services, often hindered by logistical, financial and cultural barriers.

RSL Tasmania invest $1.2 million in social and wellbeing services for veterans and has a small number of affordable housing options for veterans, but really not enough. They were asking the state government to invest in a housing plan that would have built 21 homes for homeless veterans or veterans at risk of homelessness. The plan was to construct and install rapid-build affordable housing with community amenities on land assets already owned by RSL Tasmania. We know the federal government was interested in investing in this housing plan, but needed to see some interest from the state government. The state government is just not interested in investing in this. It is an actual investment and it would save lives, so it was disappointing the government did not take it up in this Budget.

I will go back to the point about that awful term, 'stop talking Tasmania down'. To me, it is a form of gaslighting. We love our state and the last thing we ever want to do is speak ill of our magnificent state. However, we need to be honest and we need this government to be honest with the people of Tasmania. This Budget and the irresponsible decisions the government consistently makes only adds fuel to a house already on fire. This Budget from a minority Liberal government is slowly but surely burning the house down.

[3.06 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to make my contribution in the Budget reply speech. I will be voting for the Budget, consistent with my supply arrangement with the Rockliff government. Whilst there are elements of the Budget I do not agree with, elements I am concerned about, it is important that an elected government that forms the Treasury benches is able to articulate its vision and allocate its resources and priorities as it sees fit. There should be appropriate scrutiny and critique, but not, given the numbers in the House - not only government departments but organisations, both public and private, rely on the money to flow from the approval of the budget bills the government is allowed to conduct, and to have a level of security and surety. Consistent with my supply agreement, I will be

supporting the Budget. That does not necessarily mean I agree with everything in it and some of the decisions made, which I will go to in my contribution today.

My supply arrangement should be seen in context of my commitment about confidence. Every day I question myself about the confidence, as I should. As an independent, given the numbers of this House, it is not a blank cheque; it is not open approval for the government. Confidence is a daily test, and so it should be. I apply that and take that extraordinarily seriously. I see it within context of the responsibility I have as an elected independent member to ensure there is a level of stability in this House, a level of surety for the Tasmanian community and that we are not in a constant chaotic collapse of confidence in the democratic processes and important parliamentary processes we undertake.

Obviously, the Budget has some very big numbers in red. That should not be a surprise. It was interesting hearing some of the debate, particularly when you look at the last election and the number of commitments made by all parties. There is a level of, 'Well, if we knew we may not have'. That is probably not a statement that stands because the Treasury has provided significant quarterly and annual updates as to the state of the books. People knew the issues of COVID and the commission of inquiry would cause a shock to the budget. At the beginning of the forward Estimates process, the budget papers are framed in a context. Those two matters are significant and ongoing for every state government, particularly in regard to the COVID response as an obligation there. Treasury has been making this clear, probably since about 2018, in its independent fiscal assessments and they do the short, medium, long-term, high-risk, low-risk and medium-risk assessments. They forecast that the state budget, in the absence of any change or in the event of a shock or an unexpected set of circumstances, would be under significant pressure, so here we are.

Particularly given the context of the last election and in public life, if parties go to an election and make commitments or promises, however framed, I think there is an obligation to be truthful with the Tasmanian people and to follow through with those commitments, but in doing so come up with a fiscal strategy that accommodates that and moves forward, so it should not be a surprise to people that the Budget is in this set of circumstances.

Having said that, I must admit there has been a lot of quoting of Saul Eslake in this House, and selective quoting, I would say. There are some people who are using it as a battering ram. I understand that because there is some pretty incendiary stuff in what he says. He is a respected economist, someone who is a deep thinker about public policy and managing budgets and the conduct of governments. I do not always necessarily agree with him, but I will not selectively quote from him. He came up with quite a significant report commissioned by agreement from the then Jacqui Lambie Network people and he not only identified the problem but he prescribed a couple of solutions.

Again, when the big ideas sometimes lay on the table in Tasmanian politics, as soon as the lights are on - I was going to use the example of a cockroach and the light going on, but I will not refer to members of parliament in that way: it is probably the wrong metaphor. When something is big and controversial, too often in Tasmania politicians run to the fringe to rule it out because they are worried of a fear campaign or a campaign run against them. I get the politics of that but it is disappointing that in one breath people are using Saul's report as a sword and a shield, but they are not actually seeing it in the full context of some of the remedies and ideas that I think have a level of credibility that should actually be debated. I think that is

disappointing so I will not be quoting Saul Eslake or claiming a virtuous position by virtue of reading an opinion piece from Mr Eslake.

What I would seek is to call on this place and all members of parliament in both this place and the other to deeply consider some of the issues he raised and see if we can find a way to have a constructive debate about that, because budgets and the conduct of government is a moral task. We have a moral obligation to make the best decisions we can, not just for the people we represent today, tomorrow, the coming weeks and months, but for the next generations of Tasmanians. It is a deeply moral task we are asked to take on. It is not just a job; it is not an abstract concept. We have been given a hell of a responsibility to make significant decisions and make the best decisions.

I can only imagine sitting around the Budget Cabinet table and seeing some of these numbers come through. I have been in a similar set of circumstances where tough decisions are made and I know that the government does not have 45 options in front of them. They have to make the best of the circumstances put before them. We can cast our mind back and say they should have been preparing for this and I think it is a legitimate critique that you always need to be mindful of the future. I remember the previous treasurer, Peter Gutwein, making comments about the security in a low-interest rate environment and a stable economy, saying, 'I think we're going okay; we can wear a bit of debt'. No-one can predict a COVID pandemic, but every futurist, every strategist, every senior public servant I have ever had the pleasure of spending time with has said the ship of state can take a couple of torpedoes but cannot take a third, fourth or fifth. When you have a series of hits to the budget you do need to prepare for those kinds of environments. In terms of the decision, we accept the history. Words do not fall from my mouth easily in terms of casting judgment on previous treasurers, but we are where we are.

There are some people taking the moral high ground about debt and deficit decisions of government. If you compare the virtuous morality of taking on significant debt but making sure that services are delivered and that the economy works at a time where you actually do not have net debt, you have money in the bank and you are copping a few budget deficits at the time, but then you proceed to significantly cut and pare back public services, I am not sure who has the most virtuous high ground in terms of that, cutting when you do not need to or putting money on the credit card, as some people have said.

Both are deeply moral questions and there are choices that are made. In Tasmania the state government has a mammoth task delivering public services to a state that has probably since World War II been at the bottom of the rung in a whole range of key indicators such as health, education and housing outcomes.

At the bottom of a regional economy, we have certain constraints on us in terms of service delivery and the government has a disproportionate role in the state where our private sector is not as large as those in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, et cetera.

There are matters that need to be taken into account when you make decisions. We can all talk about debt. I do not believe debt is necessarily a bad thing, but the parlous state of the Budget and the concern that I and other Tasmanians have about the state of the Budget and the amount of debt and the fact that six of the nine fiscal targets have been broken in this year's Budget, regardless of a 10-year strategy, means that there is genuine concern and that needs to be taken into account and considered. The choices that governments make are difficult. We

understand that and, in this Budget, there are some choices and decisions that deeply concern me.

To the matter of our COVID response, we are moving beyond the time now where we can use that as a legitimate excuse. I believe we need to move after a passage of time, although that was a massive hit to the budget.

The commission of inquiry is important work that needs to be funded, no argument there whatsoever. Amongst a number of the recommendations from the commission of inquiry which are funded in this Budget, I put on the record the fact that Ashley remains open is a stain on Tasmania and we need to do something. You cannot allow it simply to drift and say we are working on a plan and an idea. The commissioners were very clear and if they expected the delay to this point now, they may have been even harder in their criticism, need and desire to have that place closed.

There are a number of good things in the Budget for community organisations I have been advocating for and I am enormously pleased to see they are funded. There is the work of Ant Edler and the Bike Collective in Risdon Vale, Rokeby and Huonville. They do amazing work and divert young people away from crime and keep them connected to school and community environments. Reclink, which Richard Allanby and his team do, Hamlet Cafe, Dress for Success, the decisions about Bethlehem House, SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY, various sporting organisations and community organisations, all do great work. These are really important investments in social infrastructure, not the hard infrastructure that gets talked about a lot. The social infrastructure of our state is really about lifting people up, giving them a better chance at life, and giving them pathways into employment. These are things which are a part of that moral obligation of the work that we do here.

I welcome the investment in Neighbourhood Houses and infrastructure investments across the state, both inroads. That is important because it is not just about making those places safe, it is about providing jobs to the civil construction industry which keeps families in houses, roofs overhead, and food on the table. I also think the investment in our schools is significant. If we make those public school environments better and make it a more conducive environment to learning and getting the next generations of Tasmanians to be able to see their future and reach their potential, they are significant investments.

There is a lot of talk about the debt. It is concerning. Remediation to the Budget and decisions does need to be made, but my main concern is always how do these numbers on a page actually affect Tasmanians? At the moment Tasmanians are getting very little really for the massive recurrent overspending.

If hospitals and schools are running really well, if everyone was getting their operations on time, students were getting a great education, public transport was working, the housing waiting list was minimal, then the overspending would not be so concerning but the opposite is true. Lots of investment in public services, but you talk to anyone in the street and they would say that those services are failing them. We need to redouble our efforts to ensure that those services are delivered well.

For example - and this is a product of a very narrow view of how you deal with labour in the health sector - we have institutionalised agency staff. We have institutionalised locums. They are so much more expensive. It is not how you deal with a labour workforce. We have

now made it to the point where instead of a top-up, it is now a constant and growing part of our Health Department. I am not judging or casting a shadow on those people who make a decision to become agency or locum staff, it is absolutely needed, but you cannot run a health system on locums and agency staff. This is a product of short-term contracts, casualisation, not actually having a labour force plan for our Health Department. That can echo across so many parts of our public services. The fact that we have allowed this to fester is a problem of the government's own making and an approach to labour force development that has created this challenge.

I only have a few minutes left. I have raised the issue about the mother-baby unit. I am concerned about that. I am concerned about the lack of an appropriate wages policy because we compound the lack of equal or fair pay comparative market rates with Tasmanian workers to other mainland services. I am concerned that we will just compound this problem. We will not acknowledge the work of the unions, particularly HACSU, the ANMF, United Workers Union, the AEU, the Firefighters Union, the Police Association, and the Public Sector Union for their continued advocacy on behalf of their members.

I am really concerned about the management of our GBEs. Whilst they are not a part of this budget, their mistakes and the lack of accountability and the lack of transparency has and will continue to cost the Tasmanian Budget significant dollars. I am concerned about the governance of them.

The stadium - and I am triggering when I mention the stadium - some people say it is not the right time and not the right choice. Sometimes things land on the state's desk that you do not have any choice with in terms of timing. You either take it, you either deliver it, or you miss the opportunity and it sails off. You never get that opportunity again. The AFL team and the AFL stadium is one of those opportunities, and people have no idea how big it will be. They have no idea how massive an impact it will have on the state of Tasmania, both socially and economically. It will be massive. People do not appreciate how big it is going to be. We just need to deliver it. Obviously, I am concerned about the money that is allocated to it, but the government does not have a choice in terms of the timing. The timing is thrust upon us.

In terms of housing and homes, there was a lack of detail in the Budget for Homes Tasmania. An emblem of the situation that really makes me so angry is the purchase of Fountainside Hotel by Homes Tasmania. I recently made a fuss about it because it is a Health responsibility, not Housing. Housing for health workers has always been the domain of the Health department, but the Health department does not have any money, so Homes Tasmania had to buy Fountainside. Effectively, you are robbing Peter to pay Paul when Peter is a homeless person and Paul is a locum on thousands of dollars a day.

[3.26 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to give my contribution to the Budget debate and speak to our analysis and the priorities of the Greens in my portfolio areas.

I acknowledge the significant departmental and staff work that goes into the preparation and delivery of the Tasmanian government's Budget and our alternative budget. Irrespective of the content, which represents active, deliberate choices of the government of the day, there is a power of work to go into the development and publication of a state budget. The work and professionalism of Treasury and MP staff is noted, and I offer them all our thanks.

Dr Woodruff has comprehensively detailed our alternative vision for the Budget and meeting the needs and expectations of Tasmanians. We are proud to continue the tradition of presenting an alternative budget and transparently articulating the choices that we would make to deliver our policy agenda and support all Tasmanians. We unashamedly back the needs of Tasmanians over and above the interests of corporate entities like the AFL, aquaculture companies and gambling providers.

We are upfront in the call for industry players to pay their fair share, for miners to at least pay royalties that meet the national average, for fish farmers to pay significantly more for access to public waterways and for gambling taxes to be raised. We are clear on the health, housing and education investments required to provide for people at a time when our population is ageing, education results are lagging and too many people are sleeping rough or simply unable to find a home to call their own.

We are resolute in our opposition to the stadium. However, we support our AFL and AFLW teams and capital investment in what should be Tassie's home of footy, York Park. We stand in solidarity with many across the community - the RSL, local business and cultural interests, Aboriginal people and future generations of Tasmanian taxpayers - in opposing this stadium, come what may.

For your average Tasmanian, the stadium stands central in the Budget, backed up by a chocolate fountain, as a surreal, laughable and morally bankrupt investment they do not need and do not want. It comes at a massive cost to the Budget - $610 million across the forward Estimates. Just today we learned that the cost blowouts have begun: $115 million already just on presentation of the documentation, $60 million on the build and further costs, uncosted elements in relation to the kitchen, the TV and the audiovisual. That will just be the start of it.

With a dud AFL deal that has taxpayers on the hook for every single dollar of cost blowouts, a complete failure to negotiate a GST exemption on the $240 million contribution to the Mac Point precinct from the feds, a nebulous private-public partnership that will see the private sector get its pound of flesh from the public purse or public land, or some other sweetener that costs our kids well into the future, the stadium was never Premier Rockliff's to commit to anyway.

As it stands, the stadium condition in the AFL deal currently represents the biggest risk to the AFL teams. Whether it is community concern, an inappropriate site unsuitable for such a project, local heritage, impacts on neighbours, traffic chaos or the degradation of cherished values of the state's Shrine of Remembrance, the Cenotaph, a proper assessment that considers longstanding protections for values will reject a permit to proceed with the stadium build, and may it be so.

For parents angsting over literacy levels, patients on public wait lists, health and education professionals strained under unsustainable workloads, or the homeless couch surfing and camping, the stadium stands as the very first question to be asked when they read of the upcoming cuts in this Budget - and cuts there are.

No matter how they are dressed up, 'efficiency dividends' or 'vacancy control', Tasmanian departments are having to find $450 million of savings. That can only mean more pressure on services, lesser outcomes for Tasmanians, and Tasmania's public servants and frontline workers

expected to do ever more with less. Saul Eslake's report, helpfully released in the lead-up to the Budget, provided a stark alternative direction to that chosen by the Government.

Mr Eslake called out these inefficiency dividends in no uncertain terms - 'crude', and 'a very poor means of achieving meaningful and lasting expenditure savings'. Then just yesterday, Mr Eslake wrote on the Budget, highlighting that efficiency dividends 'often result in greater inefficiency rather than increased productivity'. Yet there they are, writ large in the Budget across all the departments, most already struggling under past cuts, with rock-bottom morale and ever-increasing demand on their services. Education, children and young people - $81 million; health - $135 million; natural resources and environment - $10 million; police, fire and emergency services - $23.4 million. The EPA, Finance-General, Justice, Director of Public Prosecutions, the ombudsman, the list goes on. Even the Integrity Commission, publicly flagging the need for additional funding to implement the recommendations of the Weiss Review, will be required to find savings in the forward Estimates.

On pork-barrelling, we have had a spirited defence by the Premier in this House, of a practice the Integrity Commission literally described as 'indirect electoral bribery' and called for reform. In 2022 it called for action before the next election, but here we are, two years on, one election later, and pork-barrelling is alive and well and the Premier is the 'cooper in chief', defending the indefensible and insulting the intelligence of everyday Tasmanians along the way. The Leader of the Opposition has finally joined the chorus of the Greens and others calling for reform in the way electoral promises are made.

To be clear, we Greens support the allocation of resources to local community groups, clubs and other worthy investments. Many do good work and they deserve public support and need financial assistance. That is not the issue. The issue is how the decisions are made and who makes them. It should not take knowing a Liberal candidate to get public financial support for a local initiative or upgrade, and it should not only happen at election time.

As it stands under the Liberals, many of these local organisations are starved of the funds they need to succeed in the early years of the electoral cycle, only to be invited to apply to an internal Liberal Party funding program during the election and hope that they are in a marginal electorate or are tight with the local Liberal member.

While the Premier rails against Labor's pitch to ban pork-barrelling, he laments the notion of unelected bureaucrats making decisions about the allocation of public money. Meanwhile, with his own process, the irony should not be lost on anyone. It is unelected, internal Liberal apparatchiks and literally Liberal candidates up for election who make the allocations, against no criteria, with no mechanism for review and no accountability and transparency. If you need confirmation that it is suspect, have a look at the 10 March 2024 Liberal media release, just 13 days before the election:

> Liberals announce community commitments. Community groups, councils and sporting organisations will be supported with commitments to progress local initiatives under a re-elected majority Liberal government.

Whose name was on the release? Who fronted it? Was it the Premier? Was it the Treasurer? No. It was no-one. This was probably the only release issued by the Liberals during the election campaign with no candidate attribution, no comments, no-one facing up to announce it. Just a vacant, hollow, faceless release, still sitting on their website. It is dodgy

process, and that is why no-one spoke to it on the day. To Labor, there is no need to wait till you are in government. Many of us are deeply committed to electoral transparency and implementing the recommendations of the state's integrity body, so let us get a conversation going, work through how this can happen and get something into the House for debate and decision.

On some portfolios, yesterday we finally saw a 2024 State of the Environment report after over a decade of waiting and this government ignoring two statutory deadlines in a row. Thanks to the advocacy and determination of scientists and community groups, one was finally commissioned and we have now had a chance to digest it.

It paints a dire picture of degradation at the hands of an apathetic government that makes a virtue out of denying, ignoring, or misrepresenting science to make active decisions that serve vested interests and cost both the community and our environment dearly. Of the 29 indicators, 55 per cent are deteriorating, 21 per cent are stable, 7 per cent are improving and 17 per cent are unknown. That is a shocking indictment on a decade of Liberal policy and funding.

The report makes 16 recommendations, including to develop a long-term vision and strategy for Tasmania's environment, to explore opportunities to collaborate with Aboriginal people, to establish more marine protected areas, to remove protections of wild fallow deer from regulatory frameworks, implement a strategy to control feral cats and invest in the terrestrial reserve estate.

This report highlights many challenges for this island's unique environment. There is climate change, threatened species in decline, pollution, inappropriate development, damage caused by invasive species and land clearing and more, but the Liberals have had their heads in the sand, which is why this report shows so many environmental indicators going backwards.

Meanwhile, in the Budget, money goes to skewed priorities. There is $600,000 for the kunanyi strategic review, a stitched-up internal departmental process that will make the case for a cable car whilst the Wellington Park Trust languishes with all of its responsibilities on a core government commitment of less than $400,000 a year.

Despite the State of the Environment report finding deteriorating measures in native vegetation and fragmentation, threatened flora, threatened fauna and riparian zones, the Budget offers meagre support for action to fix things. There is $2 million for a Threatened Species Fund to 'directly support conservation activities for priority species, including actions to protect the endangered Maugean skate'. That will get swallowed up by a captive breeding program, hatching skates and growing them out while their habitat degrades thanks to fish farming over the long-term and there is nowhere wild to release them.

Reducing the tracking of orange-bellied parrots ends after just one year of funding. For the fastest parrot in the world, just last weekend we saw the minister hit the media to talk up the work of the private sector to identify and protect critical habitat located on private land. This is an important action that is identified in the National Recovery Plan for the Swift Parrot and the Tasmanian Land Conservancy and private landowners are doing great work to meet targets, but the same recovery plan identifies native forest logging as a key risk to the future of the species due to loss of habitat and proposes an action to protect remnants of public land in areas of habitat critical for the survival of swift parrots.

Just like the State of the Environment report, it proposes new formal reserves like national parks to protect habitat. The Greens will fight to end native forest logging and expand the reserve system to protect important habitat for our unique species and ensure the recommendations of the State of the Environment report are honoured and implemented.

