



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 8 March 2022

REVISED EDITION

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Tuesday 8 March 2022

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

QUESTIONS

MyState Bank Arena - Redevelopment Costs

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.02 a.m.]

When the Public Works Committee approved the redevelopment of the MyState Bank Arena in 2020, they were assured the state contribution would be capped at \$41 million. They were told any construction costs beyond this amount would be entirely borne by the proponents. However, last February it was announced that construction costs had blown out by \$20 million, and \$15 million of this would be paid by the state. Was the additional expenditure, which was apparently expressly ruled out in the original agreement, approved by Cabinet?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. I will begin by acknowledging all women on International Women's Day. I know my newest minister, Ms Ogilvie, will ably be representing the Government today at a range of functions and I am sure she will do a very good job.

Like many projects, at the moment we are finding that building costs have gone up - whether you are building a house or a stadium. That is simply an unfortunate fact of the times that we are in at the moment.

I signed off on this project, on advice from State Growth. It then forms part of the Budget, which all members of this place have the opportunity to peruse and to ask questions about.

Mr Kestelman has again made it perfectly clear today that the terms associated with the construction of MyState Arena - and I make this point again because it is an erroneous one that was made last week -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker. It goes to relevance - standing order 45. I ask you to direct the Premier to the question, which was whether that additional expenditure of \$15 million went through the Cabinet?

Mr SPEAKER - I take the point of order. However, simply standing up on a point of order and reissuing the question is interjecting on the Premier. The Premier had only been contributing in his answer for less than a minute. I will hand back to the Premier and ask him to continue.

Mr GUTWEIN - The point I have made is that I signed off on matters associated with the contracts for the development of MyState Arena, on advice from State Growth.

Last week, erroneously, on that side of the House, you claimed that the JackJumpers somehow have been the benefit of \$100 million-worth of funding from the state Government. That demonstrates your lack of understanding of public finance. It also demonstrates your willingness to trash the brand of an organisation that is doing great things for this state, for junior basketball and in putting us on the national stage.

We own the stadium. We paid Glenorchy City Council \$8 million for it. It sits on our balance sheet. It is not owned by the JackJumpers. I acknowledge that costs have gone up, but that asset will sit on the state's balance sheet for the next 100 years.

Ms DOW - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 45, relevance. The Premier has been on his feet for a significant period of time, and he has not answered the question.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, I have answered the question that I signed off on advice from State Growth.

Jane Howlett MLC - MyState Arena - Alleged Conflict of Interest

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.06 a.m.]

Did the former Minister for Sport and Recreation declare a conflict of interest in relation to the additional expenditure for the redevelopment of the MyState Bank Arena? Did she excuse herself from all discussions and decisions related to the expenditure?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. Ms Howlett has denied the rumours and the allegations. When put directly to her by me, she denied them. No conflict of interest exists. Regarding the state's investment in MyState Bank Arena, we own the asset. I could not be any clearer than that.

COVID-19 - Wearing of Masks - Relaxation of Rules

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.07.a.m.]

We have had high daily COVID-19 case numbers, 700 to 1000 for more than a week. More than 51 000 Tasmanians have already been infected, including upwards of 2000 young people. Schools have been reeling under constant outbreaks. Tasmania is in the middle of rampant COVID-19 transmission, but last Friday you announced the end of universal mask wearing in retail settings.

Your whole COVID-19 Public Health response now relies on having a population fully vaccinated. However, no children under 12 are fully protected with the minimum two doses, and one in three Tasmanians over 16 have not had a booster. Universal mask wearing is a baseline protection during an airborne virus epidemic. You have chosen to remove this

requirement. Will you release the unredacted advice from the director of Public Health that you used to make your decision?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for that question. Unlike other premiers in other jurisdictions, I have not distanced myself, nor the Government, from the advice we have received from the director of Public Health. In other jurisdictions, as you would be aware, they have legislated to ensure that the Premier can make decisions without taking into account Public Health advice.

Every step of the way, we have acted on Public Health advice. On Friday when we stood up and made this announcement, Public Health was with us and provided support and advice on the day. The Public Health advice is very clear: that we could gradually look to remove mask wearing.

We have started with the lowest risk settings in retail. We have flagged that this Friday, subject to Public Health advice, we may take another step which would include cafes, restaurants and possibly offices. I do not need to release Public Health advice because the acting director of Public Health, or the deputy director, Mr McKeown, in Dr Veitch's absence, who was not with us on Friday, provided that advice directly at the press conference, as we have done every step of the way. That differentiates the way that Tasmania, and I as Premier, have managed our way through the pandemic. Other premiers have dislocated themselves from public health. We have, every step of the way, been with Public Health, and through all of these decisions, Public Health has been there with us to support and provide advice and answer questions.

Where the member wants to go, all I can presume is, as they did disgracefully over the late December and January period, they want to attack Public Health. The deputy director of Public Health is on the record last Friday regarding the steps we are taking. I refer the member to that tape.

Securing Tasmania's Future - Economic Performance and Job Creation

Mr TUCKER question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.11 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on Tasmania's strong economic performance and our plan to create jobs and opportunities that grow our economy and secure Tasmania's future.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Tucker for that question and his interest in this very important matter. Last week I said this Government is an aspirational government. It is an aspirational government that believes in Tasmania, and believes that we should all aspire for more, for better. We believe that our economy can be nation-leading. We believed it, and it is. Jobs can be created here and we can provide people with a better and more fulfilled life, no matter where they live, their circumstance, or their background.

Last week's ABS data on state final demand found that over the years through the December 2021 quarter, state final demand grew a massive 5.8 per cent. I do not believe that it has ever got anywhere near that since I have been in public life. In 2021, state final demand hit a record \$39.7 billion. Over the year business investment was up by 13 per cent. Household consumption was up 4.5 per cent. In January, retail trade grew 0.7 per cent to more than \$653 million, demonstrating the confidence of Tasmanians and visitors. Trade in our cafes, restaurants and catering sector is now 41.6 per cent higher than January last year.

Our exports sector is at record highs, hitting \$4.7 billion in the 12 months to January. That is a 23 per cent increase. When businesses are confident they invest, they hire. The beneficiaries of this are Tasmanians and the jobs they create. Employment is at near-record levels. Who would have thought we would have a 3.8 per cent unemployment rate in this state.

Ms Butler - Oh, come on.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms Butler.

Mr GUTWEIN - Right across the state, no matter what the purveyors of doom on that side of the House point to, in every region we have more jobs than we had before the pandemic. We are unashamedly pro-jobs on this side of the House. Unashamedly we want to support Tasmanians to have the skills and training they need to get those jobs.

The Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme has been a great initiative of this Government. For two years it supported trainees and apprentices and for one year, youth employees. It is a policy that has underpinned training and development and also provides young Tasmanians with the opportunity to work. Last year the rebate supported 2945 apprentices, trainees and youth employees and so far this financial year it is supporting 2335.

I am pleased to announce that the Government is going to extend this scheme for a further two years to 30 June 2024 and legislation will be tabled today to put that into effect. Assuming a similar uptake over the next two years, we should see around 6000 trainees and apprenticeships and young people supported. The scheme will be available across all industries as we grow our economy across every sector.

Because of our strong economy and the strong economic management we have been providing, we are able to invest in the services and infrastructure that Tasmanians need and a bold vision for the state, which is what we announced last week, unlike the Opposition Leader, who spent 40 minutes whingeing and carping. We announced a \$1.5 billion plan for housing -

Mr SPEAKER - If you could wind up, Premier, please.

Mr GUTWEIN - We announced over \$1 billion over the next 10 years in infrastructure spending and investment for health and we also announced our new Housing Market Entry Program which will be a game-changer, getting Tasmanians off the rental roundabout but importantly also enabling more Tasmanians to get their first step onto the property ladder.

I know that the other side of the House does not like to hear all the good things we are doing. I know that they are more interested in rumour and innuendo, but on this side of the House we remain firmly fixed on ensuring that we grow the economy, ensure that there is confidence in it and create jobs.

Women in Sports Bill - Government Position

Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for WOMEN, Ms OGILVIE

[10.17 a.m.]

As the minister is aware, today is International Women's Day, the day when we are asked to imagine a gender-equal world, a world free of vice, stereotypes and discrimination, a world that is diverse, equitable and inclusive, a world where difference is valued and celebrated. Today we are called to work together to forge women's equality.

Sadly, though, for trans women there is not much to celebrate, as they are under attack from Senator Claire Chandler's divisive, hurtful and utterly unnecessary women in sports bill. The Premier and the Sport minister have both recently said that they do not support Senator Chandler's bill. Will you now also add your voice as Minister for Women condemning this bill? Will you stand up and defend the rights of all women, both trans and cis?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. The Premier has been very clear on this topic and he has spoken for the Government. I am part of the Government and I concur with his statement.

I am very excited to be here for my first International Women's Day as the Minister for Women. The Tasmanian Government is committed to ensuring that all women and girls in Tasmania feel safe and have the opportunity to fully participate in our economic, social, political and community life. As I look around this Chamber I see good Tasmanian female politicians and I would like to acknowledge everybody in the Chamber today on that score.

To date we have the Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-21 which has been guiding the Government's agenda to support women's equal access to opportunity in our state. A number of action plans were released under the previous strategy and it is very pleasing and encouraging to see the results of these having an impact in our community. There are programs for upskilling women to take up jobs in the building and construction industry, apprentice programs opening now targeting female apprentices - and we will have more to say on that today - scholarships for leadership programs and significant initiatives and partnerships under the safety, health and wellbeing priorities of the strategy.

As the new Minister for Women I am very much looking forward to meeting stakeholders in coming weeks who are already delivering outcomes with the support of the Tasmanian Government, but the world has changed enormously since the last strategy was launched in 2018. I think this is an appropriate time to acknowledge our sisters in Ukraine and Afghanistan who need additional help and support. I certainly will continue my focus on fairness and equality for all Tasmanian women, particularly refugee and migrant women.

As I have said, the last two years in particular have been very challenging. One of my priorities in this portfolio will be steering the new strategy through the final stages. I would like to acknowledge the work of the previous minister for women, Jane Howlett, and also Jacque Petrusma, who have both done a power of work in this area. I hope to continue carriage of this portfolio in a sensible manner.

The next iteration of the strategy, the Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-2027, is an opportunity to look forward, to look at what we have done well and what we can do better to support women and girls in Tasmania now. I look forward to updating the House on its progress in coming weeks.

Jane Howlett MLC - Alleged Conflict of Interest

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.21 a.m.]

Did the former Minister for Sport and Recreation ever declare a conflict of interest during Cabinet processes?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question but I am not going to speak about Cabinet processes. The Leader of the Opposition understands the reasons for that. She was a member of Cabinet once, for a short period of time. The Leader of the Opposition seems to want to go on with this spurious and disgraceful attack on the former minister.

Last week I made it perfectly clear that when these matters were raised with my office I raised them with the minister. The minister was quite clear in her rejection of the rumours and the allegations. Unfortunately, Ms Howlett resigned because of personal and family reasons following the tragic death of her brother.

The Leader of the Opposition is aware of that, but it did not stop her last week coming into this place and misleading the parliament on a number of occasions and, in fact, making up and stating categorically that Mr Brookhouse was even here in this parliament last Wednesday. She sent out Mr Willie to mislead in the reasons why Mr Brookhouse attended parliament late one night last year, even though the text that was sent by Mr Brookhouse completely explained the circumstance, which was that he was there to see Mr Willie to provide corporate material to Mr Willie for his children. The Leader of the Opposition wants to go on with this because she has nothing. She talks about integrity -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker, under standing order 45. It was a very simple question directed to the Premier. I ask you to ask him to answer the question. Were any conflicts of interest declared by Jane Howlett during the Cabinet process? I remind the Premier - through you, Mr Speaker - that in the past you have spoken about these things, and I remind members who have Airbnbs that those matters were discussed.

Mr SPEAKER - Taking a point of order is not a chance to have another debate. The Premier has the call.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition still has untold numbers of questions to be answered by herself irrespective of what she knew about the circumstances of Mr O'Byrne, the fact is that she had before her advice of a complaint when she supported the ascension of Mr O'Byrne to the leadership. Then, because she was publicly caught out, she tore him down - as did Ms Haddad. They knew what they were doing. They have questions

to answer on matters of integrity. The Leader of the Opposition sets such a low bar it would not even be a trip hazard.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, silence in the Chamber.

COVID-19 - Numbers of Cases in Schools

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, CHILDREN and YOUTH, Mr JAENSCH

[10.25 a.m.]

Yesterday you were out trumpeting the next stage of your Back to School Plan. Last week you reported 1703 school children were COVID-19 positive. Some 1300 of these are in primary school and are wholly unprotected. They have been exposed to the risk of potentially serious and disabling long-COVID-19. Nearly 70 teachers were also off work, COVID-19 positive or a close contact.

Despite this, your dystopian plan claims it has been a successful start to the term. Not a single measure in your forward planning is different to the hopelessly inadequate protective measures you have used so far to keep our children safe. There is no plan to expand ventilation upgrades and no plan for outdoor learning areas in winter. How are you going to manage these fresh air spaces when it is freezing cold and driving rain?

Will you commit to releasing daily figures of the number of COVID-19 cases in primary and high schools, and to releasing a real plan for term 2 that provides for safe air spaces in classrooms and protection for children?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for the many questions embedded in her preamble speech. I can update the House on the latest figures I have for Tasmanian Government schools as at Friday 4 March. Of our 60 000 students in Tasmanian Government schools, less than 3 per cent - 1747 - are known as COVID-19 cases. Pleasingly, well over two thirds of those students are actively engaged in learning from home through our virtual learning centre and supported by our staff. Of our staff, less than 1 per cent of teachers in our schools are home, away from the class room, with COVID-19.

As we have said before, we have over 1700 on our reserve list - people ready to step up into those roles as they are needed - to ensure we can continue providing education face-to-face in safe places in our schools. As the Premier has outlined we continue to work very closely, and have done since day one, with public health and alongside public health. When we come to make announcements, like the one I did yesterday at Bowen Road Primary School, I have Public Health experts alongside me and we invite the media to ask them questions and they provide answers directly to Tasmanians through the media. We are not hiding them. We are not changing their words. We are not keeping them, as I think you said, in a cage. They are directly informing our decisions and our tactical steps and, in the case of my announcement yesterday, our COVID-19 safe schools operational plan.

As we know, sadly, COVID-19 is moving through our community. There is transmission of COVID-19 in our community. Nobody likes that, we did not ask for it and our job is to deal with it.

Our children live in the community, and they come to school. Our job is to make our schools as safe as we possibly can. Our Public Health officials consistently advise that schools, and the way we have them set up, are the safest places for our kids to be. In a community where there is community transmission of COVID-19, we are providing a place for those children where we guarantee that all the adults they come in contact with are vaccinated; where there are Rapid Antigen Tests available for every school that are replenished as they are used; there is an unlimited supply of testing, to ensure they can respond to the onset of symptoms and they can determine if they have a positive case, they can take action to keep their kids at home, and out of the school. Everybody is relying on everybody doing the right thing, and it is working.

There are facemask requirements for all adults and all students over 12 years of age in our schools. There are strict hygiene practices and protocols for COVID-19-safe behaviour in our schools, including the provision of additional hand soaps, sanitizers and other products that assist to keep them safe.

There are frequent cleaning regimes in place. I particularly want to mention the cleaning staff in our schools across the state, who have stepped up to take on additional cleaning duties to ensure our schools are meeting the requirements set down by public health for keeping them safe spaces. Ventilation - natural airflow is being maximized across our schools. Air purifiers - 4500 of them - have been deployed to our schools. The vast majority - I believe the figure from yesterday well over 93% - of windows in our perimeter classrooms are fully operative. Each school site has been provided with a carbon dioxide monitor, supporting guidelines and advice from occupational physicians on how to use them so that we can continue to measure the adequacy of airflow and ventilation in our learning spaces.

Mr SPEAKER - If you could wind-up please, minister.

Mr JAENSCH - We are actively investing in more outdoor learning spaces for our children, we are ensuring physical distancing, particularly for our adults and we are managing our sites, entries and exits. We are minimising mixing of groups of students in our public schools, for example, by not resuming whole school assemblies, but dealing with the sharing of information and the celebration of achievements of our students through other means. We are doing everything we can, and we are following all guidance that we are given by Public Health, to make our schools the safest places they can be.

In finishing, I thank all the teachers, the principals, the staff of our schools, the parents and the students in our schools, for following the guidelines and the rules we have set down to keep our schools as safe as they can possibly be. It is a great relief to see the curve of increases in cases in our schools flattening - as we expected it to - at week five, and we look forward to that plateauing continuing. As Public Health has previously indicated, they expect those case numbers in our schools to be tapering off from this high point.

Conflicts of Interest - Declarations

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.33 a.m.]

There is a clear pattern of behaviour emerging that points to a culture of cover-up in your Government. You said you were satisfied when Adam Brooks told you there was nothing to see. We have seen you rely on the same defence of ignorance when it comes to alleged conflicts of interest by your ministers. Since you became Premier, on how many occasions have your ministers declared a conflict of interest in accordance with the ministerial code of conduct?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. My ministers will always appropriately declare conflicts of interest. When I approached Ms Howlett about these rumors, she was categoric in her denial of them,

Ms White - Just like Adam Brooks was?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - In terms of that interjection, I put the question to those relevant members. Did you put the question to Mr O'Byrne when you had the complaint before you, when you promoted Mr O'Byrne? When you supported him in your party work, and you had that matter before you, did you put the question? As I have said, on matters of integrity, the Leader of the Opposition sets the bar so low that she does not even create a trip hazard.

There are matters in this place that the Leader of the Opposition needs to clear up in terms of last Wednesday and her claims on the Thursday in respect of Mr Brookhouse's arrival here at the place on that day. You say that he was here. Who provided you with that advice?

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Who did you have wandering around the parliament trying to find mythical Mr Brookhouse? Was it the member who is not in his seat today?

Opposition members interjecting.

Ms White - What about what you said about what happened in the upper House? You haven't corrected the record.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms White.

Mr GUTWEIN - Your position on this is unravelling and your credibility is in tatters.

Mr Speaker, I make the point that it appears that the member wants to damage the JackJumpers brand and that is shameful.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I take personal offence to what the Premier has just accused us of. We have not mentioned them once in questions today. These are questions about the integrity of this Government and the integrity of your leadership. I ask the Premier to withdraw.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Premier, but the member has taken offence.

Mr GUTWEIN - She has taken offence to what?