Housing is a basic human right and too many Tasmanians are being left behind by a system that is simply straining under the pressures of demand. While the government and Labor refuse to act on renters' rights in a cost-of-living crisis, rents go up, no-cause evictions remain legal, rentals remain cold and inefficient, and a runaway short-stay accommodation system continues to strip whole house rentals from the market, turning homes into hotels.

This place has heard much discussion about the creative accounting artificially boosting Homes Tasmania's delivery figures. Vacant land, crisis accommodation and health worker accommodation skews data or misdirects some of the funding that is allocated to housing Tasmanians in need. The Homes Tasmania dashboard reports some very disturbing statistics. In June, there were 4709 applicants on the housing register, with applicants waiting an average of 89.7 weeks to be housed. Despite government rhetoric about building more homes faster and record investment, the Budget itself highlights an escalating failure. The Budget forecasts worsening statistics in both those measures, each with a very human cost of homelessness, frustration, anxiety and impact.

Our budget genuinely funds the construction of 1000 new public homes per year, and with a department of public works established to deliver the builds, we can do it efficiently and without requiring a profit. While strong supporters of infill and medium-density housing, we do not support cash handouts to property developers. The $10 million in the Liberal Budget for developer subsidies should be redirected to meaningful support for the people who need it.

Rooftop solar and energy efficiency upgrades can deliver real, sustained cost-of-living relief for residents in public rentals, and a minimum annual investment of $15 million in our budget will help young people doing it tough with supported crisis and transitional accommodation. Failure to address youth homelessness and support young people into stable, safe accommodation represents a fundamental abrogation of government responsibility to care for its community and provide at least a realistic opportunity for young people to be educated and prepared for the ever more challenging world they face.

On education, the challenges go beyond youth housing and the provision of a safe, secure and nurturing home environment. Consistently below the national average, Tasmania's year 12 retention rates and academic performance has been the subject of much public debate and discussion. The Baylis review has been commissioned and somehow by the end of the year Vicki Baylis will report back with recommendations on how to turn things around, but with record numbers of teachers leaving the profession, more demands on the time of those who stay and a subsequent deficit in the morale of education professionals, it is difficult to see how this Budget can deliver that change. Not immune from budget cuts via efficiency dividends, public education will suffer and the government has failed to outline where those departmental savings will come from.

There is no specific funding to implement recommendations of the Baylis review and the Australian Education Union highlights the dire situation facing the sector and the profession, saying:

> Four years ago, one in eight teachers planned to leave the profession before retirement. Today it is one in three. Tasmania's educators cannot afford another decade of inequity and neglect.

That was from Tasmanian branch president of the AEU, David Genford.

As an alternative, we Greens have identified and funded significant investment in education professionals to support the work of teachers. Psychologists, speech pathologists, social workers and education support specialists need to be recruited to tackle individual living and learning challenges faced by young people.

Aboriginal education workers are currently employed on annual contracts and support a cohort of students facing the greatest levels of intergenerational equity and disadvantage. Being themselves vulnerable members of our community, Aboriginal education workers deserve the security that comes with permanent positions and the support and training needed to make their programs more effective.

On the cost of living, let us abolish public school levies for good and assist families in need with the costs associated with getting their kids equipped for the school year.

We are in a climate crisis and the Greens are long and proud supporters of renewable energy as a means to reduce emissions and improve resilience across our community, but the Liberals' headlong rush into Marinus and large-scale industrial development leaves more community focused and palatable options behind. Energy policy is difficult and we are seeing increasing levels of community concern, people anxious or outright opposed to industrial-scale developments located in the wrong place and needing new transmission infrastructure, special arrangements and retrospective approval in order to be approved.

Robbins Island is a case in point. Marinus is a massive capital investment with inflated financial figures, new transmission infrastructure and impacts, capacity, delayed decisions and a narrative regarding its need that increasing numbers of Tasmanians are highly sceptical about. The Budget identified Marinus and energy projects more broadly as having a high-level investment and uncertainty both in relation to the public investment required and the financial risks associated with that investment, including the impact of project cost increases.

With government businesses absorbing risk through direct investment, off-take agreements and other instruments, the risk to Tasmania's long-term finances remain strong and transparent decision-making is required. The Energy Matters inquiry established jointly with the other place will assist members and the public dissect energy-related policy and investment progress. We need diversity in our network, with smaller distributed grids, power-sharing across multiple meters, resilient infrastructure designed to withstand fire and storm events and credible community consultation that meets people where they are, hears their views and acts accordingly. At the end of the day, there is no room to trade-off between renewables and the environment. We can and must have both.

Our veterans through RSL Tasmania are but one constituency feeling shafted by the Liberals and their ongoing obsession with the Mac Point stadium. Recent renders demonstrate the unequivocal loss of important sight lines from the Cenotaph. Minister Barnett's acknowledgement that the Cenotaph bill to be introduced at the explicit request of the RSL will kill the stadium is an admission that if existing planning rules were to be applied, the stadium

would be rejected a permit for construction. We strongly support our veteran community and stand in solidarity with them against the stadium.

Similarly, our alternative budget contains funding to support veterans' employment, including the establishment of dedicated veterans' positions in the State Service. RSL Tasmania has important mental health, housing and employment outreach. We Greens would augment that with additional funding across the forward Estimates. I am saddened to hear and see that the RSL's budget submission was not met.

Finally, in the arts sector, we cherish and celebrate, but all too often undervalue and underfund. The neglected Salamanca Arts Centre lift highlights both budget shortfalls and a reluctance to invest in solutions before they become a problem. We Greens will continue to advocate for a living wage for artists. We support the inclusion of building maintenance costs in core funding for arts organisations, investment in creative spaces, and a doubling of funding for arts grants so more people have access to more funding to create more inspiration for locals and visitors alike.

To conclude, in the parliament there are more members in this Chamber, and there is more work that needs to be done. I have heard the calls of the parliament - Speaker, your calls - for additional resources to deliver to the cleaning, library, research, Hansard, and catering staff. I look forward to budget Estimates and to asking questions to interrogate exactly how those requests have been met and how we as members in this place are going to be supported in a bigger House.

To conclude, this is a budget for the times, but it is a budget for the Liberals' times. This is cuts that will be felt by all Tasmanians, its largesse, support for mates and a lack of transparency.

Time expired.

[3.47 p.m.]

Mrs PENTLAND (Bass) - It is a privilege to make my first budget response. It is another significant occasion in what is been a whirlwind introduction to Tasmanian politics. We have heard plenty of jabs from Labor about the events over the past few months, some very colourful contributions, so much so that parliament occasionally feels like Sesame Street, which I think makes the shadow treasurer the Count - one, ha ha, two, ha ha - and the member for Braddon, the 'Cannot Count'.

I am proud of the stand I have made in the name of stability, along with the member for Braddon, Mrs Beswick. We were elected to do a job and to make this parliament work. When I signed an agreement promising supply and confidence, yes, that was a promise to the Premier, but more importantly it was a pledge to the people of Tasmania. While we are talking about supply and confidence agreements, I am not sure why the media is in such a flap about Mr Jenner's agreement or non-agreement with the government. I am pretty sure you have to actually be in the Chamber for your vote to count.

Tasmanians have put up with political games and they should not have to worry about the threat of an early election. I was pleased to hear the Opposition Leader say his party will allow the Budget to pass, despite its flaws.

This is not my first budget. Throughout my working life I have grappled with many, but this is the first one that has come with a lock-up, a roadshow and a week of public hearings. It feels like a big deal, and rightly so. The decision made in framing this Budget will have an impact on generations to come. They will influence who gets timely healthcare and who does not. They will influence the quality of education provided to young learners. They will determine which projects will be built in our communities.

While the budget papers themselves may be dry, their impact will be significant, and not just for the short term. Decisions made in this year's Budget will reverberate for decades to come, some leaving a profoundly positive impact on our state and others lumbering future generations with expensive debt. As a mother of young children, this is an outcome that makes me very uncomfortable.

As the election campaign unfolded early this year, I sat back and I watched the major parties indulge in a rally of spending promises. If the Liberals announced funding for a project, Labor would invariably match it, better it, and vice versa. I remember thinking at the time: can we afford this? The answer was no. At a time when everyone engaged in Tasmanian politics knew that the budget was in dire position the old party spent money like it was growing in the Tarkine. I have heard the Premier tell the Greens leader that he does not have a money tree, but I reckon for sure he has one hiding out the back.

Tasmanians know that when household budgets run dry, tough decisions have to be made. Steak dinners are replaced by two-minute noodles, the trip to the movies is put off until next month and you get a few more weeks out of those much-loved sneakers. Tasmanian families know how to live within their means but, unfortunately, our political leaders have not followed their example.

That election spending spectacle motivated us to make a review of the state's finances a significant priority. I thank the Premier for engaging economist Saul Eslake to undertake that important work early this year. The Eslake report was a very loud wake-up call but it appears the government has hit the snooze button. I acknowledge that by the time Eslake's report was released last month, much of the Budget would have been already locked down. However, the reaction to the report has been largely underwhelming. The government was quick to completely discount any of Mr Eslake's ideas to raise revenue, spooked by the prospect of being seen to even consider a new tax. While I agree that taxing our way out of trouble is not the answer, Mr Eslake's proposals deserve exploration and I will be consulting with stakeholders over the coming months.

The government was also quick to reject the prospect of being more strategic in infrastructure spending. We need to maintain a pipeline of publicly funded infrastructure projects but I urge the government to put equal effort into making it easier for privately funded projects to get off the ground. In my short time in politics, I have been overwhelmed by examples of red and green tape getting in the way of sensible projects. The Liberal government was originally elected in 2014 with the promise of putting up the 'Open for business' sign back up on the door. Unfortunately, there are many in our business community who would argue it has come back down.

If the government found ways to make life easier for suitable private investment, it could lessen the burden on publicly funded infrastructure. We cannot afford to take on $8.5 billion of debt, let alone the $16 billion-plus Saul Eslake warns we are heading towards if nothing

changes. It is going to cost us $400 million each year to service our debt, money that is desperately needed elsewhere. Given that the Budget was largely finalised before Eslake's report was handed down, I am hoping we see more structural change come next May. We need to see a realistic path back to surplus, not one that relies more on good luck than good management. As Saul Eslake says in his report, efficiency dividends are crude and, along with vacancy control, a very poor means of achieving meaningful and lasting expenditure savings.

With efficiency dividends, the Treasurer and fellow ministers are outsourcing the responsibility of finding savings to the departments. This decision lacks leadership and will result in either harmful, non-targeted cuts or a failure to achieve any savings at all. If the government wants to find sensible, sustainable savings that will not undermine essential services, it needs to work with the public sector unions. There may well be strategies available that create savings without hurting service delivery, but to find them, ministers and their staff need to roll up their sleeves rather than passing the buck to bureaucrats.

The government's current path back towards surplus includes some ambitious projections. The government is relying on spending about $100 million less on supplies and consumables next year than it did this year. This is an admirable target but one that is not backed up by any clear plan to achieve it. The current path back towards surplus also relies on a significant spike in taxation revenue, from $1.7 billion this year to $2.15 billion in 2027-28. It is an ambitious projection and one that will not be easily met. Unforeseen events are also bound to put added pressure on the budget. My point is that the government's path back into the black relies on everything going right. All the while, net debt grows and the cost of servicing grows with it. A big theme of Saul Eslake's report is fiscal sustainability. He emphasises that this is more important for Tasmania than any other state or territory but, unfortunately, this almost business-as-usual budget does not seem to adopt that notion.

I note that, in recent days, the Labor opposition has developed a pork allergy, a welcome change of heart about election spending. However, it comes off the back of an election campaign where the red team promised about $2 billion of new spending initiatives. The budget situation has worsened in recent months. The writing was on the wall.

February's pre-election outlook should have been a wake-up call for both major parties. Instead, they kept trying to outdo each other with new spending. It was reckless then and it is reckless now. It is also worth pointing out that Labor's commitment to end pork-barrelling is proposed for the next term of government, not this one. One last spending spree for the road, perhaps? There are valuable and necessary initiatives in the government's $1.4 billion of election commitments, but to promise so much money was irresponsible. Likewise, if Labor had been elected in March, the budget situation would be remarkably similar, if not worse.

The budget problem was not going to be fixed this year and I was hoping to see a change of attitude, a recognition that the methods over the past few years are not working. I hope we will see a much sharper focus on budget repair next May, and a greater willingness to take on advice from the likes of Saul Eslake.

Mr Winter - Where is your alternative budget? You voted for Labor to give one, so where is yours? Have you got one?

Mrs PENTLAND - Where is yours? We are all still waiting for yours. I have not made that commitment.

Mr Winter - Do you have any policies yet?

Mrs PENTLAND - No, not yet.

Mr Winter - Not yet. Okay, keep working on your policies and I will perhaps give you some advice later.

Mrs PENTLAND - I am an independent, so thanks.

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Interjections can probably cease, I think.

Mrs PENTLAND - Having said all that, there is much to like about some commitments in the Budget. It is clear the government is conscious of the cost-of-living pressures facing many in the community. Energy bill relief, cheaper public transport fares and the extension of the school lunch program are all welcome. I also appreciate the targeted support for some of the unsung heroes in the community, not-for-profit groups who work tirelessly to improve the lives of those who rely on their services. I recently visited Shekinah House in our electorate of Bass. What a wonderful example of a compassionate, hardworking organisation that is doing good each and every day. I am passionate about housing and I was alarmed when I read in the budget papers that there are currently 4709 applicants on the housing register, and that the average time for those applicants to be housed is 122 weeks. That is over two years, which is simply not good enough.

I am pleased to see other equally valuable organisations supported in this Budget. Grassroots initiatives were a big part of the budget bids we put forward for consideration. I am proud to see so many in black and white. There is $1 million for increased emergency food relief funding, $3.7 million for Neighbourhood Houses, $2.5 million for the men's sheds - funding that will literally save lives by improving the physical and mental health of Tasmanians.

We were also proud to see our request for school improvement funding was not only met but exceeded. Every young Tasmanian deserves to learn in a safe, modern, comfortable environment, and this $116 million funding boost will help with that. I urge the government to distribute the funds in an independent, non-prejudiced way. I acknowledge the Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations for its ongoing commitment to school communities across the state and its fight for a fairer distribution of funding based on need.

I want to mention the positives in this Budget because I understand there is a difficult balance to strike between funding all the services and initiatives our community expects governments to fund and the critical need for budget repair. No one says it is an easy task. The Treasurer has inherited both historical budget mismanagement and unforeseen expenditure requirements he cannot ignore. However, the current budget trajectory leaves the state in a dangerous position. The interest we will pay on the debt we are set to accrue would put a lot of roofs over people's heads, prevent a lot of people from going hungry and provide a lot of relief to teachers in our classrooms. We simply cannot afford to be wasting money servicing the state's credit card. We must find ways to raise revenue and curb spending. It will take understanding from the community and bravery from our political leaders, but the consequences of burying our head in the sand are too ugly to contemplate.

While we are talking about budgets, may I end on a lighter note? I do hope my colleagues on the opposition benches did not spend their entire printing budget on those Liberal-Lambie propaganda flyers. Maybe they can get some money on them on Facebook marketplace and use the profit to help pay down the debt.

[4.00 p.m.]

Mr FAIRS (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, on behalf of my constituents in the electorate of Bass, I rise in support of the Tasmanian government Budget handed down in this place last week by Treasurer, the honourable Michael Ferguson.

The 2024-25 Budget drives the delivery of our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, which takes action right now on the things that matter to Tasmanians and makes life more affordable. It secures record investment in cost-of-living relief, health, housing and education. Our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future keeps the state's economy strong, creates more jobs and makes Tasmania the best place to live, work and raise a family.

This is a good, solid budget designed to build on the Liberal government's many achievements over a decade in office. It is also a budget that delivers immediate cost-of-living relief to all Tasmanians amid stubborn inflationary pressures combined with higher mortgage interest rates and rents.

With some Tasmanians doing it tough, the Rockliff government has stepped up, providing 100 different concessions to support our most vulnerable while never losing focus on the issues that matter to all Tasmanians: health, education and housing. Every election policy was costed and, more importantly, delivered by the Rockliff Liberal government, many of them in the first 100 days in office.

This Budget is a reflection of the external world we are connected to. Australia is experiencing some economic challenges off the back of years of COVID pain. High interest rates are designed to slow the economy with a view to halting what has been rampant inflation, a double whammy for the family budgets of so many Tasmanians. This Budget responds to that.

Cost-of-living pressures are real, but the strength and resilience of the Tasmanian economy is perhaps best measured by our low unemployment rate and the $27 billion worth of investment in the pipeline. That is not an accident. Confidence in the Tasmanian economy remains high. Companies want to invest here to create jobs and wealth for hardworking Tasmanian families, which in turn supports our unique and vibrant communities right across Tasmania but as the national economy slows, state governments are dealing with declining revenues which, combined with inflation, make all the services provided by government more expensive to deliver. Faced with that kind of budgetary pressure, governments have choices to make. This government has decided to continue to invest in their people and leverage all the economic gains made over the past decade of Tasmanian Liberal governments.

At a time when the Australian economy is under pressure from stubbornly high inflation and high interest rates producing cost-of-living pressures, this Tasmanian government will not be throwing the economic baby out with the bathwater. Great strides have been made by successive Tasmanian Liberal governments over the past 10 years to transform the Tasmanian economy from last place on the national economic rankings to be one of the most resilient in the country today. This Liberal government will continue to invest in vital infrastructure such

as roads, bridges, inflation, ports, rail, hospitals and other emergency services, schools and higher learning, and housing. Infrastructure spending is critical to provide jobs for Tasmanians now and to add value to our economy for decades to come. To abandon infrastructure spending now would simply be an own-goal.

The pathway back to budget surplus is dependent on these big projects going ahead, some of which I will mention in detail shortly. Tasmania must continue to grow the economic pie we all share. By contrast, Labor just wants to shrink the pie, meaning less for everyone. This Liberal government Budget provides the responsible pathway back to surplus while assisting all Tasmanians through a raft of measures designed to ease cost-of-living pressures.

The Liberal government recognises that growing the pie requires government and private investment in our state that provides stable and satisfying employment for Tasmanians and helps to build the kind of communities we all want to live in. In Tasmania's case right now, that investment pipeline is worth billions of dollars, $27 billion, in fact.

Take Bell Bay in my division of Bass, which is earmarked for development as a green hydrogen hub and renewable energy services hub. Private investors see the natural advantages of Bell Bay and the areas around George Town as world-class opportunities that will add export value to Tasmania and create stable jobs for Tasmanians into the future.

Back in Launceston, this Liberal government is redeveloping the Launceston General Hospital, including doubling the size and capacity of the LGH emergency department. We are developing a new purpose-built mental health precinct and delivering a new four-bed mother and baby unit in the all-new Launceston Health Hub.

At Launceston Airport, we are securing a new purpose-built home for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, so important for those living in rural or remote areas of our great state. In the West Tamar region of Bass, the government is building a brand-new ambulance station at fast-growing Legana and recruiting 12 new paramedics to meet demand. Still in Launceston, the Liberal government is funding and delivering the Northern Suburbs Community Recreational Hub, which is going to be a superb sporting and community centre for all.

During the election campaign, I was incredibly proud to announce funding for the redevelopment of the Elphin Sports Centre in Launceston. This $21.5 million project will be the launchpad for the next generation of Tornadoes and JackJumpers players and I cannot wait for that.

By this time next year, we will be driving on the brand-new Bridgewater bridge, a $786 million investment reducing travel time to the capital from Launceston and the north and providing capacity for large shipbuilding in the Derwent River, courtesy of Incat, a great Tasmanian success story. I cannot wait to see the cats going under the great brand-new bridge.

We have also delivered the Midland Highway Action Plan. There is only one 10-kilometre stretch of upgrades remaining, just north of Campbell Town. Some said it would never be completed, but here we are with only 10 kilometres to go.

As a part of the $557 million in upgrades to Tasmania's roads and bridges, there will be major investments along the Bass Highway from Launceston all the way to Marrawah, along with ongoing investment directed towards the East and West Tamar Highways.

In Bass, we are funding improvements to Bridport Road, with further upgrades to Illawarra Road and along the widening and alignment works west of the Batman Bridge as well. Birralee Road is getting an upgrade and so is the eastern portion of Frankford Road. Those of us who regularly use the Sideling section of the Tasman Highway between Scottsdale and Launceston will see much-needed upgrades there too. If those opposite could perhaps convince their federal counterparts to honour a previous federal government commitment to fund their fair share of a new Tamar bridge, we will build that too.

For those Tasmanians who rely on public transport currently enjoying half-price fares to ease the cost of living, this government will deliver a contemporary Metro bus interchange in the heart of Launceston, with intercity passengers benefiting from a new purpose-built Northern Transit Centre.

This government recognises the importance of properly educating the next generation of Tasmanians. We will not skimp on them. In my division of Bass, this government will deliver a brand-new super-sized Child and Family Learning Centre at Scottsdale.

As part of our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, this Rockliff Liberal government has committed $188 million to the School Building Blitz, an investment in our future. Primary schools such as Mowbray Heights, Port Dalrymple, Ringarooma and South George Town in my electorate of Bass will see significant upgrades under this policy we took to the last election.

I mentioned fast-growing Legana, where just a few weeks ago I was privileged to visit the brand-new primary school and I can say honestly it is absolutely awesome how times have changed from when I was at school. Incredible. This amazing facility is another investment in our future that will see its first students enrolled next year, which is a very exciting time.

This Government is also committed to providing the best possible education outcomes for Tasmanian students in our regions. The redevelopment of Exeter High School is a case in point.

I am proud to be a member of the government that has doubled the Healthy School Lunches program, saving some of our most disadvantaged Tasmanian families up to $950 a year and investing in the future of Tassie kids.

Still in my electorate of Bass, this government has not forgotten the good folk of beautiful Flinders Island either. It is an incredible place. The best fishing I have ever experienced over there, Speaker. Triple-headed salmon - I think we caught something like 90 in about an hour once. It was incredible, just amazing. It was also fun climbing Mount Strzelecki with the fabulous Three Peaks challenges that were once going.

The SPEAKER - You did that?

Mr FAIRS - Yes, a lot. Every year for a lot of years, chasing runners as they got off the boats there and climbed Mount Strzelecki. Flinders Island is certainly a wonderful place. I have very fond memories and I love going there.

This Budget delivers a new police house on the island, too, activates the important Islander Way project, and funds upgrades to the Flinders Island campsite to provide improved

access to RVs. There will be new equipment for the Flinders Island Arts and Entertainment Centre as well.

I went into the last election campaign as a fierce advocate for our communities, and this Liberal government Budget has delivered. As I met with community groups of all kinds, one thing rang out clear to me. That was the suffering and cost-of-living issues, and the need for a funding boost to continue to deliver the kinds of services they provide and is critical to their local communities. The Rockliff Liberal Government has responded and delivered, guaranteeing an increase in indexation to the community sector of 3.5 per cent in 2024-25 and three per cent for the following three years.

Operational funding to each of Tasmania's 34 Neighbourhood Houses which are incredible organisations, I am sure you will agree, have been boosted too, through the provision of $50,000 to each of them.

By now, this place should be very aware of my belief that providing high-quality sporting, recreational and community facilities makes for better, safer, healthier and happier local communities. I make no apology for getting out amongst the community groups in my electorate of Bass and listening to them and advocating on their behalf. I will not go through the full list of community commitments in Bass funded in this Budget, but I could challenge anyone in this place to stand up and explain why they should not get government support.

In Scottsdale, I support the government's commitments to the football club, the RSL and its military museum, the Rotary Club doing fabulous work to redevelop the former Scottsdale Railway Station and to find a replacement for the Big Thumb sculpture, a hallmark location in this beautiful town. I also support funding for the important work done by the Dorset Community Men's Shed included among significant funding upgrades for the Men's Shed movement right across Tasmania.

Sporting and community clubs all over Bass benefit from this Budget. The Launceston Tornadoes will be supported by this government to help develop women's and girls' sport in the north. The Lilydale Football Club will revel in the new change rooms, while Bridport Football Club gets an upgraded scoreboard. The Scottsdale Football Club will see long-term financial benefits through government funding for rooftop solar panels, and the Old Launcestonians Football Club will enjoy their new clubroom awnings on a sunny or rainy afternoon.

Moving on to the round ball game, the other football, the George Town Junior Soccer Club will be able to train in winter months with funding for new lighting and security upgrades, while the Launceston United Soccer Club scores a new storage shed.

Kings Meadows Bowls Club will be supported to develop stage 1 of a new high-performance training centre, while the Invermay Bowls Club can now install their long-awaited new synthetic green. This government is also supporting the fabulous Beauty Point Bowls and Community Club to install their new synthetic green, along with the Launceston Bowls Club and Exeter Bowls Club.

I am incredibly proud to represent a government that continues to financially support the inclusion of Tasmanians living with a disability to engage with vital sport, recreation and social

activities through the amazing work of New Horizons Tasmania, which as you know, honourable Speaker, is very close to my heart, as it is yours.

I could go on, but very clearly, this government walks the talk regarding supporting local community groups to thrive, prosper and continue to deliver for Tasmanians. Now is not the time to reduce government spending on critical infrastructure, on hospitals and schools, and housing, or indeed, pull back on support for local communities.

Tasmania has come a long way, but there is more work that needs to be done. We must keep Tasmania moving forward and continue to grow our economy so we can deliver the infrastructure and services Tasmanians need and deserve. That is what this 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future is all about.

Honourable Speaker, I commend this Budget to the House.

[4.16 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, as we take time over the coming weeks to consider the state Budget, there will be thousands of Tasmanian households also considering their budgets. Thousands of Tasmanians will be considering how they are going to make ends meet in a cost-of-living crisis. Thousands of Tasmanians will be trying to figure out what are their priorities? What can they afford week to week? What are the nice-to-haves and what are the must-haves? In this cost-of-living crisis, too many Tasmanians are now having to choose between the must-haves, trying to figure out whether they can forego their medication or heating in return for being able to put a roof over their heads or food on the table and trying to figure out if they can juggle an extra job or maybe more shifts to bring in extra money to the home. These are tough decisions but are necessary to survive. They can only dream of the nice-to-haves. That is the very nature of budgets. They are, by necessity, all about priorities.

It is no different for the government. Resources are never unlimited, so where governments spend our money is a matter of choosing between alternatives. To guide those choices, the people of Tasmania expect their government to have a vision - to have in mind the kind of place we want Tasmania to be, and to invest in those as a priority. Yet there was no discernible vision in this Budget. Spending and saving measures are ad hoc, directionless and lacking in context. Worse still, this lack of vision or sustainable fiscal strategy and wise investment of public funds will cost and impact on generations of Tasmanians to come.

The vision my constituents would have liked to see is a budget that puts, front and centre, investment in a society that cares for, and protects, the most vulnerable: a world where the word 'crisis' is redundant - no housing crisis, no health crisis, no cost-of-living crisis. A place where healthy communities are nurtured and celebrated. Communities with ready access to services that care for people in their homes, where preventive care is at hand, and their health and welfare concerns are identified and managed before they become acute cases: in short, communities that enhance the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of its people and environment.

For those who are trapped in the private rental market on the housing or hospital waiting list, trying to find a GP or a dentist, or need additional support for your children at school, it is difficult to see how their lives have been meaningfully and sustainably improved in this Budget. I believe TasCOSS hit the nail on the head when it said in its budget response:

> In the midst of a worsening affordability crisis, we have been delivered a Budget which prioritises investing in projects over investing in people.

That is such a shame, because investing long-term in people and communities could ease some of the structural challenges that Tasmanians face.

I will start with one of the fundamental community needs - an effective health service. I agree with our health professionals on this budget. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) point out that this Budget will not address the chronic understaffing and access roadblocks that continue to plague the Tasmanian health system. The ANMF note that while recruiting incentive commitments are retained along with graduate nursing position incentives, there is also an efficiency dividend, an intent to reduce public sector full-time equivalent positions. In other words, the government gives with one hand and takes with the other.

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) emphasise that whilst ambulance ramping continues, patients are still spending too long in emergency departments. Diagnostic services are overloaded, outpatients are overbooked and elective surgical procedures are being cancelled. The AMA is concerned, as I believe all Tasmanians would be, that the Health department is not immune from widespread cuts to government services, highlighting that the department needs to find $134.9 million worth of savings over the next three years, and that there is only 1.7 per cent increase in recurrent funding, which is well below inflation and will effectively mean more cuts on top of the efficiency dividend. All the while, demand for services and health is growing rapidly.

Compared to the rest of the country, Tasmania has a large and vulnerable population. We have an older and sicker demographic, chronic disease levels and a low take-up of private health care and health insurance.

The utter frustration within the health sector is growing too. It comes from the doctors and nurses at the frontline. They are the ones who have to deal with the overcrowded and under-resourced health system. We have seen some minor investment in health in this budget, such as a Mayshaw upgrade, some medical equipment replacements and a peer support model for mental health. These are only scratching the surface. As the AMA note, investment tends to be piecemeal and linked to political promises and election cycles, but not necessarily aligned to meet the needs of today or the future.

The AMA said in their budget response that it is clear that Health needs significantly more resources. It needs a change in focus to build the new infrastructure it requires, develop new models of care with a particular focus on preventative and community healthcare, and to fund the staffing involved in running the services within them. They are clearly frustrated this government has not addressed their fiscal challenges outlined by Saul Eslake and the likely impacts that it will have on future Health budgets.

I will touch on Mental Health as another sector under enormous pressure. While there been some additional investments, it fell far short of the sustainability and certainty that the sector needs to keep delivering these important services to Tasmanians. The Mental Health Council of Tasmania said in their budget response:

> Thursday's state budget does little to provide certainty or ensure the ongoing viability of Tasmania's vital community mental health sector.

They go on to say that:

> Our members across the community managed mental health sector have been telling us for many years that a combination of short-term contracts and long-term underfunding makes it is nearly impossible for them to offer job safety and security, impacting their ability to attract and retain staff. The one and two year commitments for our sector in this budget only perpetuates these problems.
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> Community mental health organisations and their staff deserve the same level of certainty that their public sector counterparts enjoy. The supports they provide aren't just a 'nice-to-have' luxury. They are essential, supporting thousands of Tasmanians to manage and stay on top of their mental health, participate in their community, live their best lives, and stay out of our hospitals.

This is an all too familiar theme across the community and allied health sector: short-term funding and visions which do not provide certainty for health consumers or staff and fail to address the long-term systemic issues.

I will spend a little time on the other big crisis hotspot, that of housing. As in health, there are some welcome initiatives, but also like health, they appear to be ad hoc and arbitrary. I acknowledge that Shelter Tasmania supports the government's $1.5 billion funding package and the implementation of the Tasmanian Housing Strategy. However, the government is clearly on notice to meet the targets. I remain to be convinced that 10,000 homes will be delivered by 2032. Given this government's track record, I would seriously advise against anyone holding their breath.

I also acknowledge $450,000 per year for two years for support at each of the three Safe Space sites, and $1.2 million to support women experiencing or at risk of homelessness at the former Bethlehem site. This is a common-sense practical crisis option that I have been lobbying for. I also acknowledge the $20 million for Wintringham to build more homes in the north.

However, despite this investment, nearly 5000 remain on the social housing waiting list and service providers. My electorate office, I might add, continue to see increasing demand for services. Those 10,000 homes will not even go to matching a meeting of the demand now, let alone in 2030.

The private rental market remains out of reach for many households, so they must remain marooned on the Homes Tasmania waiting list for still more years to come. Tasmanians and I continue to wait for proper reform of the residential tenancy laws that will make a significant difference to accessibility and affordability for many.

Another glaring omission from this Budget is in relation to education funding. Yet again, the crisis facing staff and students in our schools was not addressed. Australian Education Union (AEU) Tasmanian branch president David Genford said:

> After enduring a decade of inequity and neglect, educators are now being faced with further cuts. Educators have been left in the dark about how 'efficiency dividends' will be applied, or where. This couldn't come at a worse time, with educators' morale at an all-time low.
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> …
>
> This budget fails to address educators' concerns. Nothing to address rising violence in classrooms, no investment in TAFE, no plan to fix a staffing crisis crushing our classrooms or to implement the recommendations of the Education Review.

I believe I have said this in every Budget reply speech I have delivered in this place: it is a disgrace that the government fails to provide 100 per cent of the minimum school resources standard to every public school and college. In fact, there are none that receive that bare minimum standard. All are funded less than the bare minimum.

I proudly signed the AEU's pledge to defend public education and I put the Minister for Education on notice that I will be asking questions during Estimates scrutiny about this. In particular, I want to hear how the government is going to deliver:

- 100 per cent of the minimum school resource standard.
- More in-class support for teachers, additional teacher assistants, support teachers and education support specialists. Ratios are one full-time equivalent school psychologists and social workers for every 500 students.
- Increased funding and in-class support for disabled students and students requiring additional adjustments.
- Ending unpaid stand-downs for education support personnel to deliver job security and increase retention.
- Increase resourcing to tier 2, tier 3 and tier 4 learning programs and extend tier 4 programs into colleges.

Without these, we cannot expect our poor literacy and numeracy results to improve. Investment in education is a sound investment and reaps many rewards in the long term for the economy. Failing to invest now sets us up for continued failure.

I will touch on some of the warped priorities this government has that baffle me and many Tasmanians. Firstly, there is the stadium. Despite the rhetoric espoused by the government, the vast majority of Tasmanians oppose building a billion-dollar stadium when we have a health crisis, a housing crisis, an education crisis, a public transport crisis and a fiscal crisis on our hands. At my regular pop-up offices in the community, the first topic people used to raise with me was either health or housing. Now, it is the stadium. People are deeply concerned that this government has sold us out to the AFL. The money that should be going to health and housing

is now being funnelled into a stadium no one will be able to afford to go to in a cost-of-living crisis, which the government will not be able to afford anyway.

Tasmanians cannot believe the government thinks we are foolish enough to accept that Tasmania's contribution will be capped at $375 million. To borrow the Premier's term, that is utter bull crap. This government has a strong record of significantly blowing the budget for major projects. Today, we have learnt that the stadium budget has blown out by another $60 million even before they put a shovel in the ground. No one is buying the line that private enterprise will pick up the tab, or that the federal government money is for the stadium when it has clearly been earmarked for the precinct. Tasmanians are sick and tired of being taken for fools. They know this latest luxury obsession is going to bankrupt us.

While we are on the issue of this government taking Tasmanians for fools, let us talk about the blatant pork-barrelling funded in this Budget. There is no doubt some of the projects funded have merit, but there are many other projects in Tasmania that have equal or more merit. They remain unfunded simply because the Liberal Party deemed that they did not have the ability to win or influence voting intentions. This is what stinks. This is what grinds Tasmania's gears. Worthy projects are not funded because they are not closely associated with a candidate or a member, despite the fact that they would benefit Tasmanians. When the spending on election promises is in the vicinity of $1.3 billion, against a backdrop of extraordinary debt and a state dangling off a financial cliff, this is insanity defined. As with every Tasmanian household budget right now, each and every budget allocation must be based on merit, not on political affiliation.

Finally, contrary to the express wishes of thousands of Tasmanians - 13,506 signed a petition and thousands more have since that time - the racing industry continues to be subsidised by the taxpayer. This is an industry premised on animal cruelty for entertainment purposes, it is inhumane and is plagued with crisis after crisis. While money is being poured into this industry that has no social licence, young Tasmanians are missing out on critical community sporting infrastructure, adequate funding for schools, waiting four years to see a paediatrician and sleeping in cars. It is shameful.

I look forward to the opportunity to further scrutinise the Budget next week during Estimates. I remain committed to ensuring that supply is provided because we need to continue to pay our teachers, nurses, police and service providers. However, I put the government on notice: the community are deeply unhappy and I will not hesitate to voice their concerns.

[4.32 p.m.]

Ms BADGER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I rise today to give my first budget reply contribution. We are in a cost-of-living crisis, a health crisis, a climate crisis, a biodiversity crisis and a housing crisis. Every single one of these crises was created by poor political decisions, so they can be overcome by good political decisions. These crises can be overcome by prioritising the long-term wellbeing of Tasmania's people and our magnificent island environment.

Unfortunately, the Liberals' Budget continues on the trend of poor political decisions, to favour chocolate fountains and stadiums over upscaling investment for protecting and restoring our environment. Where is the funding for bridging the state's digital divide or for boosting funding for frontline services working on the prevention of the national crisis that is family, domestic and sexual violence? We have heard repetitively this week about the intergenerational

infrastructure coming from this Budget. What needs to be said loud and clear is that this non-essential intergenerational infrastructure comes with intergenerational debt and intergenerational climate collapse. This Budget offers an underwhelming prioritisation of investment for the two biggest threats facing Tasmania, and indeed all humanity: inequality and the climate crisis.

Young Tasmanians are being screwed over by this Liberal government. I have friends, hard-working friends -

The SPEAKER - Sorry, I will ask you to rephrase that.

Ms BADGER - Sorry. Young Tasmanians are being cut short by this Liberal government.

The SPEAKER - 'Done over' would be fine.

Ms BADGER - I have friends, hard-working friends in good jobs, paying exorbitant rents to live in unstable share houses because they cannot afford their own homes. People are sick of living in shabby share houses with no insulation and heaters that may as well not exist. Renters are also sick of being kicked out of their homes just so the building can be turned into another Airbnb. The cost of living has gone through the roof and it is hitting young Tasmanians hard. After all, most of us never had the chance to put savings aside for a rainy day. In this Budget there are a couple of small cost-of-living measures, but they are barely a drop in the ocean of the increase in food prices and everyday bills.

There is also the rise in anxiety from the lack of climate action. Tasmania's young people are wide awake to the fact that they are inheriting an increasingly uninhabitable planet and that the extreme weather events we live through will only worsen. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has found that the rate of depression and anxiety in people aged 15 to 35 has doubled in the past decade. Is it any wonder? By the way, mental health services are also critically underfunded in this Budget.

What does this Budget do for young Tasmanians? There is no revolutionary program for housing. It is the same old, which is evidently failing. There is certainly nothing serious on the climate front. What it provides is an enormous debt which will be carried by every single Tasmanian but, hey, at least we will have a chocolate fountain.

Tasmania has a huge role to play in tackling the climate crisis, but that fact is absent from the Budget as subsidies to the unsustainable forestry industry continue, and big industries are still using our natural environment to turn a profit free of charge. We should be taxing million-dollar industries. If we can no longer see the state government pay for what is rising insurance fees for community groups to operate out of public buildings and to run public events, then we cannot justify giving big industry a free ride in Tasmania. In the Greens alternative budget, mining royalties are lifted by 40 per cent. This simply aligns Tasmania with the national average.

In our alternative budget, there is investment into climate mitigation through the restoration and protection of the environment. Ecosystem restoration investment at sufficient landscape scale is absent from the Liberals' Budget. This is a massive loss for Tasmania. Ecosystem restoration and land management creates jobs and social cohesion, and it comes

with mental and social benefits for all involved. These are invaluable, intangible benefits also not captured in a regular budget.

Unsurprisingly, the late State of the Environment report clearly shows the need to upscale ecosystem restoration. We are still losing primary forest, woodlands and critical habitat for rich biodiversity. Restoration can help fix the vegetation fragmentation issue, build environmental resilience, and be a key driver in alleviating the worst impacts of climate change. As recommendation 4 of the State of the Environment report highlights, Tasmania needs to reform its resource management to the standards similar to those at COP 15, including targets to protect biodiversity and restore nature.

This will require investment: funding that is not in the Budget but should have been. With any restoration or protection measures we must adequately deal with destructive invasive species. We have seen an enormous failure to manage invasive species. This is resulting in uncontrolled population causing significant damage across the state. There is no clearer example of a failure on invasive species than on feral deer, which have been allowed to trample sensitive environments in national parks and our World Heritage area. New evidence that was just released last week showed the invasive species had also been damaging the endangered Miena Cider Gums at the Central Highlands. At least the State of Environment report now highlights what environmentalists have been endlessly calling for: to remove the protections on fallow deer.