Ms White - You saying that we are trying to damage the JackJumpers. This is about your integrity.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, my evidence of that is the fact that Mr Kestelman felt that he needed to come out and put on the public record matters to clarify the circumstances created by the Labor Party. So, no, I will not be withdrawing that, because we have private individuals who are now issuing statements to clarify matters that have been raised by the Labor Party.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, her case and the position she has been putting is in tatters, it has unravelled. Last week she stooped to misleading this place -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. It is International Women's Day. Perhaps the Premier could stop referring to the Leader of the Opposition as 'her' and 'she' repeatedly. I find it offensive.

A member - Are you serious?

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, I am.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition's position on this is unravelling. The Leader of the Opposition last week stooped to the point where she misled this parliament on a number of occasions to try to stand her case up, and quite clearly it is a full-frontal attack on the JackJumpers, demonstrated by the fact that Mr Kestelman has felt that he needed to come out publicly this morning and issue a statement to clarify matters which have been raised by the Leader of the Opposition.

Tasmanian Government Support for Women and Gender Equality

Mr ELLIS question to MINISTER for WOMEN, Ms OGILVIE

[10.38 a.m.]

With today being International Women's Day, can you please update the House on the work of the Tasmanian Government to support Tasmanian women and girls to fully participate

in our political, economic, social, community life, and what is the Tasmanian Government doing to support gender equality in Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Ellis for his question. Today is International Women's Day and I am honoured to be standing here as Minister for Women. International Women's Day is an important opportunity for us to celebrate women's successes, reflect on our progress and consider the actions we need to take to create a more equal future.

The theme of International Women's Day for 2022 is 'Break the Bias', which is a bold vision indeed. Gender equality is good for everyone. Societies with greater gender equality have stronger economies, healthier populations, lower reporting of violence against women and higher levels of female education and workforce participation.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to creating a more inclusive Tasmania that empowers and enables women and girls to fully participate in our economic, social, political, and community life. The vision that is outlined in our Tasmanian Women's Strategy is for Tasmanian women and girls to live in a safe community, have access to equal power, resources and opportunity and to be treated with equal respect and fairness. It is a priority of this Government that Tasmanian women and girls are empowered to access the opportunities they need to participate in all aspects of society and, importantly - and this really speaks to me - to be economically secure, to be safe and to be healthy.

I strongly believe that when one woman rises, we all rise. We are supporting women to rise in many different ways and one of those is through the Women in Leadership Scholarship or Diversity Governance Scholarship. It is a very good thing. It is my great pleasure to announce today that the Women in Leadership Scholarship program is now open for applications for the 2021-22 program. This year there are 10 scholarships on offer for Tasmanian women, seven foundation directorship courses and three company director courses. The purpose of the scholarship is to increase the governance and leadership skills of women in Tasmania and to support women's appointments to government, private and not-for-profit boards.

There is substantial evidence that having women in leadership provides significant benefits to government, private and community sectors. Equal representation in leadership allows women to influence decisions which affect their lives, further narrow the gender pay gap and realise their full potential, but more importantly it goes to the point that you need leadership to see where you can head in life and to date, 87 women have received a scholarship through the Women in Leadership Scholarship program. These women come from a range of industries including community services, agriculture, health and fields in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics or STEM space, where I got my start.

This program has been so successful that we have doubled and extended the funding we provide to the program with \$100 000 per year now committed until 2025. Information about the scholarships is available on the Communities Tasmania website and I really encourage Tasmanian women who are interested to apply.

I am excited about these programs and the positive outcomes they can bring for all Tasmanian women. It is more important now than ever that opportunities for women and girls

are front and centre in our vision for a stronger, more resilient Tasmania. With the new Women's Strategy we have an opportunity to reflect on what has worked well, women's participation at home - as a mother of three I understand the balance - within the community and at work and how it is changing, and what further steps we need and will take to create positive outcomes for women and girls.

Conflicts of Interest - Declaration

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.43 a.m.]

The ministerial code of conduct sets a very low threshold for potential conflicts of interest to be declared. It gives the example that a minister proposing to reduce boat licence fees should declare a conflict of interest if they also happen to own a boat. Is this test being met on your watch?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I said, ministers declare conflicts of interest where they need to. I have made that perfectly clear. You have been banging on now for 10 days about a conflict of interest. It is time that you put your proof out there for everyone to see. If you have proof, you should lay that before this House or, at the very least, release it publicly. What is unfortunately happening here -

Ms White - Is that your signature?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - For some reason the Leader of the Opposition is fixated on destroying Ms Howlett. Ms Howlett left the ministry under very sad circumstances - for personal and family reasons - but the Leader of the Opposition wants to continue with this matter. I say to the Leader of the Opposition if you have proof, you should put it up.

JackJumpers - Role of Minister

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for SPORT and RECREATION, Mr STREET

[10.45 a.m.]

What role do you have in managing the ongoing relationship with the JackJumpers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question. My role as Minister for Sport and Recreation is to drive participation at the grassroots level across the state. My role with the Tasmanian JackJumpers is the same as it is with any other state sporting organisation, or any sporting organisation that I speak to. We want to make sure that any elite content that we bring to Tasmania, or any teams we have in national competitions that are based in Tasmania are

driving participation in that sport. That is what I will do, not only with the JackJumpers, but with every state sporting organisation.

Family Violence Laws

Mr TUCKER question to ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Ms ARCHER

[10.46 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Tasmanian Government is protecting and supporting Tasmanian women by strengthening our family violence laws?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons, Mr Tucker, for his question and his interest in this very important issue. Action to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence is an absolute priority for the Government. We are committed to ensuring that all Tasmanians feel safe and supported in their home, at work, in the community and that perpetrators are held to account. Violence in any form is not acceptable. Unfortunately with family and sexual violence, we know that while men can be victims the majority of victim/survivors are women and their children.

Our Government is strengthening Tasmania's legal responses to family and sexual violence, which will result in greater support and protection for victim/survivors, and increase our ability to hold perpetrators to account. In light of this week containing International Women's Day, which provides the opportunity to celebrate the achievements and promote equality for women around the globe, I would like to recognise the importance of our role as members of parliament that we empower and support Tasmanian women through our justice system. To achieve this aim I have had a clear focus on progressing an extensive law reform agenda, to further protect and support survivors and victims of crime.

I am pleased to announce that today I will be progressing the next stage of reforms that will build upon this work and further strengthen our family violence laws, by tabling the much anticipated Criminal Code Amendment Bill 2022. This bill delivers on our strong commitment to the Tasmanian community in the 2021 election to create a standalone offence to criminalise non-fatal strangulation, choking or suffocation. I have prioritised the development of this important reform in recognition that these dangerous acts are a significant form of violence, which can unfortunately be a precursor for escalation in the severity of family and sexual violence.

We have also considered recent reforms in other jurisdictions such as the ACT and Victoria, to look at whether improvements to our consent laws were needed. While our consent laws are already very strong, we are further strengthening them by including amendments to expressly address conduct that is known as stealthing. Stealthing is a form of sexual assault. As the work done in other jurisdictions has demonstrated, unfortunately there is evidence that the practice is far more common in our community than is acceptable. While the criminal behaviour of these amendments addressed can be prosecuted under existing laws, our Government is mindful of the significant value that specific targeted offences can have in providing greater clarity about the legal status and in increasing community education and

awareness. This leads to positive flow-on effects regarding reporting and prosecuting offences, therefore providing further support to victim/survivors.

Our amendments will make prosecution against this type of behaviour easier. That is why, to support this important reform, we will also be rolling out a community education and awareness campaign, to ensure that we send a clear and strong statement about the seriousness of these crimes. Specific recognition of stealthing and the law will help educate the public and discourage would-be offenders, as well as empower more who have experienced stealthing to come forward and can access advice and support.

I have also prioritised the Family Violence Reforms Bill, which was out for public consultation at the beginning of this year to make a series of amendments to the family violence legislative framework. These important reforms aim to reduce levels of family violence and improve the way Tasmania's justice system deals with perpetrators. This includes the creation of a new serial family violence perpetrator declaration for serious and repeat offenders, as well as a series of further amendments to improve the operation of the family and sexual violence legislative framework.

I intend to introduce the serial family violence perpetrator declaration framework to ensure that perpetrators who repeatedly commit family violence offences against a single partner or multiple and successive partners are appropriately identified. It will also allow the courts to take further steps regarding orders relating to supervision and rehabilitation as well as behavioural change program participation or electronic monitoring.

Every Tasmanian deserves to be and feel safe in their community, at home, at school and at their workplace. The significant suite of family violence reforms confirms we are continuing to ensure our laws are strong and robust to protect victim survivors of family violence and ensure perpetrators are appropriately punished for the severity of their crimes.

I am proud of the clear action our Government is taking to further strengthen our laws to ensure the prevention of family violence and to empower and protect women in the justice system.

Conflicts of Interest - Call for Investigation

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.52 a.m.]

A cloud is hanging over you and your Government and your former minister. You have failed, and refused to say today whether conflicts of interests were declared during Cabinet deliberations. This could all be laid to rest with a thorough independent investigation of the facts. Why will you not call an independent enquiry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. The answer is simple. You have not made a case. What you have done over the last -

Ms White - You are not satisfied that there is a case to answer for.

Mr SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Over the past week, the Leader of the Opposition, together with members of her team, have smeared someone's reputation. They have stood in the gutter and thrown rocks at an individual who has not been able to defend herself in this place and who is no longer a minister because of personal and family reasons and is grieving the recent loss of her brother. It has been a disgraceful performance by the Leader of the Opposition and her team over the past week, at a time when the Leader of the Opposition still has questions to answer regarding Mr O'Byrne and what she knew.