It is not just the environment suffering due to invasive species. In Mole Creek, rabbits are causing significant damage to public infrastructure. The local school and community association are being forced to use their own resources and funds to address the problem. Not only is there no adequate rectification of the fauna issue in the Budget, but there is also no meaningful action at the scale that we need on invasive flora. The Weed Management Fund is disappearing from any obvious budget line.

With the Greens alternative budget, we have invasive species eradication plans. We have a professional program of eradication in Tasmania's reserves to develop an invasive species eradication plan. This also involves monitoring, and programs to prevent the spread of fungal diseases such as *Phytophthora*.

The Liberals' budget, not surprising, is also not funding new public protected areas. Recommendation 10 of the State of the Environment report says that we need to expand our terrestrial protected areas. This is not a surprising recommendation. It is something that the Greens have been calling for years. We have budgeted to expand the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) to encompass the universally outstanding Spero-Wanderer Wilderness, for recognition of the takayna/Tarkine, the West Coast Range, the Vale River catchment, Granite Tor Conservation Area and Recherche Bay.

Our national parks in TWWHA are some of Tasmania's greatest safeguards against biodiversity loss. The Liberals' Budget does not even contain sufficient funds for the core basic management of our parks in TWWHA as is currently needed. There is a continuum of the $100 million increase to Parks and Wildlife funding from previous years, but not more.

Meanwhile, $2 million is awarded to take tourism to the next level. Great, but knowing a large percentage of visitors who come to this state are visiting our national parks, we must ensure that parks are fully resourced to undertake their core work of conservation. In the Greens

alternative budget, we have funding for parks infrastructure and upgrade, funding for maintaining existing tracks and visitor infrastructure, new gateway infrastructure and visitor education and interpretation. There is funding for a large recruitment of park rangers, field officers, and critical workers to undertake the maintenance of tracks in lutruwita/Tasmania's parks. We have accounted for these basic parks investments along with the expansion of the TWWHA by abandoning insulting parks processes such as four-wheel driving in conservation areas of cultural significance, the Cradle Mountain cableway and the Tyndall Range resort complex walk.

The latter two projects are, miraculously, or through some creative accounting immune to the inflation that all other major projects have seen right around the planet. The Tyndall walk is budgeted at $40 million, which was its original optimistic cost. That is despite the fact that we now know that the build will be more expensive, yet despite the addition of new private pods and project delays already occurring thanks to the inclement western Tasmanian weather, it is still somehow line costed at $40 million.

Similarly, the fanciful Cradle Mountain cableway, part of the Cradle Mountain experience, was estimated to increase in cost from the initial $60 million to $190 million. In the state Budget it is listed at $61 million through the lines, so does that mean there is more federal funding attached to the project after the first grant was withdrawn and that Tasmanians simply have not been told about it?

The Reserve Activity Assessment reform funding was listed in past budgets but is not explicitly highlighted now, right when we expect to see the review after public comments were received to become public. Our Greens alternative budget sets out high-yielding, low to no-impact tourism opportunities for Tasmania. As announced during the election campaign, key areas of low-impact nature-based tourism deserving of investment include agritourism, which is burgeoning, tall tree tourism and regenerative tourism, and I am delighted that the Islander Way project which is leading the regenerative space on Flinders Island is funded in the Liberals' Budget.

A staple of these low-impact tourism ventures is declaring the Southwest National Park's Southwest Sky Country an International Dark Sky Sanctuary. Tasmania has extraordinary views of the night sky but we have missed a key opportunity for environmental protection and a tourism opportunity by not protecting our sky country sooner. New Zealand has just declared its third Dark Sky sanctuary in their pursuit to become a Dark Sky nation. Tasmania could do better. Let us get on with protecting sky country, creating new jobs and business opportunities and sharing even more of what makes Tasmania special with the world.

Numerous small businesses, many of whom rely on the visitor economy, have come forth lacking confidence, given the government's inability to manage infrastructure projects. They feel that there needs to be much more communication and clarity about all the infrastructure projects coming forward. This comes at a time as they are just recovering from the vast impacts of the COVID pandemic, when they most need certainty to be able to create a clear plan and fully recover from those impacts.

Tasmania has a growing digital divide. As other states met the federal government's match funding for fibre-optic cable rollout in the past decade, Tasmania has not come to the table.

Ms Ogilvie - Yes, we did.

Ms BADGER - Great, I would love to hear about that in budget Estimates, minister. Our ageing Bass Strait cables will soon need renewing and with new undersea fibre-optic cables comes greater data ability too. The Greens have $20 million as a state contribution to be matched by the federal government and private investment for a total of $60 million. Such a cable investment goes further than we have previously seen, as it would not just connect the north of the state, but provide backup for the south too.

Private investment is a key component to entice a variety of telecom companies, creating a competitive market in Tasmania and helping break any possible monopolies. Greater digital connectivity can ensure regional Tasmania does not fall behind to offer people the ability to run businesses and work from home with the effective bandwidth in busy times as well, and it can also help transform our agricultural industry.

On the topic of future-proofing our infrastructure and industries, we cannot miss any key opportunities to fully invest in the agricultural industry in ways that are perhaps underappreciated. There are things like investing in more regenerative farming. There is always more room for funding in future industries like hemp.

We also need to see further investment in future-proofing energy infrastructure such as community batteries to build resilience and decentralise the grid and underground power lines in high bushfire-prone areas that repetitively disconnect, sometimes multiple times a year, like Dolphin Sands in my electorate of Lyons. The technology exists; we just have to invest in it.

In the face of increasing climate-induced weather events, it is critical that we equip our emergency services. They will be facing more frequent and more severe weather events. They will face exhaustion and the growing need for higher resourcing. They must be kept safe at work as they keep Tasmanians safe. Under these emergency services, I would also include those from Parks and Sustainable Timber Tasmania who respond to bushfires. The Greens alternative budget includes 30 new remote rapid response firefighters, which we partially funded by dropping the government's contradictory youth strike task force.

The request of $35 million of cuts to police over the next four years is ridiculous during a time when we must ensure there are fully staffed teams all around, especially detectives and the forensic teams who play a crucial role in crime solving without being the ones doing the arresting. They are the staff who are dealing with the national crisis of family and domestic violence and with child abuse.

On that note, did TasCOSS receive the requested additional $500,000 to finalise the family violence peak body to the standards that they wanted from their alliance? Such a body was part of the commission of inquiry recommendations. If it is funded, where is it hidden in the budget lines?

This Budget widens the divide between the haves and have-nots in Tasmania. It passes on larger debt to future generations instead of setting them up for a better, more equitable life in our state.

When the $4 million chocolate fountain contribution was announced, it was done so on the premise that every Tasmanian child had a right to visit Cadbury's to have that experience.

That announcement is emblematic of the attitude that went into drafting this Budget. Instead of budgeting to mitigate climate change and fix the inequality crisis, Tasmania is left footing the bill for handouts to big industry and some inessential infrastructure. Flowing chocolate is not a fundamental necessity for every Tasmanian child. A safe, sustainable, livable future in Tasmania and on this planet is the basic right for future generations.

We can do better. Even the Greens have put together an alternative budget, demonstrating that we can turn this ship around. Maybe 'turning the ship around' is a poor turn of phrase given the Liberals' issues with ships, but this Greens alternative budget, whether you agree with it or not, is proof that we can make good political decisions so all Tasmanians and our magnificent island can enjoy a healthier, fairer, greener future.

[4.47 p.m.]

Mr BEHRAKIS (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, it is a pleasure to also be giving my first budget reply speech. This Budget focuses on our delivery for Tasmania: on getting Tasmania through the current challenges such as cost of living and broader economic headwinds, while implementing the recommendations of the commission of inquiry and righting the wrongs of our past.

The 2024-25 Tasmanian Budget is one that meets the commitments that we made to the people of Tasmania. Any suggestion that we should not be doing that is quite concerning. It lays the foundation for a strong, vibrant future, not only for Tasmania but for my electorate of Clark.

I acknowledge the work of the Treasurer and his office and the offices within Treasury. As the Deputy Leader of the Greens said in his contribution:

> Having worked in my capacity as a staff member, I know exactly how much work goes into these things and they should be commended and acknowledged for that.

This Budget is one that recognises the challenges our state faces - housing, planning, economic growth - whilst also delivering the solutions necessary to create real change. It is a plan that reflects the government's unwavering commitment to delivering essential services, creating jobs and investing in the future prosperity of our community.

As we are here discussing this Budget, it is important to reflect on where we came from, as we continue to work towards improving future outcomes for Tasmanians. We are proud of our record of job creation since coming into government. It is to the tune of 47,000 more Tasmanians in work than when we came into government: an unemployment rate of 4.1 per cent compared to 7.4 per cent in 2014. That is 47,000 more Tasmanians putting food on the family table and spending money in their local community.

We have the strongest wage growth in the nation, recording 5.1 per cent growth in the year to June 2024 - a full one per cent higher than the national average. This represents the largest annual growth in wages in Tasmania in over a decade. This means more food on the table for more Tasmanian families.

With $44.6 billion in the year to June 2024, our economy is as large as it has ever been. It continues to grow, as shown by gross state product and final demand data.

To be clear, since this government was elected, we have seen the creation of 47,000 more jobs. We have seen the unemployment rate almost halve, dropping from a peak of 7.9 per cent in 2013 to a near record low of 4.1 per cent today. We have seen state final demand increase by 25 per cent, gross state product increase by 24 per cent and retail trade increased by over 56 per cent. As the Treasurer said, it is no wonder that over the past six years Tasmania has been the strongest performing state economy in the country with a strong jobs market, retail sector and exports trade. This is despite the impacts of the pandemic, 13 interest rate rises and stubbornly high inflation.

One of the most significant highlights of this Budget is its focused and targeted investments across Tasmania, with Clark being a key beneficiary. The government's ongoing support for the Macquarie Point development, which has been capped at a responsible level, ensures that we will see the creation of a world class precinct which balances economic, cultural and community needs. It will not only boost tourism and local jobs, but will also provide a space for families, businesses and visitors to enjoy for generations to come.

This Budget delivers critical infrastructure for southern Tasmania ensuring that our roads and bridges are safe and that transportation remains efficient. Southern Tasmanian roads and bridges will receive unprecedented investment, making travel safer and more accessible for families, workers and tourists alike. It includes significant upgrades to key arterial roads, showing that Clark is well connected to the broader state and can - as the home of our capital city and CBD - accommodate future growth.

I am proud as the Parliamentary Secretary for Housing and Planning to see this Budget delivering for Tasmanians in housing and planning. Housing remains a top priority for many Tasmanians. This Budget responds decisively to our state's housing needs with a commitment to deliver 10,000 new social and affordable homes by 2032. This target is underpinned by a $1.5 billion investment pipeline, with an immediate focus on building 2000 social homes by June 2027.

As minister Ellis said, the 2024-25 Budget makes it easier for Tasmanians to own their own home. It includes commitments to making life more affordable for Tasmanians. We are taking key steps, like abolishing stamp duty for first home buyers on existing properties valued up to $750,000. Stamping out stamp duty for first home buyers is providing crucial cost-of-living relief for Tasmanians, with savings of up to $28,900 making it easier for Tasmanians to break into the property market and realise their dream of home ownership.

Further, this Budget delivers on our Homes Faster Partnership Incentive Fund, with $35 million over two years to deliver the Key Homes program which would deliver more key worker accommodation in Tasmania's regional communities. It delivers on the Apartment Development Purchase Program which brings forward larger residential apartment developments and Homes Tasmania guaranteeing the purchase of 10 per cent of units off the plan to be made for affordable rentals. It includes enhancements to our successful MyHome shared equity program, lifting income limits and increasing the equity share.

The budget also increases the Residential Land Rebate scheme which offers rebates of up to $15,000 per lot to bring on more affordable residential land. It includes no interest loans for head work charges to stimulate investment, and importantly, it includes the Medium High-Density Development Grant, offering incentives of up to $10,000 per unit to get developments out of the ground.

The Budget also unlocks affordable rentals with $7.2 million over 2 years to expand a private rental incentive scheme by another 200 homes. We have also committed an additional $20 million over the next four years to maintain social homes across Tasmania, over and above the existing investment in maintenance. This Budget ensures Tasmania continues to be a strong contributor to helping Tasmanians access a roof over their head and into the dream of home ownership.

Further, we are providing up to 100 more rapid rehousing homes for women and children escaping family violence, with $1.5 million over two years. Jireh House and McCombe House will also receive a boost of $1.2 million over two years to continue their crucial work.

Homelessness support needs to be more than just a roof over a head. That is why the Budget delivers $900,000 over two years to establish key development coaches at each Safe Space site, helping Tasmanians overcome trauma and other barriers that can get in the way of finding and keeping a home. This is further supported by an uplift in funding for the peak body Shelter Tasmania by $250,000 a year over the next four years to continue providing expert policy advice and advocacy to the government.

For the people of Clark, this means new affordable housing projects that will ensure more of our community members can have a safe, stable place to go home. We are addressing homelessness and housing insecurity head on with new rapid rehousing initiatives, particularly for women and children fleeing family violence.

The government's partnership through the social housing sector will see tailored support offered through Housing Connect reforms, making sure that housing services are designed about the needs of individual Tasmanians. We are also delivering energy efficiency upgrades across social housing, ensuring the vulnerable Tasmanians can save on their power while contributing more to a more sustainable future.

Economic growth in Clark will be further stimulated by targeted investments in local industries. The government's Strong Plan to support the construction sector through investments in public infrastructure and housing is complemented by a commitment to job creation. This Budget backs in our small businesses, the backbone of our local economy, with a suite of measures designed to help them thrive, such as, for instance, our $1.8 million energy efficiency grants program that helps businesses become more energy-efficient.

Last week, minister Duigan and I visited the Mt Nelson Medical Centre, where we spoke to Rajeev and Dr Kaur about how the solar system that they installed at the practice, with the support of government grants, helped reduce their power bills from about $1500 to as low as $600. This is meaningful support to reduce the cost of doing business, which means small business owners can focus on what they do best - building our economy and employing Tasmanians.

For our young people, the government is committed to creating a job-ready generation, with specific investments in training and skills development. From apprenticeships in construction, energy, advanced manufacturing and hospitality, we are ensuring that our young people in Clark have every opportunity to build successful careers right in Tasmania.

Ongoing planning reforms are also crucial to unlocking more land for housing development, further supporting our ambitious housing agenda and building our economy. By

cutting red tape and making it easier for developers to bring forward projects that meet community needs, we are ensuring that the right homes are built in the right places.

We know that more needs to be done. One of the key areas we have identified, that this parliament will have a strong say about soon, is taking the politics out of planning with our development assessment panels. This is really important because, tragically, we have seen multiple councils with local politics knock back housing options and other developments where they are most needed - including, as recently as this year, a major development for women over 55 at risk of homelessness in Hobart or blocking applications, such as the Welcome Stranger development a few years back which would have added over 50 homes to the city's housing stock, the Tasman Hospital in New Town, and so many others.

Anyone who has sat on a council or has tried to apply for any substantial Development Application through councils would have seen the routine situations where political lobbying, mostly by 'anti-everything' activists but, in fairness, on both sides, have an arm race of political action to try and achieve outcomes that should be a statutory process.

Too many times I have personally heard from applicants, builders and developers who have said that they do not care what the result in council is because, one way or another, it will get appealed, either by the applicant or by opponents. The council's decision inevitably becomes redundant and instead is made months later by the Tasmanian Civil & Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT). That is why we are legislating development assessment panels to ensure the planning outcomes reflect the outcomes we need as a state. They will streamline the process, remove the politics from planning, and significantly reduce the holding and political risk for investors in our state who want to build the housing and other infrastructure projects we need.

This Budget is focused on keeping Tasmanians, especially young Tasmanians, safe. As noted by minister Jaensch, we are delivering the interventions for at-risk young people with a need to prevent them from reoffending and to help them become positive contributors to their community. We are supporting the JCP Youth's innovative model, which offers a community-based response to high-risk youth. This model will be boosted with $3.7 million in funding and $2.3 million to be allocated to support local initiatives and partnerships around the state.

Other investments to support Tasmania's youth justice system include $9 million towards keeping Tasmanian kids safe in detention, by funding the employment of additional youth workers and undertaking a comprehensive review of legislation, and $8.6 million for other community youth justice and early intervention and diversionary services.

We are also recruiting an additional 60 police officers for the front line, and they are establishing permanent strike force teams. This is an issue that is front of mind for me, personally, with repeat offenders causing damage within our community and placing Tasmanians at risk - Tasmanians who are simply going about their business. We need to keep them safe, just as we need to simultaneously ensure that we are diverting young Tasmanians at risk from a life of crime through these support programs, just like JCP Youth and others.

It is not just infrastructure and housing where this Budget delivers. It also provides a substantial investment in supporting our communities and the people who need it most. The government's expansion of funding for community services, including mental health, family

support and education, reflects our strong commitment to building resilient communities. In Clark, we see this Budget delivering, including exciting local investments such as our continued investment in the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, recruitment of 44 additional doctors and 25 nurses at the Royal Hobart Hospital. We are supporting a new mother-baby unit at the Royal Hobart Hospital, as well as a new diagnostic breast imaging clinic. We are investing in stage one of a new cancer wellness centre. We are delivering 15 new mental health beds, and a 12-bed child and adolescent mental health inpatient unit and a facility at St John's Park. The Budget also includes the building of a new 40-bed older persons' mental health complex and includes funding to deploy more community paramedics.

In education in Clark, we are upgrading Princes Street, Rosetta and other primary schools as part of a $188 million school funding blitz. We are redeveloping Cosgrove High School and upgrading Hobart High School.

In infrastructure the Tasmanian Budget, we will provide for Clark the building of new ferry terminals at Wilkinsons Point and Sandy Bay. We will continue that hugely successful project, the beginning of the Macquarie Point urban precinct project, as well as the completion of the Bridgewater bridge, our continued support of the Glenorchy Showgrounds housing project, and upgrading of the Algona roundabout.

Last week this House passed a motion. The House called on the Labor opposition to finally table an alternative budget, an opportunity for them to present their vision for Tasmania and explain how they were going to pay for it. Yet here we are, over a year later and the opposition has again failed to meet that basic expectation. Ten years in opposition and still no alternative budget.

I acknowledge that we heard the Greens alternative budget today. Granted, it is one that would shut down productive industries in our state and tank the economy, but at least they were able to do the work. They put forward for the scrutiny of the parliament and for the Tasmanian people how they would do what they proposed to do and how they would pay for it.

Conversely, Mr Willie, the opposition's Treasury spokesman, had ample opportunity to break this tradition. He has chosen to continue down the path of relentless negativity, talking down our state without being able to articulate an alternative approach. It is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and I cannot imagine one more flattering assessment of the Liberal Government's Strong Plan than the infrastructure policy released by Tasmanian Labor in the final days of the election. So impressed was the opposition with the government's infrastructure policy that they directly copied Liberal project initiatives, including for the Lyell Highway between Granton and New Norfolk, at Wielangta Road and the Bass Highway. They even matched the party's funding to the dollar.

It is almost as if they did not have any ideas of their own. Is it a coincidence, or is it just laziness? Was this another case of the opposition asking ChatGPT to do the shadow treasurer's job? Of course, there was no detail in even these policies. Parts they copied were just dot point sentences. Conversely, our budget is based on responsible fiscal management. Over the past years, we have responded to unprecedented challenges, from the economic impacts of COVID-19 to cost-of-living pressures. We have done so while maintaining Tasmania's economic growth and protecting essential services.

The glee with which we have heard members of the opposition boast of the government's election result, while they continue to sit in the opposition benches for the fourth time, having gained no ground at all, reminds me of one of my favourite movies, where a character loses a car race, blows his engine, spins out of control, walks up to the victor and says, 'I almost had you'. Well, the opposition never had us. They never had the election. They did not even have an alternative budget.

Without outlining an alternative plan, they are proving that they are no alternative government. They are a desperate, bitter, fourth-term opposition angry that they are still on that side of the chamber without once giving the people of Tasmania any reason to consider them a credible alternative. Tasmanians remember what it was like to live under the tax first, ask later Labor-Greens government. Tasmanians remember the state being plunged into a recession in 2013. They oversaw unemployment rates of 7.9 per cent. Tasmanians remember over 19,000 unemployed Tasmanians.