Ministers declare conflicts of interest in line with the code. In this case, the Leader of the Opposition, who has been desperate in her attempts to use smear and innuendo and rumour to create the perception that there is a conflict of interest, has yet to provide any proof.

Last week I said that I had never witnessed this parliament hit such a low water mark, where privilege was weaponised while those who would use that privilege remained hiding in their offices at lunchtime rather than going out and fronting the media. The way that side has conducted themselves has been an absolute disgrace.

We heard over the Christmas period that we should recall parliament early because they had questions that needed to be asked about the COVID-19 response. Not one question has been raised -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - If it was not so serious, it would be humorous. Last week, the Leader of the Opposition misleading parliament, suggesting that mythical people were here in the parliament and wanting to know who they had met with, who they were meeting. Again, without a shred of proof, the Leader of the Opposition has come into this parliament and wasted this parliament's time.

Ms White - Integrity is a waste? Seeking integrity?

Mr GUTWEIN - You want to talk about integrity? As I have said, the bar that the Leader of the Opposition sets is so low -

Ms White - What about Terry Brooks?

Mr SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, order. You are on slippery ground.

Mr GUTWEIN - that it would not even be a trip hazard. There are questions that side need to answer. There are questions that the Leader of the Opposition needs to answer, about whether she even broached the issue of the complaint with Mr O'Byrne before supporting him and supporting her party to support him as leader. They are questions of real interest.

Regarding this matter, I raised these issues with the minister. The minister denied the allegations. Regarding the circumstances of the minister leaving the parliament, it is sad that she left for personal and family reasons as a result of the death of her brother.

Ms Butler - Why did you take her ministry from her?

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms Butler.

Mr GUTWEIN - These are all matters that the other side of the House have shown scant regard for. They have done their very best, through rumour and smear and innuendo, to attempt to destroy Ms Howlett's reputation. I ask that they accept that Ms Howlett is grieving, that she is away from her office this week, and they allow her and her family to grieve in peace.

Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan

Mr ELLIS question to MINISTER for the PREVENTION of FAMILY VIOLENCE, Mrs PETRUSMA

[10.57 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on the development of the Tasmanian Government's next Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Ellis for his question and his interest in this very important matter. As we have heard today from my great colleague, the Minister for Women, we recognise and acknowledge International Women's Day as a day which is an important opportunity to reflect on progress and the actions we need to take to create a more equal future for us all - of safety, respect, and equity - by eliminating all forms of gender-based violence, harassment, and abuse against women and girls. Every Tasmanian woman and girl has the right to live free from all forms of violence, harassment, and abuse, and all of us here have the responsibility to help make it happen. This is why the prevention and elimination of family and sexual violence is a top priority for me and this Government. Violence against anyone in any form is unacceptable, but the harm caused by family and sexual violence is particularly devastating.

Today, on International Women's Day, I pause and acknowledge, and pay tribute, to the courage of all victim/survivors of family and sexual violence, especially our women and girls. I also like to thank all those in our government and in our NGOs, who assist victim/survivors of family and sexual violence and help them in their most vulnerable time of need, as well as for their strong dedication and ongoing efforts for Tasmanians impacted by family and sexual violence.

This Government takes our role very seriously. That is why, since the launch of our first nation leading action plan in 2015 and under our second action plan launched in 2019, this Government has continued to build upon its commitment, investment and scope in preventing and responding to family sexual violence in Tasmania. We have invested over \$300 million in direct and indirect services in responding to family and sexual violence, including \$63 million for specific measures under our first and second action plans. Over the same period, we have also successfully secured another \$8.5 million in investment by the Australian Government. I was pleased to recently launch the public consultation process to inform the development of our next family and sexual violence action plan, which is to be released in July 2022. Recent national conversations have highlighted the importance of hearing from people with lived

experience. That is why we are putting the voices of victim/survivors at the centre of the development of our next action plan, so that we can develop a range of evidence-based initiatives based on feedback from those who are most impacted.

The five key elements to our public consultation process includes the Hearing Lived Experience Survey 2022; establishing a Victim Survivors' Advisory Council; partnering with Tasmanian Aboriginal People; targeted workshops with stakeholders, especially with diverse lived experience - including people with disability; women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities; women from rural and regional communities; and LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians. These workshops will be held before and after Easter, as well as public written submissions which will be called for shortly.

The Hearing Lived Experience Survey 2022 is an online public survey of adult victim/survivors with lived experience of family and sexual violence. Through providing an opportunity for victim survivors to share their experiences, the survey will also build upon our previous survey conducted back in 2018, by also including people's experience of sexual violence in addition to family violence. Importantly, it will provide the opportunity for people to share their stories anonymously. The survey is being promoted through family sexual violence service providers and a statewide advertising campaign, and can be accessed through the QR code on our promotional posters or via the Tasmanian Government Safe from Violence website. I thank all members of this House who have already put up these posters in their electorate offices, to increase awareness and to encourage responses.

For people who cannot access the internet, the survey will also be available as this hardcopy booklet, which I table today, which will be available at Service Tasmania outlets, and local neighbourhood houses from next week. I am also pleased to note that as of yesterday, we have already received 440 completed survey responses in less than four weeks. Given that the 2018 Hearing Lived Experience survey received 500 responses in total, this is a fantastic level of take-up in such a short period of time.

Our awareness raising advertising campaign is also achieving a fantastic reach with, as of yesterday, ads on social media generating over 707 000 impressions, and over 8000 link clicks. On Facebook this year has reached more than 74 000 unique users, and on Tiktok, it has reached over 70 000 unique users. An advertising campaign will also begin on Snapchat today.

Importantly, the development of the action plan will also involve collaboration across Government, and we will be working with the family and sexual violence community consultative group, as well as with a large number of government and non-government stakeholders and service providers. I am really looking forward to working with victim survivors, key stakeholder groups and service providers, and I also hope to work together with all of my fellow members of parliament, towards our shared goal of eliminating violence against women and girls in Tasmania.

I want to reflect that all of us have the responsibility to end violence against women and girls. Today, on International Women's Day, we all need to reflect on the actions that we are taking to ensure that we are creating a safer, more respectful and equitable place in which to work. I have to say at the moment that the Opposition will be the least safe space to work, as they are showing no respect, especially for Ms Howlett. They are not creating a safe Tasmania,

because what they are doing is committing the worst act of violence, abuse and harassment against a member of the other place, who cannot come into this place.

There is no equitable place for Ms Howlett to come in here and respond to the accusations. They are gutless, and if they are so sure of themselves they should get outside, on the grass, and produce the evidence. I have never seen anything so appalling as what they are doing to Ms Howlett and her family.

Time expired.

PETITION

Application for 50 Wind Turbines at St Patricks Plains

[11.04 a.m.]

Mr Tucker presented a petition from approximately 273 residents of Tasmania, expressing unequivocal support for Epuron's application for 50 wind turbines at St Patricks Plains, with reasons including:

1. Maximizing the local jobs and manufacturing
2. Ensuring the community engagement and development.
3. Suitable distance from residential properties.
4. Outside of protected landscape areas.
5. Outside of protected wildlife areas.
6. Offers easy access.
7. It has good wind speed.

The Petitioners ask the House to provide support and assist with approval of this project.

Petition received.

TABLED PAPER

Public Accounts Committee

Dr Broad presented the following report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts:

Review of Auditor-General's Report No.11 of 2018-19 - Performance of Tasmania's Four Major Hospitals in the Delivery of Emergency Department Services.

Report received.

CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL 2022 (No. 4)

First Reading

Bill presented by Ms Archer and read the first time.

**TREASURY MISCELLANEOUS (AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT) BILL 2022 (No. 7)**

TRAFFIC AMENDMENT (ELECTRONIC BILLBOARDS) BILL 2022 (No. 5)

LAND TAX RATING AMENDMENT BILL 2022 (No. 6)

First Reading

Bills presented by Mr Ferguson and read for the first time.

MOTION

Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

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

That the following Address be presented to Her Majesty the Queen through
Her Excellency the Governor:

TO HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY THE QUEEN:

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

We, the members of the House of Assembly of the Parliament of Tasmania,
in union with Your Majesty's subjects throughout Tasmania, desire to express
to Your Majesty our heartfelt congratulations at this time of celebration of
the Platinum Jubilee of Your accession to the Throne.

We recognise with thankfulness Your unfailing devotion to the duties of
Your exalted Office, particularly as Head of the Commonwealth of Nations,
and we regard with gratitude Your Majesty's sustained and self-denying
efforts to secure the welfare of Your people.

Mr Speaker, today we recognise and pay tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on
the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee. Her Majesty's coronation in 1953 was the beginning of
an era commencing a most remarkable period of time as the leader of several nations, but also
marked with the sadness at the passing in the year prior of her father, King George VI.

In a broadcast following Her Majesty's coronation she said:

I have in sincerity pledged myself to your service, as so many of you are pledged to mine. Throughout all my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be worthy of your trust.

There can be no doubt that 70 years of service is a remarkable achievement. Over this time she has embodied the very best elements of public service, leading with diligence, grace and compassion, exhibiting genuine care for the communities and nations that make up the Commonwealth.

During her reign there have been some 15 prime ministers, 16 governors-general, and 17 Tasmanian premiers. It is therefore unsurprising there is no-one in this House who was even born, let alone elected, when Her Majesty was coronated.

As a state, Tasmania has had a proud history of hosting Her Majesty on several occasions. We have hosted visits in 1954, 1963, 1970, 1977, 1981, 1988, and of course in 2000, in the midst of the Olympic Games and the new millennium, Her thirteenth visit to Australia. These visits have always been met with significant fanfare. Our communities flocked to show their love and admiration for Her Majesty, with thousands lining the streets and holding bouquets of flowers ready to be presented. It has been an incredible spectacle each time.

In 1954, *The Examiner* reported that an estimated 75 000 people went out onto the streets of Launceston to catch a glimpse of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh on their final day in the state. The Queen spoke at the Town Hall on this occasion describing our community with a genuine warmth, saying:

My stay in Tasmania has of necessity, been all too short but we shall carry away happy memories of the charm of your island state and the steadfast kindness of its people.

Today we acknowledge and give thanks to Her Majesty for commitment to the Commonwealth of which Australia and by extension, Tasmania, is a key part. She has provided the world with a reassuring presence throughout her 70-year reign and as a nation we are grateful for her capable, stoic service. I do not think that stoic service has ever been expressed so well, nor with the dignity that she demonstrated when grieving the loss of her husband when she sat in that cathedral by herself, with a mask on, in grief, but in demonstration of the extraordinary spirit that she herself holds.

Mr Speaker, as a parliament we extend our warmest wishes and most sincere congratulations to Her Majesty on her Platinum Jubilee.

Members - Hear, hear.

[11.12 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise on this motion to extend my gratitude to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for her seven decades of unwavering public service and in doing so extend on behalf of the Opposition our warm wishes and thanks to Her Majesty.

In rising today, I reflect on the great dedication Her Majesty has displayed in a life lived in service of the Commonwealth and the public. I note that for the Queen this milestone also marks the seventieth anniversary of the passing of her father, King George VI.

As a young girl, Princess Elizabeth would undoubtedly never have expected to have marked such an occasion as her Platinum Jubilee as monarch. As third in line to the throne behind her uncle and father, the young Elizabeth would never have expected to have become Queen. However, the abdication of her uncle in 1936 and the untimely passing of her father George VI at just 56, saw then Princess Elizabeth become Queen of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Commonwealth.

At the time Princess Elizabeth had been in Kenya with the Duke of Edinburgh on a tour that would have included Australia and New Zealand. As the Premier said, while no-one in this place was born at the time, and I would say I doubt 8-month old Mr Valentine from the other place would have very much recollection, it is undoubtedly fair to say that much has changed since Her Majesty took the throne 70 years ago.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has been a rare, constant, and enduring presence throughout these decades. All the while there has been enormous change and upheaval to navigate to this very day but what has not changed is the stable and steadfast example that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II projected to the world. As evidence of the change over this time, I note that Her Majesty has been the reigning sovereign for 16 Tasmanian premiers, 13 governors of Tasmania, 15 Australian prime ministers, and 16 governors-general.

During her time as Queen, Her Majesty has seen Australia evolve and grow as a nation. Her Majesty has undertaken 16 official tours of Australia marking important milestones, anniversaries or celebrations, maintaining her engagement and connection with our nation.

This started in 1954 when she finally made it to our shores and in doing so became the first reigning monarch to visit Australia. This included a visit by Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, to our own state.

It was reported that an estimated 75 000 people lined the streets of Launceston on Wednesday, 24 February, to glimpse the royal cavalcade of the Queen and the Duke on their final day of this four-day visit of Tasmania. While a royal visit may no longer see the same clamour of crowds, it is fair to say that across Australia there is a deep respect and admiration for the Queen. Even those who do not hold with the principles of the monarchy feel deep respect for Her Majesty and her unwavering sense of duty. The Queen has lived and continues to live a life of duty, conducting herself with integrity, humility and dignity - qualities that any leader, anyone who seeks to serve their community, is well-served by.

On International Women's Day, it seems appropriate to note that over the past 184 years, the throne of England has been held by a woman for 133 of them. There have been just two women: Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II. As the first monarch to reign for seven decades, Her Majesty has long surpassed the reign of her great, great grandmother, Queen Victoria, to become the longest reigning British monarch in history.

Today, we acknowledge the Platinum Jubilee of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II - 70 years - a truly remarkable achievement. Her Majesty has undertaken

her role with consistency and with great dignity. On behalf of the Opposition, I offer my congratulations and gratitude.

[11.17 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Greens, I wish Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II congratulations on the celebration of her Platinum Jubilee and to acknowledge on this International Women's Day one of the great women of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Like a number of people in this place, I am an avowed republican but I love and admire Her Majesty very much and acknowledge that her entire life has been dedicated to service to the people of the Commonwealth, the people of Australia and Tasmania. The traits I see in Her Majesty are those of a good, strong, decent woman. Her Majesty also has, in some ways, the heart of an activist. Following her recovery from COVID-19 at the age of 95, our Queen has stepped up to voice support for the people of Ukraine.

I also acknowledge that Her Majesty the Queen has the heart of a Green and -

Members interjecting.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is true and I am about to help the House understand why.

Ms Archer - She does not get involved in politics, though.

Ms O'CONNOR - Ms Archer, having a Green heart has nothing to do with politics. It is about a sensibility and a compassion for the natural world and all its people.

Her son, Prince Charles, is a deeply committed conservationist who, in fact, talks to his plants. Her late husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, was a passionate advocate for nature and for looking after the planet. One of the most wonderful friendships that I believe the Queen has is with another great human being, Sir David Attenborough. He and the Queen have teamed up in recent years to be a strong global voice for nature and for looking after our forests, for looking after the planet. That means, of course, looking after people and all life on the planet.

A few years ago, the Queen launched the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy, an initiative that began in 2015 as a network of forest conservation programs throughout the 54 countries of the Commonwealth of Nations. By 2016, 16 countries had become involved and by 2019 the number was 46. All over the world now there are Commonwealth nations that have set aside dedicated areas of forest to contribute towards the Queen's Canopy.

I do not know if Her Majesty reads the speeches and contributions that are made in Westminster parliaments on the marking of her Platinum Jubilee, but Your Majesty, if you do read this transcript, I want you to know that the Greens tried to persuade the Minister for Resources, Mr Barnett, who is a dedicated monarchist, that there should be a contribution from Tasmania to the Queen's Canopy. This beautiful island, with its extraordinary, carbon-rich, unique-in-the-world, forests, could make a contribution to the Queen's Canopy, and it should. Regrettably, our attempts to have the Tasmanian Liberal Government contribute towards the Queen's Canopy were rebuffed.

In November last year, Her Majesty made a speech at an evening of the COP26 event on climate. Her Majesty said:

I am delighted to welcome you all to the 26th United Nations climate change conference, and it's perhaps fitting that you have come together in Glasgow, once a heartland of the industrial revolution, but now a place to address climate change. This is a duty I am especially happy to discharge as the impact of the environment on human progress was a subject close to my heart of my dear late husband Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

I remember well that in 1969 he told an academic gathering if the world pollution situation is not critical at the moment, it is as certain as anything can be that the situation will become increasingly intolerable within a very short time. If we fail to cope with this challenge all the other problems will pale into insignificance.

It is a great source of pride to me that the leading role my husband played in encouraging people to protect our fragile planet lives on through the work of our eldest son Charles and his eldest son William. I could not be more proud of them. Indeed, I have drawn great comfort and inspiration from the relentless enthusiasm of people of all ages, especially the young, in calling for everyone to play their part.

It is the hope of many that the legacy of this summit written in history books yet to be printed will describe you as the leaders who did not pass up the opportunity, and that you answered the call of those future generations. That you left this conference as a community of nations, with a determination, a desire and a plan to address the impact of climate and to recognise that the time for words has now moved to the time for action. Of course, the benefits of such actions will not be there to enjoy for all of us here today. We none of us will live forever, but we are doing this not for ourselves, but for our children, and our children's children, and those who will follow in their footsteps.

Mr Speaker, that is a true global leader speaking to a gathering of global leaders, who history now tells us failed to meet the challenge of the times. Of course, we have to remain hopeful, that there will be change, as I am sure Her Majesty will. As every member of this House knows, Her Majesty is 95 years of age. What an extraordinary life. I am sure everyone in this place had the same feeling as me when we learned that Her Majesty had contracted COVID-19. Yet she has recovered. That is something for which we should all be very thankful.

I wonder what happens when her majesty turns 100? Does she send herself a letter? I hope she gets the opportunity to do so. I trust that she will. Long live Her Majesty the Queen.

[11.24 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, the motion moved by the Premier is beautiful and touching. For the benefit of members of the House, the words of that motion are precisely the words that this House moved in acknowledgement and affection for Queen Victoria on the celebration of her Diamond Jubilee, having at that time attained 60 years

on the throne. I want to acknowledge the Premier in that, and the beautiful work of our beloved Clerk, in supporting that to be before us today. It is a beautiful motion and poetically spoken.

It is recognition of our gracious Queen, who is a beautiful person, a beautiful human being who is much admired by Commonwealth subjects and others; by men and women; by young and old; by republicans and monarchists.

I rise today, with a lot of gratitude, to be able to join this motion in this debate, and to pay tribute to our Queen; Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and to note those 70 years on the throne. Her Majesty has a unique relationship with our country and our state. In all her duties and functions, she acts as Queen of Australia, and not as some mistakenly think as Queen of the United Kingdom or England. The unique title was, in fact, bestowed upon Her Majesty in 1953, shortly after her accession to the throne.

The year 1954 marked a significant point in the role and history of the monarchy, and the relationship with Australia, when she was the first reigning monarch to visit our country. As a previous speaker has said, she was en route to visit our great nation two years earlier, but was recalled to England following the passing of her father, King George VI. Her Majesty herself has commented that, while many were celebrating the time in which the young princess became Australia's Queen, for her personally it was a time of great sorrow to lose her father.