We will never lose sight of the fact that the numbers we talk about in this place and this budget represent the livelihoods of real Tasmanians. Each new job created is another person contributing to our economy, but more important, providing for their family. We are committed to improving the livelihoods of those Tasmanians and this Budget does just that.

The 2024-25 Budget is a blueprint for a stronger, more prosperous Tasmania. It is a budget for the times, albeit times of some economic uncertainty. It is a budget that lays out a path through that. It is a budget that invests in our people, invests in our infrastructure and invest in our future. For the people of Clark, it delivers on the key issues of housing, economic growth, transport and community support, ensuring that our region remains a great place to live, to work and to raise a family.

I commend this Budget to the House. I commend the work of the Treasurer and his office and the hard work of those in the Treasury offices.

[5.06 p.m.]

Mrs BESWICK (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, it is an honour to deliver my first budget reply in this space. Assessing the Budget and the financial policy of the government is a responsibility I do not take lightly. I acknowledge the thought-provoking contributions made by all corners of the House and have listened to them with interest, even those espousing coalitions of chaos. I must say that from my perspective there has never been a coalition and the disassembly of the JLN was less about chaos and more about stability, but I digress.

It appears it can be agreed that this year's Budget is a crucial one: crucial in funding the services Tasmanians expect and deserve, and equally important in putting the state's finances on a sustainable footing. I would argue it passes the first test, albeit with important caveats. Unfortunately, it is closer to a fail on the second test. This Budget puts too many difficult decisions off for another day and makes it increasingly likely that future parliaments and even future generations will be left cleaning up the consequences. A projected debt of $8.5 billion is ringing alarming bells across the community, especially in business circles. Households know how dangerous it is to put everyday spending on the mortgage. Credit cards are for one off, unforeseen expenses, mortgages for asset purchases and neither for keeping the lights on.

The government has gone from using debt to service infrastructure projects to using debt to offset significant deficits. All the while, the cost of servicing this growing debt is getting more and more expensive. The state is stuck on a hamster wheel with no plausible state plan.

We are facing interest repayments totalling about $1.4 billion over the next four years. It begs the question: when are we actually going to start paying the debt down? How many years will we be spending? Will any of this, any of us, still be sitting in these seats when we finally say we are debt free? Some of the financial burden has been outside of the government's control. The pandemic was costly and we needed to spend to keep Tasmania and the state's economy as healthy as possible. There are also costs associated with responding to the commission of inquiry, a necessary impost to address a very dark chapter in the state's history.

While some of the budget expenditure could not have been planned for, much of the pain is avoidable. Unaffordable spending promises have been a hallmark of consecutive election campaigns. Tasmanians have been caught in the middle of a bidding war as the major parties have vied for votes. It is an unhealthy tradition and one that has left Tasmania's budget on very shaky ground. I note Labor's proposal to ban pork-barrelling, but I would argue we need a change of attitude before a change of rules. We need to adopt an attitude that puts the next generation front of mind. We need sustainable spending decisions on essential services and projects instead of a show bag of election promises for political purposes. I am yet to be convinced that outsourcing responsibility is the answer, but something has to change about election spending.

I acknowledge the timing of Saul Eslake's report made it difficult to implement his ideas in this year's Budget. However, the state government has demonstrated an unwillingness to take on his advice. They ruled out any revenue raising measures without even properly considering them and they seem intent on ignoring Mr Eslake's practical advice on infrastructure spending. The next budget is just eight months away. We need to see some of Mr Eslake's advice taken seriously. Putting our head in the sand and our fingers in our ears is not an option. Neither is continuing down the path of efficiency dividends and vacancy control as our only means of making savings. As Saul Eslake says, 'they are blunt and crude ways of saving money'. If the government is serious about making efficiencies, it is going to take hard work, clear measurables and a willingness to partner with the public sector and its unions.

In my electorate of Braddon, there is a wonderful training program offered by people movers in Burnie. The Lean Leader simulated working environment, teaches participants to remove waste from every process, improve quality, reduce costs and improve productivity. I personally have enjoyed this experience and I know it is transferable to all industries. It would be worthwhile for our ministers and our high-level public servants to make use of this home-grown initiative.

Tasmanians understand there is not a bottomless pit of money, but cuts cannot compromise vital public services. I urge the government to properly engage rather than washing its hands of the responsibility to find savings. I would also urge the state government to be more transparent about some of the decisions at the heart of this year's Budget.

Compared to last year, the spend on the Digital Health Transformation has decreased by $50 million with the footnote: 'the funding profile for the Digital Health Transformation project has been revised to reflect a reprioritisation of the department's internal resources'. When I asked the Minister of Health about it, he could not explain what advice this decision is based

on. The funding allocation in last year's Budget was obviously arrived at for a reason. What does the $50 million adjustment mean for us? This project was to take 10 years to complete. With this significant reduction in funding, when can we expect it to be completed?

When can we expect our ambulances to call our hospitals and let them know they are on the way? When can we expect to turn up at emergency where staff have access to our GP notes? These kinds of efficiencies improve staff effectiveness, reduce costs and improve services. Why would such a vital system be reprioritised? Are we at risk of falling behind the expectations that Tasmania has? The government needs to take the community with it and explain the thinking behind this decision.

The government is right when it argues a slash and burn budget is not the answer. Our most vital sectors including health, education, child protection and emergency services are already stretched. Wholesale cuts would have been rejected by the community and the consequences would be devastating for protecting the state's most vulnerable. However, the community does understand the need to live within our means and would understand the necessity for targeted savings or reprofiling of infrastructure spending.

One area which needs to be a focus is preventative medicine. This year's federal budget highlights the importance of this approach by noting that nearly 40 per cent of diseases could be prevented through the reduction of risky lifestyle factors. This statistic emphasises the potential for substantial savings and improved health outcomes through targeted investments in preventative health initiatives. Investing in preventative medicine not only addresses the root causes of many health issues but also saves us money in the long run.

For every dollar spent on preventative health measures, there is an estimated saving of about $14.30 in healthcare and other related costs. This return on investment illustrates the efficiency of preventative strategies. It will prevent Tasmanians having to access expensive treatments and procedures, but more importantly, it will simply improve their quality of life.

Saul Eslake's report gives us some really good solutions for improving income and developing budget policy, including increasing the ratio of own source revenue as opposed to grants and reliance on the federal government. Mr Eslake recommends the state consider stamp duty reform and obviously we have our Stamping Out Stamp Duty policy which shows that stamp duty is a problem for home buyers. In the first place he suggests extending the surcharges payable on foreign investors in residential real estate to mainland-based investors as well. It is an idea worth consulting on. Over the long term, Mr Eslake recommends abolishing stamp duty in favour of a broadly based land tax. The government was quick to dismiss these ideas, but we owe it to Tasmanians to explore ways of improving our tax regime. Other jurisdictions have been working on reforms in this area and have made changes. There is no reason we cannot, too. After all, Tasmanians believe in standing on their own two feet.

While I have been critical of the government's failure to address budget repair, there are many genuinely good initiatives contained in this year's Budget. It pleases me to see that some of the quieter voices in our community have been listened to. Funding for the community sector organisations who work day in, day out to keep vulnerable Tasmanians warm and safe is always welcome. There are lots of compassionate decisions in this Budget and I would urge the government to make sure that funding is delivered in a timely manner. In my electorate of Braddon there is funding for some crucial local services like Gran's Van, Neighbourhood

Houses and men's sheds. I am excited to see the increase in the School Lunch Program, which will enable children to improve educational outcomes with food in their bellies.

I am proud that so many of the budget bids we made as part of our supply and confidence agreement have been considered and acted upon - modest, meaningful spending to make our communities a better place. The response to our latest school improvement funding was particularly pleasing, with $16 million committed. I urge the state government to listen to the Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations when it says funding should be distributed independently, free of politics. Young people in our public schools deserve to learn in great environments.

Another positive aspect of this year's Budget offering is the inclusion of the Gender Budget Statement. It is an interesting snapshot of life in Tasmania with plenty of reminders that we still have a long way to go. Women are overrepresented in the underemployment statistics, suggesting that, while they are employed, it is still a massive challenge to make ends meet. Saul Eslake's report goes into some depth on the value of productivity in Tasmania. Delivering policy that improves access to employment can go a long way to equal opportunity and equal lifetime earnings. The gender statement is an important addition to the budget process and I encourage all Tasmanians to consider its findings and the shared responsibility of making our home a safer, fairer place to live.

My first state Budget experience has been an eye-opening one so far. It has been a reminder that the decisions made in this place and by those on Treasury benches have a profound impact on the lives of Tasmanians. This Budget is filled with hope and faith. Many not-for-profit organisations would appreciate the battle of forward planning to deliver on works which, when looking at their balance sheets, are just not viable. They commit to their plans and place their hopes and dreams on their ability to work hard and keep moving forward. Tasmanians rely on us all in this place to put politics aside and make the best possible decisions for their future.

I am committed to working with my close friend, the member for Bass, Mrs Pentland, and the rest of the crossbench to provide much-needed scrutiny and to put forward intelligent, sustainable solutions to make this dream come true, and to ensure we are not overstepping and moving into fairyland. We cannot put off difficult decisions so that our children and their children are left repairing the damage. Now is the time to step up and put Tasmania on the most sustainable footing.

[5.19 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, in responding to the government's Budget, allow me to paint a picture of what could be. It is a vision of what could be if we approached our budget with deep empathy, recognising the innate, inalienable value of every person who lives in Tasmania, placing them at the heart of our decision-making and prioritising their wellbeing before all the other competing interests vying for budget attention. It is a vision that looks at what we collectively need to be safe, healthy, connected, productive and happy.

It will not surprise you that much of what the Greens believe is needed to achieve this vision is contained in our alternative budget. We have looked at the government's budget choices, sifting through them one by one to identify the things that are missing from the Budget and the things that are in it that Tasmania can do without. We have developed alternatives that

will help Tasmania become an island alive with healthy people living life to their fullest potential within thriving communities that provide warmth, care and joy.

How might we shift people from the difficult situation they find themselves in right now? We know Tasmanians are struggling to cope with the stress of just getting by each day. Power bills are unaffordable for many. Food is so expensive some parents are skipping meals to ensure their children have enough to eat. Rents are enormous and placing huge strain on people's budgets. People are avoiding the GP and dentist because they cannot afford it. Tasmanians are doing it tough, stuck making impossible choices about what to buy because they cannot afford all they need.

What can we invest our resources in, as a state, to best help us achieve the transformation we need? What will enable people to flourish and thrive across their lives? Here are some cameos that highlight the budget choices the Greens would make for a better vision of the future. They are examples of what could be. They imagine a different state.

Meet Rachel. Rachel is very stressed. She is a single mother to two young children, Sam and Emma. Yesterday she received notice that her rent will rise by $30 a week, an increase she can barely afford as she already struggles to buy food and she avoids switching on the heating so she can save on power. Rachel has no idea how she is going to survive, but she does know where she can find a friendly face and a listening ear. Sam is at school, so Rachel pushes Emma in her pram to the local Neighbourhood House to speak with staff there. They welcome her with warm smiles and, more than that, they are able to offer her financial help as they have just received funding from the Greens to provide cost-of-living support in the community. They have also been funded to provide food relief, so Rachel stocks up on supplies from their community pantry. She heads home feeling relieved. She and the kids will eat tonight. She still has to figure out how to pay the rent, but she knows she is not alone and can get help when she needs it.

Rachel experienced trauma as a girl and has also experienced violence from intimate partners, all of which has impacted on her deeply. Sometimes she is triggered and says and does things she regrets, especially with her kids. It is just that Sam and Emma are really tricky and she does not know how to manage their behaviour. One time she really lost it, yelling and screaming so much she lost her voice and scared Emma. Rachel is worried that she might lose her kids because she gets so angry, but she feels comfortable with Sam's teacher, Dan, so she tells him about the incident and shares her worries. Dan is very kind and makes a referral for support. Not long after that, Rachel is allocated an intensive family engagement service (IFES) worker called Nick.

Nick visits parents at home and works with them on parenting, as well as providing mental health support and teaching them how to be more organised. He works with Rachel for several months and, over that time, Rachel learns a lot about herself, and Emma and Sam. She practises the parenting skills she has learnt and gets better at staying calm and giving her children the care they need. It takes time, but she goes from being at risk of losing her children to knowing how to manage them and support them to grow. That is because the Greens funded more intensive family engagement workers.

Nick, the IFES worker, loves his job. He is part of an organisation the Greens better funded to provide early intervention support to families. Before, they could not provide the support they wanted to. They could only work with families in crisis and sometimes it was too

late to make a real difference for children. Now, they are well staffed and Nick has a small enough caseload that he can work with families early and help them change the way they do things so they are safe and can stay together.

Nick's manager is Sophie. She has been the CEO of the organisation for years and has seen many changes in the community services sector. In the past, there was never enough money to provide all the services she wanted to. All that changed when the Greens increased community service organisation funding by providing indexation to a level that covered rising staff wages and inflation. The organisation was transformed. They did not have to choose which services to cut, or which referrals they could not afford to accept. They were well resourced and able to provide a full range of services to families in need. What a weight off Sophie's shoulders, and the whole team felt better. They could do their jobs properly and enjoy the satisfaction of supporting families and seeing things change for the better.

Sophie's organisation used to support Tom's family. Things were going well for them until Tom started having a bit of trouble. He fell in with the wrong group of friends and they had been up to mischief around town. Actually, mischief is not the right word. They had been vandalising property, stealing things and even assaulted someone. Tom is 14, the new age of criminal responsibility under the Greens, but he has not been remanded to Ashley Youth Detention Centre because the detention centre is now closed, fast-tracked by the Greens, who worked alongside community organisations and funded them to set up alternative accommodation and supports. Tom has been remanded to a small community facility that is safer and more suited to his needs. He has access to social workers and support staff and they are teaching him social and emotional skills that are slowly helping him change his behaviour.

Ellen is one of the support staff working with Tom. She lives at home with her mum and dad still. She has been trying to get out into her own place, but at 22, it has been impossible to find somewhere she can afford. Ellen is feeling hopeful now, though. She saw that the Greens funded a Child and Youth Homelessness Plan to set out a pathway to support all children and young people struggling with housing. It will definitely help the young people Ellen works with at the therapeutic justice facility, but it will also help people like her who have no way into secure housing.

One of Ellen's friends, Josh, was in out-of-home care throughout his life. He lived with his carer for many years and now he is of an age where he is ageing out of care. This has been really stressful for him. The Greens recognise that Josh is at high risk of becoming homeless when he transitions out of care, so they have invested funding in programs that support young people in his situation to move into living independently.

Niall and Alice are other carers in the area. They have been providing care for a six-year-old boy for three years now and it is hard. They know that every child in care is trauma-impacted and comes with difficult behaviours, but living with it every day has been more exhausting than they expected and they were beginning to think they might need to quit as carers. That was until recently when the Greens funded a boost to respite care. When they could not get a break for months at a time, the new funding has meant more respite is available. They had their second week off in two months last week and the relief was enormous: just to get a regular break, care for themselves and build up their energy ready to keep being there for the boy in their care.

Another positive change Alice and Niall have seen is their boy now has a child safety officer allocated to him. Previously, they had been managing their boy's care, organising appointments, chasing up on supports that he needed and basically doing the work of a child safety officer themselves.

Now, with the funding of 40 additional Child Safety Officers this year, with more funded for the next few years, Niall and Alice have been able to access support for their boy. He has had access to more supports that his Child Safety Officer arranged, and Niall and Alice are relieved someone in Child Safety now knows as much about the child in their care as they do. It was not always like that.

As well as being a carer, Alice is a nurse. She has been working in the Launceston General Hospital Emergency Department for years. So stressful. She was constantly exhausted, working extra shifts, always dealing with management, looking for ways to save money for efficiency dividends when all she wanted to do was give people the treatment they needed as soon as possible. Things have been better lately, though. The Greens funded a range of new staff in the Emergency Department and across the hospital. They put in clinical coaches, backfilled Assistant Nurse Unit Managers, employed discharged nurses and added a new role of nurse navigator to help create better pathways for people through the Emergency Department. It has all made a huge difference to the care Alice can give. She particularly loves that there is a psychiatric evaluation nurse on duty all the time. They have helped so much with those patients who come in distressed during a mental health crisis.

Things are much smoother for Alice and her colleagues now, and Alice is hopeful of things improving even more once the Greens' funding of the Health Education and Research Centre kicks in. There will be more nurses being trained and she will be able to keep up her skills and learning too. Alice is impressed by the whole package of jobs the Greens put in place in the hospital. As well as the extra nurses, there has been great investment in allied health. It is brilliant having more physios, OTs and social workers available with the extra funding so more can train - that salary increase for allied health has drawn more people to Tasmania as well. Patients are getting the wraparound support they need from the whole healthcare team and it is a beautiful thing.

Then there are the changes in radiology and pathology. The Greens funded 24/7 services in both areas and it has been great. The other day a patient called Deb came in very unwell at 1.00 a.m. She obviously needed tests done as soon as possible. In the past, she would have had to wait for staff to come in for the test, slowing down her care. It could have made the difference between her getting through or not.

The new extended service meant Alex, a pathologist, was on site that night and Deb's bloods were tested quickly. Alice was relieved. She had watched too many patients deteriorate quickly while waiting for tests to be completed, but this situation was different.

In this cameo, staff across the Health department are generally feeling better. Vacancy controls and efficiency dividends have been ditched by the Greens, and staff feel seen and valued. For example, Steve works in the emergency department at Royal Hobart Hospital. There was a lot of muck-around with the redevelopment of the Emergency Department, plans to expand the department for the future, then plans ditched to save money. The Greens, though, saw the need to future-proof, and they reinstated the funding that had been cut. The Royal Hobart Hospital emergency department is now expanded. There is space to work more easily

and, more importantly, space to provide care safely to all the patients who present. Steve and the whole team are thrilled with the improvements. It is a huge relief to be able to give all the care they want to in a fit-for-purpose space.

Valuing Health staff gives them a huge boost, but in this peek into what could be, Tasmanians across the state have also benefited from the Greens' expanded funding to the Mental Health Council of Tasmania. For example, Jack is a young person who has struggled with mental health concerns for a while now. At first, he kept his troubles to himself, but after seeing awareness-raising information about mental health online, he realised what he was feeling was not normal and that help was available. As a result, he got in touch with a mental health provider and has started working on strategies that are making a positive difference for his mental health.

One of the things Jack has been struggling with is the impending loss of his grandmother. Her health has been declining and she knows she does not have much longer to live. Her family has come around her to support and care for her. At first, this was scary and foreign to them, but they found out about Palliative Care Tasmania and were able to find information about what to expect and where to get care. The Greens provided long-term funding for Palliative Care Tasmania, meaning they could continue to raise awareness about palliative care, and their organisation has been able to keep on helping Tasmanians to die well.

There is another group in the community who are benefiting from budget funding by the Greens and that is people with disability. The new disability inclusion legislation provides welcomed extra protections for people living with disability, but even with that in place there are times when things do not go right. Suze was someone in this situation. She was not happy with some of the decisions that were made about her care and needed to take legal action. At first, Suze could not afford legal support and she had to just put up with things, but when the Greens funded disability services' legal aid, she was able to take action, challenge the situation and receive a change to her care.

For now, these cameos are a dream and a vision. Some people might call them utopian or naive, maybe even simplistic and unachievable, but we do not think so. Each of these cameos finds inspiration in line items funded in the Greens' alternative budget. They are all costed and they are all possible. We just have to choose to do them. With the political will to action them, these measures could jump off the page of our alternative budget and become real, resulting in significant change.

The Greens are not here to offer more of the same. We have a vision that offers not just an alternative to the government's budget, it also offers an alternative to the dominant economic narrative of our time and places a holistic view of people's health and happiness before the economic values of consumption and endless unsustainable growth. Our capitalist system is damaging people, hurting our community and our environment, on which my Green colleagues have shared our alternative vision. The vision here offers an alternative that places Tasmanian people at the centre, taking a broad view of their lives and their needs, recognising their value and worth and investing in them. This is not just investing in services - it is investing in people, because they are worth it.