During her 1954 tour, she travelled over 16 000 kilometres by air, making approximately 33 flights, and over 3000 kilometres by road, which I understand was 130 hours in cars and 207 trips. In that time, she visited each capital city, including Hobart, and 70 country towns. In her time in Hobart, she opened the Tasmanian Parliament in a special ceremonial sitting - would we not have all loved to have been there? Her arrival here saw the Parliament House festooned in elaborate decoration, with full military ceremony and accompaniment. There are plenty of records and photographs around Tasmania of what the streets of Hobart and Launceston looked like. This has been the only time when our parliament has been opened by our reigning monarch, so it was a very special occasion.

The front page of *The Examiner* marked her visit to Launceston by claiming, 'We'll always remember,' and we certainly have. Prior to her departure from Tasmania on that tour, Her Majesty addressed the crowds at the Launceston Town Hall, saying, 'My stay in Tasmania has - of necessity - been all too short, but we shall carry away happy memories of the charm of your island state, and the steadfast kindness of its people.' Well, Mr Speaker, the parochialism between Hobart and Launceston was as strong then as it is now, with *The Examiner* editorial at the time lamenting, 'The royal visit to the northern end of the island was much too short, but now that the Queen has gone it can be said emphatically that the basis of allocation of time between Hobart and the rest of the state was most unjust to the majority of the people of Tasmania.' If that is parochialism, it is also a great affection for the Queen.

In the 1950s, the relationship between Australia and the United Kingdom was changing on the back of two world wars and the growing economic strength and independence of Australia. Our trade ties with the United Kingdom were lessening, and Australia was establishing itself as an independent and modern country, with its own relationships within the Asia Pacific region. I think of the time when Sir Robert Menzies, as Prime Minister of Australia, undertook a trade treaty with Japan, having been at war with that country only a few years earlier. Her Majesty acknowledged this in her first speech in Australia, saying; 'In the same short space of time, we've seen the rise of Australia as a great nation, taking her full share

in the counsels of the British Commonwealth and of the world. I am proud indeed to be at the head of a nation that has achieved so much.'

The Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, was open about his own affection and respect for Her Majesty, writing at the time that, 'It's a basic truth that for our Queen we have within us, sometimes unrealised until the moment of expression, the most profound and passionate feelings of loyalty and of devotion.' The common devotion to the throne is part of the very cement of the whole national structure. Of course, there is his much publicised remark, and I commend the film footage of the show reel from Sir Robert Menzies from the early 1960s, where he quoted the seventeenth century poet, Thomas Ford:

I did but see her passing by,
And yet I love her till I die.

Her eight-week 1954 tour was the start of her and her family's close relationship to Australia, with her touring Australia a further 15 times. That happened in 1963, 1970, 1973, 1974, 1977, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1986, 1988 - our bicentennial year, 1992, 2000, 2002, 2006 - with the Commonwealth Games here in Australia, and 2011. Her son, Prince Charles, attended school in Australia.

During the 1980s, the Queen made significant visits to Australia. For me, as a school boy in the 1980s, a very memorable visit was in Launceston. I think it is the 1992 visit I am referring to, which was at the old Elphin Showgrounds, where the Queen spoke to the children and waved and took flowers and posies. Unfortunately, I was not able to have a conversation. The 1988 tour to mark the bicentenary and open the new Australian Parliament House was, I believe, memorable to everyone of our generation and certainly in this House.

In 2006, Her Majesty again visited Australia to open the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne. I remember this best. I was the federal Member for Bass at the time. During that particular visit I had, in a sense, won the lottery of the small number of Australians who were able to be at some of the formal ceremonies. I had the great pleasure, together with my wife, Julie, of attending the official dinner in the great hall of Parliament House in Canberra to celebrate her 80th birthday, which fell on the following month.

In her time as Queen of Australia, Her Majesty has reigned with great dignity, respect and fairness. As the longest serving British Monarch and the longest serving female head of state, she has provided consistency throughout the decades. While we often look to our political leaders for change, we look to the Queen for stability.

Before I close, Mr Speaker, I want to draw from a very profound speech that Her Majesty made when she turned 21 years old. She was still Princess Elizabeth at that time, in April 1947. Princess Elizabeth was with her parents on a tour of South Africa and spoke by radio throughout the world, which at the time was an incredible innovation. She said these words:

... If we all go forward together with an unwavering faith, a high courage, and a quiet heart, we shall be able to make of this ancient commonwealth, which we all love so dearly, an even grander thing - more free, more prosperous, more happy and a more powerful influence for good in the world - than it has been in the greatest days of our forefathers.

To accomplish that we must give nothing less than the whole of ourselves. There is a motto which has been borne by many of my ancestors - a noble motto, "I serve". Those words were an inspiration to many bygone heirs to the throne when they made their knightly dedication as they came to manhood. I cannot do quite as they did.

But through the inventions of science I can do what was not possible for any of them. I can make my solemn act of dedication with a whole Empire listening. I should like to make that dedication now. It is very simple.

I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.

But I shall not have strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in it with me, as I now invite you to do: I know that your support will be unfailingly given. God help me to make good my vow, and God bless all of you who are willing to share in it.

Mr Speaker, that is where I will close. We celebrate Her Majesty's 70 years on the throne and we all look forward too many more. We convey through this motion in this time of speaking in this House together our dedication and loyalty to her. Importantly, just as she has, we show our dedication and loyalty to the people of our community following Her Majesty's unmatched example.

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Attorney-General) - Mr Speaker, as Attorney-General for the State of Tasmania and a very proud and dedicated constitutional monarchist, it gives me great pleasure to make a contribution to this motion. I believe I am perhaps one of the few who considers herself a monarchist and a very proud one.

This year marks the occasion of the Platinum Jubilee which celebrates Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's 70 years of incredibly dedicated service to Australia and the Commonwealth from 1952 to 2022. I note that Australia will hold a range of national and community events to honour the incredible legacy of the Queen and her 70 years of service. Her Majesty's historic reign is the longest in Britain's history and she is currently the fourth longest reigning monarch in known world history. Her Majesty the Queen has visited Australia on 16 occasions from 1954 to 2011, as my colleague Mr Ferguson has outlined.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has outlined the Platinum Jubilee's celebrations which I note include the lighting of the Queen's Jubilee beacon in Canberra, the release of commemorative stamps and coins as well as illuminating monuments all around Australia.

Her Majesty the Queen's accession day message stated:

I hope this jubilee will bring together families and friends, neighbours and communities - after some difficult times for so many of us - in order to enjoy the celebrations and to reflect on the positive developments in our day-to-day lives that have so happily coincided with my reign.

Whilst the Platinum Jubilee is a celebration of an unprecedented anniversary and historic milestone, the occasion also marks 70 years since the death of Her Majesty's father King George VI. I also note, and I do not think anyone has stated this yet, what a path Her Majesty has taken because it was not originally the lineage the world expected in terms of who the next reigning monarch would be when her father took over.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is, as everyone has said and noted today, much loved, respected and indeed an iconic monarch. For much of her reign her husband, the late Prince Philip, stood alongside her. Through thick and thin the royal pair had been side by side in service to their country and to one another, yet little is known about the pair's affection and the secret to their marriage spanning over seven decades. Therefore, I have attempted to capture this in my research for this contribution today and to pay tribute to the strength of this important relationship throughout the Queen's reign.

It was reported that Princess Elizabeth was immediately smitten with Corfu-born Philip, Prince of Greece and Denmark as he was then known, and had eyes for no-one else. The Queen's cousin, Margaret Rhodes, said:

I've got letters from her saying, 'It is so exciting, Mummy says that Philip can come and stay'.

She also said 'she was truly in love from the very beginning'. Philip was away fighting in the Second World War, yet the pair's love endured and their engagement was announced in July 1947. Prince Philip also expressed his affection for the future Queen during their engagement and in a letter to his mother-in-law wrote, 'Cherish Lilibet? I wonder if that word is enough to express what is in me'.

According to the book *Young Prince Philip: His Turbulent Early Life*, Prince Philip wrote a letter to Princess Elizabeth in 1947 declaring:

I am sure that I do not deserve all the good things that have happened to me ... To have been spared in the war and seen victory, to have been given the chance to rest and to readjust myself, to have fallen in love completely and unreservedly, makes all one's personal and even the world's troubles seem small and petty.

The pair were married on 20 November 1947 and went on a honeymoon first to Broadlands in Hampshire, the home of Philip's uncle Earl Mountbatten, and the rest of their honeymoon was spent on the Balmoral Estate. Just a few short years later, after the untimely death of Elizabeth's father, the princess was crowned Queen on 2 June 1953, with the strength and support of Prince Philip by her side.

Prince William said at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012:

In the world that they were in, it was almost back to front. The Queen was taking on her role in a man's world. The Duke of Edinburgh was taking on the role of consort as a very successful naval commander - and would have been an even bigger one. Yet both of them carved their own paths and have done that ever since, to brilliant standards. Together, they are a very good team.

As we know, the couple went on to have four children: Prince Charles, Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward and, in turn, eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

In 1972 the Queen gave her thoughts on 25 years of marriage:

If I am asked what I think about family life after 25 years of marriage, I can answer with equal simplicity and conviction: I am for it.