Ultimately it comes down to choices. What will we choose, as a state? Will we centre people in our decision making? Will we respect them, lift them up and honour them by doing all we can to provide services and supports that help them live well? Sadly, the answer to these

questions in this Budget from the Liberal Government is a no. While the government is busy talking up all they are funding, they are concurrently making all sorts of harsh, heartless decisions that will significantly impact on service provision in the state: efficiency dividends, vacancy control measures, and the ultimate in wasting money, a billion-dollar stadium that Tasmania does not need and does not want. Each of these things will have a detrimental impact on services around the state. Tasmanians will miss out because of the choices this government has made. It does not have to be this way. There are different ways of doing things and different choices we can make.

The Greens will continue to provide an alternative perspective and an alternative budget. We will continue to highlight other choices and advocate for all Tasmanians to have access to the support, healthcare, mental healthcare and services they need. Tasmanians deserve a government in their corner, putting them first and making choices that enable an environment and circumstances in which everyone can be safe, healthy, connected, productive and happy. The Greens will keep fighting for that.

[5.36 p.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to rise this afternoon as the member for Lyons and a member of this government to make my contribution to the 2024-25 state Budget. This is not my first budget reply speech. As most people know, I have been lucky enough to take part in this process ever since I was first elected to this House in 2010. I am excited about the new Budget and what it offers Tasmania and its constituents, particularly those within my electorate of Lyons.

I cannot go on, however, without going to the member who just resumed her seat and the quirky nature of her response. It was mentioned by the Greens this morning as being about quirkiness and other things, but when you come up with a speech, and the Greens have an alternative budget, of course - what has happened, and what did happen, between 2010-2014 when they were in government with Labor, is that three-out-of-four small businesses within Tasmania indicated that the government's policy in those days was working against them. The problem with the Greens' budget is that they do not have the income. They lose the income because nobody has confidence, particularly in the business sector, that they can actually perform and assist business.

Therefore, what happened is that the unemployment rate went to 8 per cent, people had to leave the state to go and find work, the stamp duty and their own source income dried up and it left the government in a very difficult position back then. That is the problem with the Greens' alternative budget, but I do applaud them for putting out a budget every time.

This Budget from the Government is absolutely right for the time, and as the Premier has said, it offers a balance of the situations that we are in at the moment. This Budget takes action right now on things that matter to Tasmania, and makes a difference, and therefore makes life more affordable. That is the commitment we took to the last election and it is what the Premier and Treasurer, and the rest of the team on this side of the Chamber, have delivered. For their hard work and commitment, I thank them.

This Budget secures record investment in cost-of-living relief, health, housing and education. Our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future keeps the state economy strong, creates more jobs and makes Tasmania the best place to live, work and raise a family - a priority that

I find extremely important being a father of three and a grandfather of eight. The next generations are very important to me, as I know they are for most people within Tasmania.

This Budget prioritises funding to build a better health system, make housing more accessible and affordable, and keep Tasmania safe. It builds on the success of our strong infrastructure agenda with a further $5.1 billion to be invested into job-creating projects that will deliver new hospitals, schools, training facilities, and roads and bridges right across Tasmania. This Budget has been well received and prompted comments such as: 'the budget backs the building sector'. That is from the Master Builders Tasmania CEO, David Clerk, and is a great tribute to that. He has also said that by continuing to fund the High Vis Army initiatives, the government is supporting more apprentices, more tradies, greater female participation and a better pathway into our industry.

Greater female participation is important to me, as my granddaughter is currently undertaking a building apprenticeship. Endorsements such as this from David Clerk means that more opportunities will exist for those who want to follow in her footsteps into the future.

Multiple other endorsements have been received about this budget. The Civil Contractors Federation Tasmania has commented, 'The government has made the right call to continue to invest in job-creating infrastructure across the state in this state Budget', and continues by saying that, 'Now was not the time to take the foot off the gas by cutting infrastructure spending across Tasmania, as some have been suggesting' - endorsements from the major players in Tasmanian business that support that the government has delivered a good budget. I put my thanks on record to all those businesses, organisations and individuals who spoke to me and others during the election campaign and in the lead up to this Budget. Positive comments and discussions like these prove that we as a government are listening to the people and delivering what is crucial for the state.

My electorate of Lyons is well-supported by the Budget and time will not allow me to go through every announcement made across the vast 35,000 square kilometres in the area that it covers, but I will mention some of the commitments.

The Rockliff government and I are pleased to mention the investment of $32 million to build super-sized child and family centres to meet the growing demands. This includes one at Longford and adding to the 18 centres either currently under construction or fully operating in Tasmania. There are four super-sized child and family centres that are in this budget and they are a great thing for those families who utilise them. These centres are purpose-built facilities for children of zero to five years of age. Their parents and carers can access free services and activities to assist them with the challenges of parenting and early childhood development. These include free access to psychologists, speech pathologists and social workers.

These centres will be built to a national quality standard requirement so that they have additional space to enable partnering with early childhood education and carer providers to deliver early education, long day care and vacation care along with outside-of-school-hours care where there is a demand for that service.

This Budget will provide funding for the employment of 27 extra community paramedics at our district hospitals in Deloraine, St Helens, St Marys, Campbell Town, Oatlands, New Norfolk and the Tasman Peninsula. Further recruitment of full-time paramedics will occur with some of those workers being deployed to our regional communities.

An additional 44 doctors and 25 nurses will be recruited to assist in the staffing of the recently expanded Emergency Department at the Royal Hobart Hospital. We are providing funding to expand the Mobile GP Clinic to service the greater Hobart area from New Norfolk to Clarendon Vale.

Doubling the size of the Launceston General Hospital Emergency Department will also be a welcome feature of our state Budget, as will the addition of a new four-bed Mother and Baby Centre in the new Launceston Health Hub. The completion of the new helipad at the Launceston General Hospital will also be a lifesaving addition to the hospital, ensuring the time-critical transfer can take place swiftly and smoothly. Also, in the sector of health, funding has been provided for the continued redevelopment of the Royal Hobart Hospital with the inclusion of new neurology and stroke wards, supported by the employment of more doctors and nurses.

There will be $1.5 million in funding for the Midlands Agricultural Association to establish Tasmania's first Shearing and Wool Innovation Centre at the Campbell Town Showgrounds, which will include a shearing shed and associated amenities. This state-of-the-art Shearing and Wool Innovation Centre will provide first-class facilities in a central location. It will allow TasTAFE and other relevant Registered Training Organisations to provide further employment opportunities. Students will be able to learn and fine-tune their art without the need to travel to the mainland. I am very pleased to see that. I have been lobbied over a number of years that the government should be doing something, particularly by shearers in the area. My shoulder will not do too many more, so it is important for the young people out there to be trained in the shearing shed activities. Boy oh boy, is there some work when you come around to the shearing shed.

The Rockliff Liberal Government will work with Rural Youth Tasmania and Dairy Tasmania to support the construction of a permanent multi-use structure at Quercus Park with the $350,000 investment. We will also join Rural Youth to establish Tasmania's first purpose-built Earth Works Training Site at Quercus Park. This will be only the second site of its kind in Australia. It will allow Rural Youth to partner with the Civil Contractors Federation of Tasmania to deliver real life works training with up to 330 apprenticeships benefiting from its creation. It has been identified that 667 new plant machinery operators and other critical workers will be needed every year until 2027. This site will assist in providing trainees with up to 3,000 training qualifications per year in the civil construction sector alone.

The 2024 Budget will fund $20 million for the upgrading of the Lyell Highway between Granton and New Norfolk. It will allow the completion of the $786 million Bridgewater bridge and transform the Tasman Highway between Sorell and Hobart into a four-lane connection. It will provide $6 million towards the upgrading of the Wielangta Road and $1 million towards the remediation of the Sorell Rivulet Bridge.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government has also committed to funding the development of the business case for the Mountain Bike Wielangta Trail Project. We are committed to the completion of the Midlands Highway Action Plan. Northern Lyons will also benefit from the road upgrades with the completion of the $20 million four-lane Bass Highway between Launceston and Deloraine. Added to roads and highway improvements, will be further upgrades to the Illawarra Road from Springfield to the Bass Highway.

As a government, we have committed to delivering $6 million to funding the federal government's shortfall to ensure a new purpose-built Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) base can be constructed at the airport near Evandale. As well as being the headquarters for the RFDS, the new base has been designed in conjunction with Ambulance Tasmania to include an Ambulance Tasmania operations room, enclosed ambulance parking bays, a patient transfer room, six Ambulance Tasmania crew reset rooms and an Ambulance Tasmania administration space. Funding for the Royal Flying Doctor Service will also allow them to continue to deliver oral health services to concession card holders and children across the east coast.

Education infrastructure will be heavily supported from our Budget, with $188 million in upgrades to 15 schools, including Dodges Ferry Primary School, Campbell Town District School, East Derwent Primary School and Deloraine High School, along with the delivery of the new Brighton High School and Sorell School, which will also include a new child and family centre. Students will benefit from the doubling in funding to the Healthy School Lunches program, ensuring they are getting nutritious meals to help keep their minds focused on study. This is expected to save families up to $950 per year; a great help with cost-of-living expenses.

The tourism industry is an integral part of Tasmania's economy, so we are investing in local tourism ventures, supporting events such as the Bicheno Food and Wine Festival and the ECHO Festival in Swansea. Funding has also been included for upgrades to the Mount Field National Park, making it suitable for all-year-round access. Disability access in national parks and reserves will be improved and enhanced. Visitor experiences will be a welcome result. Port Arthur will benefit from remediation work and monitoring work for services and conservation projects. There will be also funding to deliver new infrastructure to aid with tourism.

We are investing in our beautiful east coast areas by completing the St Helens-Georges Bay walk, completing the St Marys evacuation centre and constructing new Telstra towers to ensure reliable coastal communication. There will be funding for upgrades to May Shaw Health Centre and we are investing in virtual infrastructure for the hospitals in St Marys and St Helens. The Budget is supporting our volunteer marine rescue units, including those at St Helens, Freycinet and Dodges Ferry, with the $1 million investment over four years to support licensed recreation boat users as well. With over 5000 km of coastline, our commitment to keeping Tasmania and visitors safe is a huge undertaking. Sporting clubs and community centres, which are quite often lifelines for regional and rural areas, will benefit from club upgrades. Under our 2024-25 Budget, we are able to assist more than 40 community clubs and facilities across Lyons, ensuring those community supports stay in place for those who rely on them.

Affordable and social housing is an important part of this Budget. We are stamping out stamp duty for first home buyers on existing homes up to $750,000. This will mean a massive saving of up to $28,935 per buyer at that level. We have committed to expanding the MyHome shared equity program, including lifting the income limits on eligibility, and adding another 200 homes to the Private Rental Incentives scheme, ensuring a reduced rental rate to low-income Tasmanians. The government is creating a Homes Faster! incentive fund to stimulate supply and delivery of more worker accommodation for regional workers.

Tasmania has come a long way, but there is more work to be done. We must keep Tasmania moving forward and continue to grow our economy so that we can deliver the infrastructure and services Tasmania deserves. The 2024-25 Budget builds on gains the

Tasmanian government has made over the past 10 years, which has delivered intergenerational infrastructure and provided the modern assets that will underpin our economic activity and growth. The 2024-25 Budget drives the delivery of our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future by ensuring economic growth alongside sensible debt management, while it continues to promote a business-friendly investment environment with no new or increased taxes.

[5.56 p.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, what is there to add to the commentary on the Budget? We have heard commentary that lauds and commentary that condemns. We have heard almost 30 speeches, each with something different to add in relation to the Budget, and it is good to hear from everybody in this House. What can I really add to that which has gone before? The focus should be on the Budget, but I will pause first to reflect on some sage advice some of us were given earlier in the week.

On Monday, Ruth Forrest MLC arranged for Regina Weiss to speak to parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. The advice from Ms Weiss was about preparing for questioning on panels or committees such as Estimates. Ms Weiss is an accomplished lawyer. She has experience at The Hague in the International War Crimes Tribunal and undertook the recent inquiry into the late police officer and paedophile, Paul Reynolds. On Monday, she described techniques of adversarial versus inquisitorial questioning. It was a master class in a lunchtime on how to deal with the most egregious of characters and the most delicate of situations when dealing with traumatised and traumatising witnesses, or those called to appear before you. Her advice was that it was a chance to consider the person before you. She suggested you imagine yourself in that person's shoes. I decided to take a little bit of Ms Weiss's advice and step into Mr Ferguson's shoes.

Tasmania has a much smaller budget than other jurisdictions. It is difficult to make ends meet in this state at the best of times. It is particularly difficult when you have a growing list of expectations in an economy competing with others around the world for the same things. We have a housing crisis. We need more housing. We have a cost-of-living crisis. We have more people in precarious situations living below the poverty line or in housing stress, even homeless, all of whom need help. We have bus drivers, doctors, nurses and allied health professionals not paid well for the work they do, whose conditions are worsening, threatening to and even taking industrial action, and leaving their profession of choice in droves. We have an extinction and environmental crisis, and we have impacts of climate change threatening our lifestyle, our economy and our existence.

As a treasurer, what do you do in this situation when there is not much left in the tank? Using the same thinking is certainly not going to help. Let us look at what we have. Mr Ferguson has delivered a budget where there is a significant fiscal risk to the state projected over many years. He has had to account for projects that may not have initially been in his remit, like the stadium, having to deal with the significant costs of redress schemes, the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic; the list of election promises, some described as pork-barrelling, which were never reined in, like the specific industry leg-ups dotted throughout the Budget. The Treasurer really had nowhere to go to seek funding for projects or even to service wage and superannuation obligations because of the Liberals' promise not to increase revenue through taxes, which inevitably means that either someone misses out, you sell assets or you accrue debt. You can do all of the above, I suppose.

Having a small state with a dispersed population, having to prop up industries and GBEs such as forestry that have not delivered a profit in years, that have lost social licence and which cannot continue to be undertaken in their current form without trashing Tasmania's environment and, with it, our reputation: or having other project delays of borrowings to pay for recurrent expenditures such as wages and goods and not nearly enough to go around for capital works even if they were on time and on budget.

Let us look at some figures based on the 2022 financial year figures: 50 per cent of revenue to Tasmania was from GST and grants, 7 per cent from capital grants, 20 per cent was from taxes, 8 per cent from royalties and 7 per cent from other owned sources. That is 64 per cent reliance on the federal government funds. Other states have a much higher tax base, but our government fails to address this revenue source and fails to shift the burden and vary the revenue.

It is not future proofing our economy. We are in a national environment where Western Australia wants a greater share of the GST pie, and Tasmania - given our reliance on GST as a major revenue source - will suffer significantly and feel the aftershocks of that levelling of GST distribution.

It is straightened times which call for thoughtful spending to deliver for services, housing and relief for the brutal cost-of-living crisis we find ourselves in. Thinking about this, I would not want to be in minister Ferguson's shoes. As a Liberal treasurer, you want to be able to deliver. You want to be providing certainty for the community, for business, for your donors, for the organisations who have backed you. You want to paint a rosy picture that everything is hunky dory and this is certainly the polished version, the government's PR machine that is definitely on budget super spin cycle.

The Greens do not subscribe to this broken system and we would want to undertake good governance and fiscally responsible budgets that benefit all Tasmanians, our economy and the environment. How freeing it could be if there were political donations disclosure reform in place so that Tasmanian treasurers could deliver for the community who actually voted them in - not the lobbyists, nor the companies with vested interests - prioritising what is right for Tasmania's future.

The Greens approach would be significantly different to this Budget, make no mistake. As described in the alternative budget tabled by Greens leader Rosalie Woodruff today, the Greens would not shy away from making large companies contribute to the common good: to have more to go to those who need it, rather than gifting a significant deficit of billions to an ailing health system, an education system lacking infrastructure and teachers, and an environment that should have been cherished rather than trashed.

We want to see all recommendations of the State of the Environment report implemented. The Ferguson Budget is set to create a fiscal burden over the next four years with no guarantee it will be back in the black beyond that timeframe. It is highly unlikely. Infrastructure expenditure seems to be based on the expectation that the Commonwealth will cough up for the projects that have been listed. It is subject to Commonwealth contribution. The 20-80 split of funding for projects will continue, but when the federal government is paying for projects, it will be more likely that Tasmania has a 50 per cent responsibility with a 50-50 split between both governments.

The Greens believe that we can do nothing without looking to the needs for future generations. The intergenerational burden of both debt and a deliberate approach to jeopardise response to climate change in a carbon constrained world leaves this state and its younger generation vulnerable, angry and swindled.

Earlier this month an extreme weather event caused significant flooding, power outages and stock and property damage across our state. Fortunately, no lives were lost. We must recognise the social, economic, psychological and environmental impacts of floods and fire. Extreme weather events leave scars.

With more frequent natural disasters and the ongoing clean up burden, we have to be prepared. The essential way to be prepared is to act in readiness of where we will have to continually divert funds and energy into recovery. We need a public sector into the future. That is not what this budget delivers.

We see reckless spending, a staggering lack of sensible prioritisation and raiding of under-resourced public services, with $300 million of efficiency dividends across the public sector until 2027-28. This is even down to the Integrity Commission and other statutory bodies being shortchanged. It is so short sighted. It creates less certainty for community services who are reliant on a strong public sector, and who may end up providing services the public sector cannot because they are scratching around to find that lazy $300 million across the board.

The efficiency dividend not only shifts the cost burden onto agencies on the front line of caring for community members - who may be vulnerable with housing insecurity, cost-of-living pressures, fleeing domestic or family violence - but it also shifts the burden onto local governments.

In the recent floods I referred to earlier, local government and emergency services were mopping up and clearing roads of fallen trees. TasNetworks, who refuse to pay their members anything near the equivalent of mainland counterparts, spent weeks on cleaning up activities from the wild weather. These events are becoming more frequent and until there is real action on climate change in a holistic sense, there will be constant reliance on, and exhaustion of any good faith with local government, community services and emergency services.

This is not a sustainable model in so many ways, not least of all financial. I extend the Greens' thanks to those who were so instrumental in that help during the most recent natural disaster.

In his speech, the Treasurer talked of resilience in the Budget, but what about preparing communities for repeat extreme weather events, for mopping up and repairing bridges and feeding and clothing people whose homes have been affected? It is happening more frequently, as our Hobart based climate scientists of international recognition have told us and warned us time and time again.

What we see instead is a huge appetite for big spending by this government, without cutting their cloth to suit the times. It is poor use of Tasmanian funds by the Treasurer and he has not taken the state down the path of preparing for the future. He has not prioritised the projects that are not only critical to Tasmania's future but for the security of the next generation's future.

I will speak now about the stadium. The Ferguson Budget does not honestly recognise the real cost of the stadium over the forward Estimates. We have seen the release of plans in the submission to the Tasmanian Planning Commission today. It does not account for inflated prices and how much mega projects really cost.

It takes no heed of the poor cost benefit analysis even from its own report of $0.50 benefit for every dollar spent because if it did take heed, it would abandon the project before accounting for roughly a fifth of the forward Estimates deficit.

In the shadow of the stadium, it is willful ignorance to not find housing solutions for all Tasmanians. If we are not going to reach the government's housing targets, and there is very little reason to think we will, how do we pivot in order to deliver homes, different housing models to do this? Tax empty homes, rein in short stay accommodation of whole homes, attract multi residential buildings in inner city, Burnie, Devonport, Launceston, Glenorchy and Hobart is where we should start and not drag our feet to create security for everyone and a roof over each and everyone's head starting now with these easy wins. With more Tasmanians in rental stress and without housing affordability people like Jane, of Moonah, who is paying about 40 per cent of her weekly income on rent, working two jobs to make ends meet and studying, see little in Mr Ferguson's Budget for her predicament. Jane certainly cannot envision buying her own home anytime soon.

The Tasmanian gender budget statement shows that there is a significant gender pay gap as well. While there are more women joining the workforce, those women are often more highly qualified, more women are underemployed and yet more women take home less pay and have less super than their male counterparts. The Greens want to see this urgently addressed. It is not good enough in 2024 to have this gender pay gap.