Then on the night of her fiftieth wedding anniversary celebrations in 1997, the Queen made a speech at London's Banqueting House and turned to speak to Prince Philip with uncharacteristic emotion, saying:

All too often I fear Prince Philip has had to listen to me speaking. Frequently, we have discussed my intended speech beforehand and as you will imagine, his views have been expressed in a forthright manner. He has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years and I, and his whole family, and this and many other countries, owe him a debt greater than he would ever claim, or we shall ever know.

At another event to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary, the Prince made a humorous declaration of his own, saying in a toast in November 2017:

I think the main lesson we have learnt is that tolerance is the one essential ingredient in any happy marriage. You can take it from me, the Queen has the quality of tolerance in abundance.

Their most recent milestone in 2017 was their seventieth wedding anniversary marking their platinum anniversary. Prince William said during the celebrations:

I would love to know their secret. They are the most lovely couple and I hope Catherine and I have that sort of future ahead of us.

Perhaps the Queen's former private secretary, Lord Charteris, encapsulated it best when he said:

Prince Philip is the only man in the world who treats the Queen simply as another human being. He is the only man who can.

In closing, I express my deep admiration and respect for Her Majesty on this, her Platinum Jubilee year, and my gratitude for the dignity and service she has always displayed over this time and most of it with Prince Philip at her side. Long may she reign.

[11.42 a.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr Speaker, I thank the Premier for moving this motion and I strongly support it.

I rise to pay tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, born on 21 April 1926, and who has reigned over Australia since 1952. On 6 February 2022, Her Majesty became the first

British monarch to celebrate 70 years on the throne - a Platinum Jubilee - an outstanding service.

Having acceded to the throne of England at 25 years of age upon the death of her beloved father, King George VI, Her Majesty's service to the United Kingdom and the realms of the Commonwealth have been steadfast and unwavering. Her Majesty has gone on to reign longer than any other British monarch in history and has become a beloved figure around the world. Celebrations are being held throughout the United Kingdom and around the world to make this wonderful milestone.

Tasmania has a long and proud history, having hosted the Queen no less than seven times since her first visit in 1954. During that 1954 visit, the first by a reigning monarch to Australia, Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh toured around Tasmania, visiting Hobart and Launceston and indeed touring the north-west coast and staying at Connorville in the Northern Midlands.

She also visited in 1963 and presented the then Lord Mayor of Hobart, Alderman Osbourne, with a CBE at a Government House investiture.

She visited again in 1970 and I have a photo here of each of the seven visits to Tasmania. In 1970 she visited the children's ward at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

In 1977, Her Majesty visited with Sir Stanley Burbury, Governor of Tasmania, in different parts of Tasmania.

In 1981 she visited the Tasmanian Police Academy and the Domain Athletic Centre, speaking with the late Darrel Baldock, who was then minister for recreation.

In 1988, there were photos of Her Majesty leaving Launceston with the Duke of Edinburgh, and in 2000, photos of Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh at the Maritime Museum, which Her Majesty opened in the Carnegie Building in Argyle Street, Hobart.

For each visit I have some photos and produced a pamphlet some years ago commemorating the visit of Her Majesty to Tasmania. I made it available to aged care, community groups and the like. I did that with the support of the Council of United Commonwealth Societies. I acknowledge their support for that pamphlet, which is now being updated.

Throughout her reign, Her Majesty has personified grace, dignity, duty and service. For all of us, republicans and monarchists alike, we can be proud to congratulate Her Majesty and recognise her years of selfless service. During her reign Australia has had 15 prime ministers, and Tasmania 17 premiers.

Her Majesty's record long reign has represented stability in an unstable world. She has been a source of comfort and strength for the institution. She has provided hope and inspiration for the community, particularly, during times of crisis, of war.

In September 2015 I compiled a book of special good wishes from hundreds of Tasmanians from across the state, congratulating Her Majesty upon her becoming Britain's longest serving monarch. I hosted a special birthday celebration in the state parliament in 2016,

in honour of Her Majesty's birthday, which is 21 April, although we recognise her birthday with a public holiday on the Queen's birthday long weekend in June. This year it is scheduled for 13 June. For most Tasmanians, Her Majesty is the only monarch and Australian head of state they have known, despite there being 16 governors-general. I have been a long-time supporter for an Australian as the head of the state, and a minimalist republican, but I am one of Tasmania's, and Australia's, greatest supporters of Her Majesty.

Her Majesty has been the head of state of 32 different Commonwealth countries, and is currently head of 15 realms whose Westminster system of government and democracy is a legacy for which we can all be very thankful. Although holding a privileged position, Her Majesty's commitment to duty and deep love of Australia and Tasmania has ensured that she continues to be held in great esteem within this country and further afield. Together with my wife Kate, I had the honour of being present for Her Majesty's speech in the Great Hall of Parliament House in Canberra during her 2011 visit to Australia. As a senator for Tasmania I felt immensely proud. It was one of the greatest privileges of my political career. You knew she cared deeply for our country and was aware of the issues of the day. Her Majesty knew of Australia's place in the world in the context of history and admired our growing confidence as a nation. It was one of the best speeches I have ever witnessed. It was an absolute privilege. During these uncertain times of pandemic and war, I have no doubt Australians are comforted by Her Majesty's faithful and enduring service.

We were deeply concerned at her recent COVID-19 diagnosis and greatly relieved Her Majesty has recovered. I understand today she is meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada in London. In recent days she has expressed support for the people of Ukraine. We thank her for that. We acknowledge Her Majesty on this International Women's Day as an outstanding role model - distinguished, gracious and kind. She is a servant leader. We acknowledge the sad passing of her husband, the late Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, a lifelong partner.

I stand with the Premier and others in this place to pay respect and honour to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for her outstanding service and the Platinum Jubilee.

Motion agreed to nemine contradicente.

[11.50 a.m.]

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

That a message be transmitted to the Legislative Council requesting its concurrence in the said Address.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Failure to Deliver

[11.51 a.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: failure to deliver.

I am pleased to speak on a failure to deliver. This is a hallmark of those opposite and the Government they form. I could talk today about a number of projects the Government has failed to deliver. I could talk about the Burnie Port. I could talk about the Cradle Mountain cableway. I could talk about the Cooee crawl. I could talk about aged care beds on the west coast - I will talk about that later.

Today I want to talk about their failure to deliver when it comes to the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians. I want to talk about the health system and their failure to address the issues across the health system and the significant impact this is having on the quality of life of many Tasmanians.

I also want to talk about their failure to deliver when it comes to the health and wellbeing of communities and the impact this is having on the economy. You do not hear the Liberals talk much about that. You do not hear them talk about the impact of poor health and wellbeing outcomes across communities and the detrimental effect that this has on local economies. You do not hear them talk about the importance of the care economy across Tasmania. One of the fastest growing sectors of Tasmania's economy is the care economy. It provides services to Tasmanians. It staffs the hospitals. It provides adequate care services across rural and regional communities.

This Government has failed to deliver. There are long waiting lists for general practitioners. We know there is significant economic benefit from population growth. That is felt nowhere greater than in rural and regional Tasmania.

When people look at moving to a rural and regional area, they want to know what health services are available in that community. The Government is not doing anything about GP shortages across Tasmania or the long waiting times to see a GP. They talk a lot about getting access to services close to where you live and we know the important role the provision of health services plays in local economies. Where I come from, on the north west coast, the North West Regional Hospital would be the largest employer across a large part of the Burnie municipality and the electorate. Changes to staffing there have significant implications for the local economy, if we cannot recruit adequate medical specialists to provide services out of that area. The local council relies heavily on the economic outcomes that come from that.

I also want to talk about the failure of this Government to deliver health services and the economic impacts of that. An OECD report talks about the importance of health and wellbeing to economic outcomes. It highlights the lost productivity from people waiting for elective surgery, waiting with poor health to see a specialist. Tasmanians living in pain not able to go to work is a significant hit to local economies. Work the Labor Party has done shows there is \$120 million in lost productivity across Tasmania because of extended elective surgery waiting lists.

The one time the Liberals spoke about the importance of health to the economy is their alternative budget, which dates back to 2013-14. Health was a key pillar of that budget document.

Let me read what their plan was at the time. It is very interesting, because I note that not a lot has changed from when they came to government over the last eight years:

What this policy means for you

For patients, the Liberal policy will mean that thousands of Tasmanians can get their operations sooner, significantly improving their quality of life. For health professionals it will mean that our surgeons can get back into operating theatres there will be more job opportunities in our state for our Tasmanian trained health professionals and there will be less frustration for our health workers as patient flow is improved.

I do not think that has improved much, Mr Speaker. In fact, I think it has gone backwards in the last eight years. It continues:

For our general practitioners, it will reduce the pressure on those who are managing patients stuck on long waiting lists and getting sicker.

Nearly 60 000 Tasmanians have been referred by their general practitioner to access a specialist appointment. We know that most of those people will go on to require elective surgery, so that is actually the hidden surgery waitlist across Tasmania and it is having significant economic impacts around productivity and people's ability to participate in their local community and in the workforce across those communities. That is a significant issue that the Liberals have failed to address. Finally it says:

For our health system generally, it will help reduce dangerously-high occupancy levels, and overcrowding in our hospitals, making it safer for both patients and staff.

I do not think this issue has been addressed either.

At the beginning of my contribution I spoke briefly about aged care beds on the west coast. I want to come back to the care economy and the opportunities that provides for employment across Tasmania, particularly in rural and regional communities where there is a dire need for additional health services closer to where people live and a dire need for people to get access to aged care packages.