We want to introduce the portable long service leave, which would benefit those female dominated community sector workers, and to consider reproductive health leave, which would address some of the inequities we see in the workplace. We would also like to see the situation for our migrant communities rectified as well. It is a similar story. We see systemic discrimination that many migrants, and particularly refugees, face in this state. Until we can address that we will not be doing our work.

Many migrants have qualifications and are highly skilled but cannot access work. Some migrants face exploitation, but we need a strong migrant community and that can only enhance our broader community. More investment in this Budget would have been desirable even though dollars were welcome for events funding.

Public transport will need more love than the Minister for Transport presently cares to give it. Announcements in July of the rapid bus and transit corridor from Glenorchy to New Town have not made it to be funded to not only improve transport options for residents, students and workers alike, it also helps reduce traffic congestion. The Southern Outlet works for a fifth lane are a completely flawed concept. I do not think there is much money in the Budget for this anyway and the issue should be tackled differently by looking at how you move people, not how you build more expensive road. Having the buses and staff to move more people en masse is a better first-step solution: smarter and cheaper for the bottom line as well.

Road safety is linked to prudent spending. It is not safe around schools with car movements. We have seen a number of accidents involving our most vulnerable road users,

sadly one fatality in my electorate earlier this year, and I urge the government to address this by being clever about road safety action. Keeping our children safe around schools could be an easy step to increasing their safety but also fitness and connection reducing risk of exposure to air pollution from vehicles as well.

In summary, this Budget is not a budget in preparation for the future. We have a significant challenge on our hands. We need to consider a new approach to ensure that the cost-benefit analysis is properly measured from a social, economic and intergenerational perspective as well as environmental.

The Greens alternative budget is that approach. Finally, here is a challenge I put to the government. For next year's budget, let's have a citizen's assembly budget process. No, let us make it a young person's budget for those less than 35 years of age who can determine how they want to see us invest in their future. I am sure it would look vastly different from hocking the state for a billion-dollar stadium whilst watching our natural estate being napalmed for woodchips, stripped of biodiversity habitat and water catchments compromised.

[6.15 p.m.]

Mr GARLAND (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, there are two things the public expect from us: honesty and courage. Yet these are two things completely absent from this Budget. This is a dishonest budget. It uses unrealistic figures and it leaves a ticking time bomb of budget repair for the next government to try to defuse. It is a budget severely lacking in courage; the courage needed to address the ballooning deficit.

In preparing the speech, I went back to the *Charter of Budget Responsibility Act 2007* to see what fiscal principles are meant to be embedded in each state budget. I remind the Treasurer, budgets are meant to manage the state's finances responsibly for the wellbeing of all Tasmanians, provide for the future for the next generation of Tasmanians and prepare for unexpected events by building a robust financial position. In my view, this budget completely ignores these principles. This budget is not responsible. This budget saddles the next generation with impossible levels of debt.

In the words of Martin Goddard, borrowing to cover recurrent expenditure is ethically unacceptable. It represents intergenerational debt, forcing the Tasmanians of the future to pay for the bad management of the past. This budget has no provision for unexpected events. You cannot raid the piggy bank when it is full of IOUs.

This budget does nothing to change the frightening picture painted in the Eslake report of where the state is headed without substantial fiscal reform. The projection of a return to surplus is a Ferguson fantasy. The Treasurer says there is a plan to return to surplus, yet the closest he gets is claiming the annual net operating balance will be reduced to a deficit of $63 million in 2027-28 but even that involves some jiggery-pokery. It relies on the forecast fall in operating expenses of 2.4 per cent over three years, something that, according to Saul Eslake, has not happened in the last two decades. We know that the budget projections of this government in recent years have proved to be wildly optimistic, particularly in terms of expenditure.

The other problem according to Mr Eslake, is using the net operating balance as a measure of financial health. The net operating balance figure for a measure of the fiscal sustainability is very misleading. It is like what is left after paying the ordinary costs of living.

If it is a surplus, that is good, because that will mean that there will be something leftover to spend on fixing up the house which is falling down around our ears, but adding the costs of trying to fix up the house means there will not be enough cash. We will have to keep borrowing.

There is worse. We have promised a few errant family members assistance to help with their pet projects. One wants to build a stadium which he reckons will help us all. I am not so sure. I do not reckon many benefits will flow back into the family and we could be left with a big debt to service, the size of which is yet to still be determined.

There is another family member to whom we lent money to buy some new ferries. We recently had to hand over more because he was in danger of losing what he had already paid with nothing to show for it.

Then there is another family member who wants to build a huge transmission network, provided we back him because he needs to service all the debt he currently has. He even wants to build a new Marinus Link, provided someone else pays for it and electricity consumers pay the interest when it is up and running. I am not sure that is a good idea if we have to borrow funds and most of the benefits accrue to the users of the link, which would not cost them a red cent.

All these family members, and there are many more - I have just told you about a few - are needing us to borrow and give them funds. That is why the net operating balance figure is meaningless from a sustainability perspective. We might eventually get to a situation where we bring the cost of living under control and pretend we have discovered the Holy Grail of a surplus, but we will still be borrowing to fix up the house and to fund all the pet projects, which are not immediately obvious when one reads a set of budget papers.

I am not suggesting the government should not be spending more money on health or education or policing, or trying to ease the cost-of-living challenges faced by Tasmanians. However, based on what is recommended by the Grants Commission's assessment, we are spending about 7.5 per cent less than required to provide Tasmanians with a level of services equivalent to the average of all states and territories. We should be spending more on government services, not less.

I do not support efficiency dividends; very few people do. Even the Centre for Independent Studies says efficiency dividends have fundamentally failed to drive efficiency in the public sector. They allow the minister to sidestep important and difficult decisions to cut certain programs and instead passes the buck to the heads of agencies. As I said, this is a budget completely lacking in courage.

How can the Treasurer in good conscience force the Department of Health to find $130 million in savings when we are already hearing some of the horror stories coming out of the state's health system? As Labor pointed out, the amount spent in the Health budget will be reduced by $240 million in this year's budget compared with last year's expenditure. It stays below this amount right through the forward Estimates. When you include the CPI figures, it goes down even further. It goes down by 13 per cent over the forward Estimates. How will this do anything to fix the crisis in our emergency departments with patients having by far the longest wait times in the country?

I do not support forcing the department for Education to find $80 million over the next three years when on any metric, Tasmania is falling further behind the other states in educational outcomes - and fast.

These efficiency dividends will hang over the head of all department staff over the next three years like the sword of Damocles. It will destroy morale and as Saul Eslake said, 'It does the opposite of achieving efficiency'. If there are efficiencies to be gained or savings to be made, I agree with Mr Winter's proposal to update the Auditor-General's powers and provide them with sufficient funding to audit GBEs and infrastructure projects, like they are doing now with TasPorts. Maybe we can avoid some of these recurrent cost overruns.

I want to see honest and genuine conversations with the opposition and the crossbench about ways to fix this crisis, because that is what it is - a crisis. That means talking about ways to increase government revenue. If we do not start doing the hard work now to repair the budget, we will end up in a situation where in four or five years whoever is in government will have to take the sort of extreme steps taken in 2011-12. Is this a deliberate government strategy?

I understand budget repair of this magnitude is not going to occur in one budget. I understand the government needs time to fully consider the recommendations in the Eslake report. However, to come out straight after the report was delivered, as it did, and rule out any of the revenue-raising measures suggested by Mr Eslake was disheartening and irresponsible. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for latching on to some of the low-hanging fruit from the Eslake report by announcing he would end the irresponsible process of pork-barrelling.

It matters not that his party was just as fond of packing in the pork as those opposite him. It is important that he has decided to do something about it. He will have my support in this endeavour, as he will with some of the other measures he has adopted from the Eslake report as part of Labor's 10-point plan.

I will highlight some areas of the budget that I found particularly shameful.

On education: the government is investing in infrastructure, but not when educators leave, when teachers are crying out for more support or assistance in the classroom, when education standards are in freefall. That is shameful.

The Health Budget in real terms over the forward Estimates reduces by 11 per cent. That is shameful.

On the stadium: the AFL stadium, and Macquarie Point urban renewal of $355 million needs to be cut straight out of the budget, pure and simple. Tasmania simply does not need a new stadium. The $240 million projected to be spent in 2025-28 is not necessary expenditure. It can be cut. The project cannot be justified under the current economic climate. It is shameful.

On the Integrity Commission: the Attorney-General claims this budget provides a funding increase for the Integrity Commission. More jiggery-pokery. They get $200,000 worth of additional funding but this is more than wiped out by the efficiency dividends they will need to find. The funding is actually, in real terms, reducing over the forward Estimates. This is despite their desperate call for additional funding to be able to carry out their basic functions.

On the SLE Report 2025 Forward Section: there is a strong connection between a healthy environment and social, cultural and economic wellbeing. Protecting the environment means protecting the Tasmanian community and livelihoods now and for the future. However, in this budget the government is spending more on sports and events than they do on our parks and the environment. The funding for the environment over the next four years in real terms reduces by 12 per cent. That is also shameful.

On resources: both major parties implore businesses, including government businesses, to extract as much as they can from our natural resources. Despite what some people might say, I am not opposed to the resource industry, but it needs to be sustainable. What I am opposed to is the absence of any real revenue raised by the state government from the businesses using this resource - our environment - for their own profit.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania: we subsidise the operations of native forest logging in Tasmania. In the 2023 annual report, Sustainable Timber Tasmania reported the income from sales of forest products was $103 million, while the expenses of its operation were $124 million. The taxpayer tipped in $12 million last year to help offset their operating loss. That is a bad use of public money.

Salmon farms, an industry which the Premier says is worth $1.3 billion. The Australia Institute released a paper in November 2023, 'Small Fish, Big Pond', relying on Australian Tax Office data to show Tasmania's salmon industry appears to pay almost no company tax. The report also found that over the last nine years, the three main salmon farming companies in Tasmania - Tassal, Huon Aquaculture and Sealord Australia - paid $51 million in tax on sales of over $7 billion, an effective tax of 0.7 per cent on total income.

The Australia Institute claims all three companies paid no company tax in the last three years. In 2019, the Australia Institute estimated the licence and lease fees paid by the industry amounted to about $1.5 million, including an Environmental Protection Authority levy, about 0.1 per cent of the farm gate production of the salmon industry. In contrast, Norway, the largest salmon producer, auctions off leases in perpetuity that raised $468 million for the benefit of Norwegian citizens in 2018. The Australia Institute estimates that adopting a similar auction regime in Tasmania could return between $707 million and $2 billion to the state for all Tasmanians.

In their Salmon Industry Plan 2023, the government committed to recover from the industry the cost to regulate it. Although it is not full cost recovery and it does nothing to remediate the damage the farms are causing to our environment, it is a start.

The government, in the same plan, also committed to ensuring an appropriate return to the Tasmanian community from use of our land and marine waters. It was called value capture. Then along comes the 2030 Strong Plan 12 months later and, suddenly, salmon taxes are off the table and the financial models will not change. This makes me wonder: are salmon farms too big to tax?

Mining royalties: according to the State Grants Commission, there is a 40 per cent shortfall in mineral royalties compared to other states, which equates to $42 million per annum that we are missing out on.

I will mention the Tasmanian Threatened Species fund, which, according to the budget papers, builds on the work already underway to support conservation activities for priority species. This includes our captive breeding program for the Maugean skate, efforts to save the swift parrot and red handfish, the construction of the orange-bellied parrot captive breeding facility, and ongoing funding to continue the Save the Tasmanian Devil program. These species are being driven to extinction, at least in part by the extraction industries supported by this government - industries that do not contribute their fair share to government revenue but leave it to the state government to fund attempts to save the threatened species they are putting at risk. This is madness.

In conclusion, revenue raising requires cross-party support. Brave decisions need to be made, and they need to be made very soon. We can have quality hospitals and quality public schools, sufficient police on the beat, and roads without potholes. We can afford them without going into record debt if we look at revenue-raising measures. Revenue needs to keep pace with expenditure. It is pretty simple. Yet, according to this Budget, revenue growth, adjusted for inflation over the forward Estimates, will be outpaced by inflation growth, while, at the same time, the government is announcing a record $3.9 billion infrastructure spend and wants to pay for that spend with efficiency dividends, or as I prefer to call them, cuts to services.

We can have quality services without efficiency dividends or loading up the credit card, but we need to talk about revenue raising - an option neither of the major parties have mentioned, even though Mr Eslake made a very strong case for this in his report.

Treasurer, I remind you of what was said in your Budget summary:

> The 51st parliament is diverse and calls for a new way of working. That of working together in unity, with a common purpose, to deliver stable government and to make good decisions for Tasmanians.

We have nine months before the next budget to make brave decisions. You do not have to make them alone. Let us make them as a parliament, and if Labor will not support revenue-raising measures, come and speak to the crossbench.

I was very heartened to see the outcome last week when the member for Franklin amended a Labor motion to get a roundtable discussion about the Health budget. It is a great example of minority government working exactly as it should in a more collaborative way. For the sake of Tasmanians, I hope the Treasurer approaches the task of formulating the next budget in this collaborative way.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

[6.31 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honour Speaker, I move -

That the House does now adjourn.

Answer to Question - *Spirit of Tasmania* - LNG Refuelling Infrastructure

Answer to Question - Supercars Event - Scheduling Changes

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, on behalf of the Premier, I provide an answer to a question asked by the Leader of the Opposition. The answer is as follows.

I am advised that the first supply of LNG to be used from Tasmania will be delivered to the ships via road tanker, and the required facility and method of transfer is well progressed. I understand that this method is already utilised by SeaRoad at Devonport port. TT-Line continues to work with the Tasmanian Gas Pipeline to ensure continued LNG supply while the EOI process is underway.

Speaker, I further provide an answer to a question asked by Mrs Pentland taken on notice by Mr Street. The answer he has provided is as follows:

Regarding the Tasmanian Government's partnership with the Supercars, the Tasmanian Government's current partnership with Supercars is worth $5.6 million and supports the delivery of one round being held in Tasmania in 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. The 2020 event was cancelled due to the impacts of COVID. Contract negotiations for future years is underway.

The adjustment in dates was requested by the Supercars due to event clashes with both the Formula 1 Grand Prix and Paris Olympics, and how those clashes impacted their entire annual schedule. As a result, August was determined as the best date to proceed. The total event attendance for the 2024 Supercars event was 28,830. Compared to the prior year, overall attendance was down by 243 patrons, or 0.3 per cent, as the 2023 total event attendance was 29,073 - I have not checked the maths and percentages on that. This minor downturn is considered by organisers to be largely due to the weather. Even though the overall attendance was slightly down, interstate visitation to the event was slightly up. In 2023, 6063 interstate visitors attended the Supercars. In 2024, the number increased by 215, or 3.5 per cent, to 6278 interstate visitors. The event continues to attract significant visitation to the state, and the Department of State Growth is currently working through the partnership assessment for future years.

Launceston City Football Club

[6.34 p.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, it is five minutes now?

The SPEAKER - Five minutes now, for everyone's notice.

Mr SHELTON - Yes. I rise to pay tribute this evening to the Launceston City Football Club in Prospect Vale, at the northern end of my beautiful electorate of Lyons. I know that you were also there with us on Sunday, honourable Speaker. Recently, the club opened the new Peter Mies Pavilion and change rooms at the club grounds, which was well attended by members, players and patrons of the club.

The Launceston City Football Club is a well-known and well-respected soccer club which was formed in 1957 and established out of South Launceston in 1958 by Matteo Stossich and Frank Zelesco, forming under the original name of 'Roma'. Over the years, there were various name changes to the club as well as numerous home grounds until 1978, when the club, then named 'Juventus', moved to the Buckby Motors park at Prospect Vale, which is still the club's permanent base. The club has a rich past of notable players, coaches and members, each playing an important role in the changing 66-year history. Commencing in the competition in 1958 as a newly formed Juventus, the club quickly made a mark on the league. In 1959 they went through the league matches undefeated for 21 rounds, and took out the win in the Northern League Championships with a season total of 134 goals. Successive wins over the next three seasons from 1960-62 started the club's most successful era, with a further four Northern Premier League titles and awards in 1963, 1965, 1966 and 1967.

Over the years of the past the club has flourished. A stalwart of the club was Peter Mies, who in his 64th year affiliated with the club from 1960 onwards. Peter arrived in Tasmania in 1960 at the conclusion of his service with Dutch Mariners, and with his wife Christina by his side, Peter joined what was then Launceston Juventus. His association with the club was then sealed.

Peter was a devoted member of the club and was one of the main reasons the club was able to secure the land on which the club rooms operate today. When the club signed a contract of purchase, Peter put his family home up as collateral to secure the deal. Peter was also responsible for some of the major signings of club players. He was instrumental in signing ex-Leagues United player, Peter Saville, who is still active as a coach in Tasmania today.

The Meis families are the only Tasmanian families in which three generations - Peter, his son Roger, and his grandson Noah - have represented Tasmania in senior football. What a credit to a great family with a long and loyal history to the club.

Over the past years, plans have been drawn up, the wish list created and the funding commenced for the new club rooms and change rooms, and ground improvements to include more parking and an improved canteen facility.

I first met Peter when I was Mayor of Meander Valley Council in the early 2000s when they were discussing the club rooms' development there at that time. On 15 September, which was last Sunday, we saw the grand opening of the brand-new change room facilities named the Peter Meis Pavilion. The change rooms and amenities are the newest addition to the upgrades and are a welcome sight for club members and players.

Peter sadly passed away in May this year after a long association with the club. His 64-year involvement comprised of being a player, coach, president and patron. He was also made a life member of the club as thanks for his wonderful contribution over many years. To have a pavilion named after Peter was important to the club to retain its history and to recognise Peter and his family for the years of dedication to the club.

I was proud to be part of the opening ceremony of the Peter Meis Pavilion, and to see and look at the pride on the faces of his family and the members who attended the ceremony in his honour. I look forward to watching and continue -

Time expired.

The SPEAKER - With indulgence to the House, as Speaker I cannot make speeches but I will add my condolences to the family of Peter Meis. He was one of the loveliest humans and the stalwart of the club.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr SHELTON - A fantastic family and it was a lovely day on Sunday.

Patricia Kay McFarlane - Tribute

World Parking Day

[6.39 p.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - I rise to talk about two things. I start by paying tribute to Patricia Kay McFarlane who died on 12 September at the age of 72 with her family by her side. Kay was proud of her family and cared for them deeply. She was inspired by them to work passionately for change. I knew Kay as another Greens councillor. She served on Clarence City Council from 2005 to 2018 and was an active member of the party.

I will reflect on when she first - I do not know if you remember this, Rosalie, but when she was first putting her name forward to stand, her nomination form was, unfortunately, not lodged by somebody else. It was one of those things we see the Liberal Party in New South Wales doing at local government level as well. Be that as it may, it did not stop Kay. She was really feisty, very vocal and used very flowery language, but she was passionate about the environment and served her community well. She did it tough, but she worked with Cassy O'Connor MLC on Ralphs Bay. She also fought hard on making sure the Droughty Point skyline was protected and worked tirelessly on the tracks and trails committee. Kay was heavily involved in the Local Government Women's Association. She was president at one stage, in 2015. She also participated in many Tasmanian Greens and Australian Greens committees and served as our party state convener.

Vale, Kay McFarlane, you served us well.

Members - Hear, hear.

Ms BURNET - The other thing I will mention is that on Friday we are celebrating World Parking Day in the car park out the front. World Parking Day has been going for many years and it is tactical urbanism done really well. Fortunately, we have three car parking spaces given up by members Dr Woodruff, Ms Dow and Ms Badger, and we are going to transform that space and see what it could be. There will be a stump for stump speeches. It will be taking the House outside. If you are in the vicinity, please do come and spend some time between 10.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. for World Parking Day. It will offer a different way of how we use that space at the front of Parliament House.

Dr Woodruff - Will there be coffee?

Ms BURNET - There may be coffee. Well, there might be some soft drinks. We can organise that for you if you like. World Parking Day makes us think about how we use our common spaces. Quite often they are under tarmac and are used as car parks, but sometimes

we can change that narrative and make it a different space and a colourful space. I urge all members and staff to come and say hello.

Dementia Action Week

[6.43 p.m.]

Mr FAIRS (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise today to speak on a very personal matter of dementia, and I must thank my father for his blessing on this. I am passionate about raising awareness about dementia as my mum has been living with it for four years, so it is very close to my heart. Unfortunately, Mum's condition has deteriorated over the past 12 months and she is now in a specialised memory assist ward in Adelaide full-time, as of January this year. I sincerely thank the medical and carer staff at Mum's facility and others like it across Tasmania and the country for the tremendous work they do in trying, stressful circumstances, 24/7.

I will give you some background on dementia. It is a term used to describe a group of conditions where there is gradual impairment of brain function which may affect memory, speech, cognition, thought, personality, behaviour and mobility. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. There are many forms of dementia and people often have multiple types of dementia, known as mixed dementia. In Australia, dementia is a significant and growing health and aged care issue. In 2023, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimated 411,100 Australians were living with dementia, or 15 people with dementia per 1000; for people aged 65 and over, it is 84 people with dementia per 1000; and 63 per cent of Australians with dementia are women.

In Tasmania, it is estimated that more than 10,600 people are living with dementia in 2024. Consider the substantial impact on the Tasmanian community in terms of health, quality of life for people living with this brain condition, as well as their family, friends and carers. Based on my personal experience with Mum living with it, I was saddened to learn that the number of Tasmanians predicted to be living with dementia is set to increase to about 16,500 by 2054. Currently, there is no cure for dementia, but there are strategies that can assist in maintaining independence and quality of life for as long as possible.

Dementia Australia supports people living with dementia, their families and carers. The theme for this year's Dementia Action Week is 'Act Now for a Dementia-Friendly Future'. Everyone is encouraged to take the first step to learn more about it and how we can help shape our communities for the better.

Central to dementia-friendly communities is providing places of belonging for people living with it and people who support them. Dementia Australia suggests a dementia-friendly community might look like memory cafes or coffee mornings for people living with dementia and their families; choirs, walking groups, sporting clubs and social groups that are welcoming and inclusive of members with dementia; accessible areas with clear signage, seating or lighting to support independence when out in the community; volunteering and employment opportunities for people living with dementia; and accessible services for people with dementia, including having staff who understand and know how to communicate with people living with dementia.

The Tasmanian government, with the Commonwealth, supports dementia-friendly communities through joint funding of the Community Home Support Program, adult day

centres, counselling, in-home respite, personal care and allied health services. We can all help move towards dementia-friendly communities and a dementia-friendly future in Tasmania. You can take the first step by learning more about dementia at the Dementia Australia website or call the National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500.

Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan

[6.47 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, on Sunday 18 August I was honoured to attend a touching ceremony in commemoration of the 51st anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, one of the most significant conflicts for Australians who served in the Vietnam War. This year, in my role as patron of the Veterans Motorcycle Club, I was honoured to ride with the Vietnam veteran motorbike riders to lay a wreath at the New Norfolk Cenotaph. It was quite the experience. We then attended an AGM at the wonderful New Norfolk RSL before riding back to Hamilton. The veteran motorcycle community is a vibrant supportive group that brings together anyone who loves bikes and mateship. It has been especially hospitable to veterans seeking healthy outlets to combat PTSD or other mental health symptoms related to their time in the military. It is an honour to serve this group as a patron.

A huge thank you to President Brett White, Sergeant-At-Arms Ian 'Grumpy' Cox, Wazza, Adam, Vince and Peter Taylor for the opportunity to ride with you and lay a wreath paying tribute to all those who died and for all those who survived, and to show our respect for those who served and those who gave the ultimate service for our freedom.

I also recently visited the Brighton Green Ponds RSL in Kempton. The history display at the Kempton RSL is one of the best I have seen across the state. The club raises funds for the beautiful Kempton Primary School and the local church. The primary school utilises the RSL Hall for school assemblies, performances and classes. It was lovely to sit down with Milo, Mick, Caroline, Joy, Wayne, Peter, Michael, Lachie and Reno.

The Brighton Ponds RSL in Kempton will hold a military fair on 2 and 3 November at the RSL Hall on Main Road, Kempton, and all are welcome.

Dial Range Forestry Plans

[6.49 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, a few weeks ago I had the pleasure of visiting the beautiful Dial Range, south of Penguin, in north-west Tasmania. It was a joy to be there. The Dial Range is an icon for the north-west and offers multi-use recreational opportunities for a diverse range of locals and visitors. It is a compact range that runs north-south from the sea all the way up to the central tablelands. It is a set of hills with numerous walking and mountain bike tracks. It is a hub of so much of the recreational activity in the north of the range. This site's values were recently highlighted through the Dial Range Recreation Management Plan that was co-created by the Circular Head Council and Parks and Wildlife Tasmania. Also included was a $15 million pledge by the state government for major upgrades to three key reserves across the state to quote: 'enhance the visitor experience'.

Sad to hear that Forestry Tasmania has scheduled two coupes within this beautiful area. A total of 45 hectares that will be, according to their timetable, clear-felled in the ranges later this year. That is a 25-hectare coupe just south of Mount Duncan that targets eucalypt regrowth with some old growth scattered through it and the 45-hectare coupe.

How can this be? It is obviously at odds on the one hand with the tourism strategy for the area, and on the other hand with the Liberals' addiction to chopping things down - even beautiful, much loved areas like the Dial Range. One of those two coupes will directly clear across 200 metres of a pre-existing trail and it will be highly visible to other trails. The mountain bike tracks in the range are very well developed. There is a lot of investment and a lot of use. There are plans from the community to expand the track network farther south. The expansion that is planned in logging would threaten those tracks. The Dial Range mountains have been used for decades. There are tracks up Mount Dial, Mount Gnomon, Mount Montgomery and Mount Duncan.

When I was visiting this incredible place, I was lucky enough to meet Ash Bulgarelli, who is the founder of the Protect our North West Forest group. He has been at the front line of the campaign to save the ranges. He guided me and my staff member through the Dial with members of the north-west Aboriginal community and several local walkers. Protect Our North West Forests, along with the Wilderness Society, held a couple of events up in this area - forest open days - to raise awareness for the local community and to help stop the Dial Ranges being so mindlessly logged.

At one event that they hosted, 120 people came from the community, who walked six kilometres into the area. I thank the many local groups who were involved: the local Mountain Biking Group, the North West Walking Club, the Penguin Walking Club, the Launceston Walking Club, the Deloraine Walking Club and many of the locals: individuals not part of any club but who go there with their families because they love the place so much. Dial is uniquely special to them.

I also met Lyndon O'Neil when I was there, a local pakana man descended from Dolly Dalrymple from the north. He shared memories of his grandmother looking for a giant freshwater crayfish on country in the Legana/Leven River area. These days native crayfish are endangered because of overfishing and habitat destruction and degradation. That is a very sad thing, and something that the community are so keen to make sure does not happen to their beautiful creeks and the river that runs through them.

If the Dial Range is opened up to logging, then species like the giant crayfish are likely to continue to decline. There is no doubt that this is a mindless logging by Forestry Tasmania of that coupe. When we walk through it, it had no giant mature trees at all. It was a place that was a low-density rainforest, but there were massive ferns, enormous ferns. It is a wonder. It is a jewel so loved. It is a beautiful wet rainforest and the community will fight to keep it there.

Devonport - Top Tourism Town Honour

[6.54 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Children and Youth) - Thank you, honourable Speaker. I rise tonight to share with you all a few of the latest accolades that have been bestowed on my beautiful home region recently. Most notably I congratulate the City of

Devonport for its recognition as Australia's top tourism town for 2024 in the category for towns with a population of 5000 or more residents. Devonport was chosen from a field of successful tourism destinations including Bendigo, Roma and finalists Busselton, Kiama and Victor Harbour. Congratulations also go to perennial tourism award winner Stanley for its silver medal in the Tiny Town category. They are going to need a bigger pool room for all their awards.

Devonport's gold medal could not be a better endorsement of the vision that has transformed its CBD and the city's brand, over a decade of hard work and investment delivering the Living City Strategy. A very proud Devonport Mayor Alison Jarman has assured us that the award is just the beginning of more great things to come with new announcements about the city's development already on the way.

Devonport City Council has dared to change, innovate and invest to create new experiences and vistas for visitors and locals alike to enjoy, with support from the Tasmanian and Australian governments and most importantly, the support of their own community. This is no mean feat when you are talking about significant new investment in the immediate term with an aim of future growth and transformation for your city.

We understand that challenge and we commend the Devonport City Council for having the guts to do that. In July, the council put a cherry on top of the Living City Transformation by launching From Sky to Sea, which is a high-tech light and sound show that portrays the surrounding area from Cradle Mountain to the coast, where it ends with a dramatic storm in Bass Strait.

Another new high-tech experience in Devonport is the shipping simulator at the Bass Strait Maritime Centre, not far from the mouth of the Mersey River. The SS Woniora simulator, which depicts the lifeline that delivered goods across Bass Strait from 1926 until 1959, was launched last week and is already astounding visitors with its technology and realism as you pilot the SS Woniora into and out of the Devonport harbour.

Also, credit goes to Devonport City Council because every designer and technician, project manager, electrician and tradesperson who worked on that project is Tasmanian. A significant achievement shows that we can do anything when we commit to supporting local talent and businesses.

On the subject of maritime history, I also urge Tasmanians to visit the Maritime Centre to see a newly unveiled permanent exhibition that relates the stories of the earliest mariners, the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. For the very first time, Our First Mariners - Sea Country People has at its centrepiece a replica paperbark canoe handcrafted by respected elder Uncle Rex Greeno. It embodies countless generations of boat building and seafaring knowledge. The exhibition also features a video by local Aboriginal artist, leader and cultural practitioner Dave Mangenner Gough, who describes the First People's connection to Muka, the ocean and waterways. I congratulate Dave, Uncle Rex, coordinator Joanna Gare and the board of the Bass Straight Maritime Museum for their great and brave new investments.

Hospitality is another pillar of our tourism experience that will bring people to our region and back again. My electorate can now claim bragging rights to the best seafood restaurant in Australia, as well as the best whisky cream liqueur in Australia - in the world, to be to correct there. The ultimate accolade was for Hursey Seafoods - a Stanley seafood restaurant that was

named the best seafood restaurant in Australia at the National Seafood Industry Council Awards on 12 September.

The awards are judged not only on the restaurant itself but also the use of high quality, sustainably sourced seafood. The success belongs to the entire Hursey family business, including the cruise of its bright red fishing vessels, which are often visible from the restaurant itself.

Built alongside the Betta Milk Factory in 1997, the Hellyers Road Distillery has been awarded for its World's Best Whisky Cream Liqueur at the 2024 World Whiskeys Awards.

Come eat and drink and visit the beautiful north-west.

Time expired.

kunanyi/Mount Wellington

[7.00 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - I rise tonight to talk about kunanyi, more recently named Mount Wellington, which sits on the land of the muwinina. It was never ceded and its physical significance for those people was profound. It provided water, it provided resources and it was a background to their existence. Its spiritual significance also was omnipresent. It can be seen from a wide extent in southern Tasmania and it held significant spiritual significance for the muwinina people but the muwinina are no longer. They fell on invasion, and their hopes, aspirations and rights and claims endure through the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. Aboriginal people continue to strongly engage with kunanyi, including in the process to assess the cable car and the current process about the management plan.

Non-Aboriginal people truly love kunanyi as well, for its European cultural heritage, for its recreational scenic values and for their connection to place. It has natural values including incredible species like wedge-tailed eagles, habitat for swift parrots, the Tasmanian devil and bandicoots and more. It has world-recognised geoheritage and it is a significant catchment for the city of nipaluna/Hobart. It flows through our taps here. It is a special place. It is much-loved and it has many defenders. It has people who care very deeply.

The cable car a couple of years ago was a case in point. It is the eighth proposal since the early 1900s. All of those eight were rejected by Hobartians, and this latest one was absolutely no exception. There were over 16,000 people who made submissions to the Hobart City Council process; 71 per cent of them opposed it and ultimately the Hobart City Council rejected it in August 2021, nine votes to three. It was a profound decision and it was based on 21 grounds of expert advice - 21 grounds of non-compliance including geoheritage, visual impact, biodiversity, noise, forest clearance and more. The proponent exercised its right to go to TASCAT to appeal that decision and after a long and arduous process, TASCAT confirmed the rejection based on 18 similar grounds to above. The issue of a cable car for kunanyi/Mt Wellington measured against proper management and planning grounds has been determined, which is why I come to the budget allocation and what looks like some profound inequity within the Budget.

What has been set aside is $600,000 for an internal state government review to look at values management, to look at user experience and to look at administration. Its steering committee is the heads of government departments - State Growth, Premier and Cabinet, Treasury and Finance, Natural Resources and Environment - and it will report not to the minister of Parks - it will report to the Minister for Business, Industry and Resources.

We deeply share the scepticism of community that this is nothing more than a stitch-up to start to reshape the rules, to rewrite the plans and pave the way for a cable car up kunanyi/Mt Wellington and, if we needed no more evidence than that, on the day that it was announced, the local Liberal member for Clark tweeted a very cute emoji of a cable car when he announced the initiation of this internal review - $600,000, Speaker.

Meanwhile, the Budget has an ongoing contribution to the Wellington Park Trust every year of less than $400,000 per annum. That is the Wellington Park Trust, that does administration, they do important management roles and they are currently reviewing the management plan. kunanyi is a significant asset to Tasmania, not only a natural asset but an economic asset with 400,000 plus visitors - an incredible brand value for Tasmania, not only for tourism but also for beer. That is really significant.

The Budget also holds $300,000 for a business case, so this is going to the Wellington Park Trust for a self-sustaining management of Wellington Park. It will look at a range of options for Wellington Park and how it can sustain itself. So, there are inequities in that budget and we fear for ongoing development on kunanyi/Mt Wellington. It is doubling up in relation to the management plan.

Recently I met with residents at Fern Tree who are deeply concerned about a recent zip line proposal for kunanyi/Mt Wellington to run from the Springs to Strickland Falls. It crosses Pinnacle Rd, it crosses the tracks, it has noise, environmental issues, visual issues and parking issues and we are deeply concerned and share the concern of the community.

Time expired.

Homes Tasmania - Budget Estimates

[7.05 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Deputy Premier) - Honourable Speaker, yesterday the member for Franklin, Mr O'Byrne, asked me a question regarding the Homes Tasmania Budget chapter. I undertook to take the question on notice and I have sought further advice to update the House.

First, I acknowledge the important work that Homes Tasmania has been tasked with and the commitments that the government is making to our community under the 2030 Strong Plan to support the government's housing program to deliver 10,000 new social and affordable homes. The Budget supports our nation-leading housing authority, Homes Tasmania, with $56.9 million in additional funding to support the capital programs of Homes Tasmania, which sustains some $500 million worth of capital activity.

As the member and the House may be aware, Homes Tasmania is a public, non-financial corporation, and therefore it operates outside the general government sector. Strictly speaking, the government is not required to report on Homes Tasmania in the Budget papers, but we do.

That is because, during the debate on the legislation, and in the interests of transparency, the government committed to continue to report on housing services in the Budget papers and to answer questions relating to Homes Tasmania in the Budget Estimates committees.

In fulfilling this commitment, the 2023-24 Budget included a chapter on Homes Tasmania in part 4 of Government Services, Budget Paper No. 2. The 2024-25 Budget provides the same level of information within chapter 28 of Government Services, Budget Paper No. 2, which includes key deliverables and performance information on the Budget initiatives being delivered by Homes Tasmania, together with detailed Budget financial statements for Homes Tasmania.

I took a good look at this in preparing this further answer. Information on the government's contribution to Homes Tasmania, which is provided through an appropriation via DPAC to pay as a grant to Homes Tasmania, is outlined on page 293 of Budget Paper No. 2, in table 9.15. This shows $549 million in funding support to deliver on our commitments to improve housing and homelessness over the Budget and forward Estimates. Additional information on Homes Tasmania's financial performance and delivery of housing and homelessness outcomes is available in the Homes Tasmania annual report and the corporate plan.

The Tasmanian Housing Strategy 2023-43 and the Action Plan 2023-27, which are also published on Homes Tasmania website, provide more detail on the priorities and actions being progressed by Homes Tasmania. I am not sure I mentioned this in my written answer that I am providing to the House, but in looking at that chapter I also noted some detailed performance information also exists in that chapter. I point out that the government is currently progressing the establishment of an independent review of Homes Tasmania in response to the parliamentary motion that was carried by this House in July. I believe this represents an opportunity to establish, for members of the House and, for that matter, the public, a greater level of detail about Homes Tasmania's operations. That is something that I, the minister for Planning and Housing, and the government are prepared to engage with further.

In providing this answer, I hope it is a useful response to Mr O'Byrne's question of yesterday, and I trust that the answer is of assistance.

Vocational Training Awards

[7.09 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Skills and Training) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to celebrate the incredible learners, businesses, organisations and training providers who we celebrated at the recent training awards. This is Tasmania's night of nights for celebrating all things vocational education and training. There are so many amazing people in this sector - hands-on, practical people who do essential work in our economy and our community. They are the people who build our homes, provide our food and care for our loved ones, and do so with an ethos of hard work and getting the job done. We celebrated a range of extraordinary people.

First up, in terms of training providers and industry, the Small Training Provider of the Year was Athena Training Academy in Hobart; the Large Employer of the Year was Nexus Inc at Dowsing Point; the Small Employer of the Year was Howrah Plumbing in Hobart - a big

shout-out to our plumbers, of course - the Industry Collaboration Award was won by Bethlehem House who run the Civil Job Start program in Hobart; and then a range of very special awards for individuals who have gone above and beyond as part of their journey. It was so telling on the night to see the emotion with which the winners spoke about just how much their journey has meant to them.

That is the thing about vocational education and training: it is a pathway to hope and opportunity, to a better life. It is something that with a little bit of support, almost any Tasmanian can take part in. It can really transform the opportunities in their life.

The Equity Vocational Student of the Year was Jennie Garland from the north-west. She studied a Certificate III in Individual Support Disability with Avidity. She is an incredible woman. I was so touched with the way that she spoke about the support that she had from her family, particularly her hubby, whom I remember she said believed in her even when she did not. I think that is so telling of the amazing people that wrap their arms around our learners as they go through these journeys.

The Equity Apprentice Trainee of the year was Ryan Frosi, Certificate III in Heavy Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology with the amazing TasTAFE, our public training provider. Ryan is from King Island, and a big shout-out to him making it happen. The Vocational Education Trainer Teacher of the Year was Renee Hinds from the Department of Education, Children and Young People at Don College in the north west. In case anyone thought that this was a bit of a ministerial stitch-up to support all of the people in Braddon, the Vocational Education and Training in Schools Student of the Year was Connor Maguire from the south of Tasmania, with a Certificate II in Tourism through Elizabeth College.

The Vocational Student of the Year, a very important award, was Andrew Bartlett from the north west, a Certificate III in Individual Support Disability, again with Avidity Training. I pay a big shout-out to them. They were actually at the National Awards that we held in South Australia a couple of years ago. They are doing wonderful things.

The School-based Apprentice of the Year was Aleira Chalker with a Certificate IV in Business with Scala, the training company, and Hobart City High School, Big Picture. Even more importantly, she was employed in the other place, at the Legislative Council. I particularly thank the Legislative Council for providing such a wonderful opportunity for a school-based apprentice to learn her craft and be part of our democracy. Perhaps it might be something that the House of Assembly could learn from too.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year was Harley Mansell, who did his Certificate III in Guiding with TasTAFE. The Trainee of the Year, a very big and important award was Imogen Tyers, a Certificate III in Business. She is from the north-west and did her work with Work and Training and KEEN Partners. She is hosted by Seasonal South and Due South, which is an amazing organisation that is providing such incredible support to our veterans and our first responders based in Ulverstone. They are truly nation-leading with the work that they do. The Apprentice of the Year was Benjamin Barker, Certificate III in Heavy Vehicle, Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology with TasTAFE and Veolia Services as well.

I pay tribute to all those extraordinary people, and to celebrate a wonderful night.

Time expired.

The SPEAKER - The minister's time has expired. Are there any further contributions in the adjournment? There being none, I will put the motion to the House to now adjourn.

The House adjourned at 7.14 p.m.