Tasmanians are waiting too long, and you have not worked with Senator Richard Colbeck to address that at all. People cannot even get access to skills and training across the care economy in those rural and regional areas and there is a dire need for people to access that training to be able to provide services to people so that they can grow older in their respective communities where they have lived for many years and made significant contributions, and be cared for with dignity. It should not be too much to ask for elderly Tasmanians to be able to do that, and right now you are not enabling them to do that.

To sum up, today was about highlighting that this Government's economic management is not working for Tasmanians. Their management of the health system is not working for Tasmanians and right now they cannot get the basics right, particularly when it comes to help. My colleague Ella Haddad will talk about another area where they just cannot seem to get the basics right. We think that Tasmanians need better leadership when it comes to access to health services and we want to see this Government work to improve the economic outcomes across regional Tasmania and how they relate to people's health status.

Time expired.

[11.58 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Finance) - Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this matter of public importance on behalf of the Government. The person who has failed to deliver is in fact the person who has just resumed her seat, Ms Dow, who last week fired an appalling question at this Government and the Premier and made an allegation that she has been too cowardly to make outside of this building. She lives in coward's castle.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms Butler - He's making up stories.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Lyons.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Speaker, she is prepared to do what she should have said, noted, when Rebecca White made her ask that question last week laced with the most vicious allegation against two people, one a member of the Tasmanian community, one a former minister. She should have said, 'No Rebecca, I won't be doing that, that is beneath my ethics'. It is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition was not prepared to ask it. She sent out the hapless deputy, Ms Dow, and you have not been willing to ask that question outside of this House. What you did was a deliberate tactic to get the print media to repeat the allegation, because it and you rely on parliamentary privilege. Who has failed to deliver today is the Leader of the Opposition, when the Premier challenged her to present the evidence to back up the accusations that Labor Party are making, and they have failed to deliver.

I will speak briefly on the matters that Ms Dow attempted to raise today, but time will simply make it impossible. I will do my best to pick up some of the threads.

In relation to health, I have a lot of history on this. We inherited waiting lists that had people who had been waiting for a category 1, 2 or 3 surgery for 10 years when we came to office. The document Ms Dow refers to was an actual alternative budget from when the Liberals were in opposition. She did not announce the number but I seem to recall it was \$76 million that we had committed from opposition and that was delivered in government. We brought those waiting lists to the lowest level in the state's history, but Ms Dow did not have the grace to acknowledge that because the Government did deliver.

What has changed since then is something called a pandemic. People have had their elective surgery cancelled as the Health Service -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. The Opposition has raised this as a matter of public importance. The Deputy Leader was listened to in silence and I expect you to respect the fact that the Leader of the House now has the call, so please stop interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - The whole health system had to reorient itself around flattening the curve and we all know that that happened, but they just gloss over that. The new Health minister, Mr Rockliff, the Deputy Premier, is bringing forward fully \$200 million to deal with that unfortunate backlog. Another thing that has not been acknowledged is that he has already

reduced it by about 1000. We do not want to see people waiting too long; that is why we focus on delivering on our commitments.

In my lifetime I would never have thought, as a boy growing up in this state, that our unemployment rate would be the lowest in the country and that the state would have the hottest economy in the country, but that is the situation right now.

Dr Broad - It is going backwards.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Broad, it is going backwards, you are right. The unemployment rate is going backwards.

Dr Broad - State final demand.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. I have just warned all your colleagues, member for Braddon, so please do not interject on the member.

Mr FERGUSON - If this is the best the Labor Opposition can do with their puerile, juvenile kinds of throwaway lines, it just shows how weak and toxic the Labor Party has truly become. They even argue with facts around the welfare of the people of Tasmania.

There is always more to do, never doubt that. There is plenty more to do as we continue to re-engage to support people who need more support and help. That is what we are about and we have tabled bills even today to put into effect policy announcement from the Premier's Address last week.

I will now speak for a couple of minutes on my portfolio of Infrastructure and Transport. We are delivering projects that Labor did not deliver. The Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment has been talked about for around 20 years. The Bridgewater bridge has been talked about since the 1990s and we let a tender in December.

Dr Broad - Where is it?

Mr FERGUSON - Dr Broad, that is the most juvenile, pathetic insult. He says, 'Where is it?'. The tender and the contractor were announced in December; they are now working on the project and it is going through the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

Dr Broad - Have you got a design?

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Braddon.

Mr FERGUSON - I ask you, Dr Broad, where is your reality? Your friend, Mr O'Byrne, had the money for that bridge and spent it.

Dr Broad interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad. You have been warned. Do not continually interject once I have talked to you.

Mr FERGUSON - You did not pipe up during the Royal Hobart Hospital comment. The Labor Party did not deal with saving the Mersey, which we have done. We have delivered that, Liberal, federal and state. As for the Midland Highway, the Labor Party did not upgrade a single kilometre north of Brighton. We have now upgraded 103 kilometres of the Midland Highway, bringing it up to an AusRAP 3-star rating. It is saving lives. When will you put aside those petty, juvenile insults when the Government is delivering better infrastructure?

I have a statistic which is a fact that in the last financial year our delivery on infrastructure was 245 per cent larger than when Labor was last in office. That is a massive upswing in infrastructure, so much so that the civil contracting community cannot take anymore work and they say to us, 'Give us more workers so we can do the extra work'. It is a phenomenal positive success story for our state.

We are delivering projects that the Labor Opposition did not even think of doing, for example the duplication of the road at Breadalbane to Launceston Airport, and the children's ward at the LGH. Then there are projects that they opposed, like the extra lane on the Southern Outlet. Labor matched us on housing at the last election. Both major parties agreed that we should have a goal of 3500 by 2027. That is great; but now we are taking it to 10 000. I have heard nothing from Labor about supporting that. To their credit, the Greens have been on 10 000 for a while.

This is what we are doing - we are delivering. Labor is toxic and has no policies.

[12.05 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Ferguson, you spent five of the seven minutes you were allocated hoeing into Labor and not telling us much at all about what your Government has delivered.

Mr Speaker, I want to talk about this Government's failure to deliver a COVID-19 safe Tasmania - a failure, despite the promises to teachers and parents and students to deliver COVID-19 safe schools. We found out today in Question Time, that there are 1747 Tasmanian students in public schools infected with COVID-19. That is not a safe school number. That is evidence of failure. That is evidence of playing Russian roulette with the health of our children.

This is a Government that sent unvaccinated, unmasked, under-12s back into face-to-face learning, when it would not even acknowledge COVID-19 is airborne. It cannot even do the basics on the science of COVID-19. What we have now, is rampant transmission in our schools. Yet, we had the minister for Education yesterday making the extraordinary claim:

After a positive start to the school year, the Tasmanian Liberal Government is releasing stage 2 of its COVID Safe Schools Plan which outlines how schools will continue to safely manage COVID-19 for the remainder of Term 1.

COVID-19 has not been safely managed - 1747 infected Tasmanian children and young people is not a sign of safely managing COVID-19. It is a sign of failure; failure to protect their health. Full stop. End of story.

We have a Government that has been dishonest about COVID-19, minimising the potential impact of this virus on human health. Now we have one in 10 Tasmanians infected with COVID-19.

This Government has failed to be truthful about COVID-19, the impacts on human health and it has failed to mention long COVID. Long COVID is now an established medical truth. Somewhere in the vicinity of 30 per cent of people who are infected with COVID-19 are left with enduring health effects three months/six months/12 months/18 months after infection; even in mild cases - and I use that term more carefully than the Government does, and even when they did not require hospitalisation.

A government that was open and honest with its people would acknowledge long COVID but it has not. Instead, we have had the Premier and the Health minister and indeed Tasmanian Public Health constantly minimising this virus, describing it as 'mild', refusing to acknowledge it is airborne, telling us it is safe to send unvaccinated children into schools, removing mask protections while cases each day are in the high hundreds.

Today, as I understand it, there are over 1000 confirmed COVID-19 positive cases in the past 24 hours, yet this Government is removing mask protections, and it does not even have the guts to table the Public Health advice it is standing behind. Tasmanians have a right to see the information provided by Public Health to Government that underpinned the decision to remove mask protections. If the Premier is so confident that the advice is the right advice, he should just table it. It is unjust, unreasonable and dishonest to hide that advice from the people of Tasmania.

We still have not had anyone in Government admit that COVID-19 is airborne. We still have advice going out from Tasmanian Public Health into aged and disability care providers that says COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through contact and droplets. All last week, we had members of the Government basically describing the two Greens in here as hysterical, tinfoil hat wearers. We have an epidemiologist on our team. People who wear tinfoil hats are people who do not listen to the science. We know who is wearing the tinfoil hats in this place, and they are sitting on the Government benches. Dr Woodruff, particularly, knows what she is talking about on this topic. I have done a lot of reading and thinking over the summer, and I believe what this Government is doing is shameful.

There has been a failure to account for the aged, the elderly and the immunocompromised. When we remove masks from retail and hospitality settings, office settings, we are saying to a person living with a disability or a cancer patient, stay at home if you want to be safe. Yesterday, we had the secretary of the Department of Health, Ms Morgan-Wicks, very kindly saying that if you are immunocompromised or you have a disability or you care for someone who does, you can still wear a mask. That is nice. But basically, what it says to those groups of Tasmanians, is that the Government does not care enough about you as if they did not already get that message from the federal minister, Mr Colbeck, who went off to the Ashes rather than front a Senate committee on the Government's failed COVID-19 response in aged care.

There has been a failure to listen to real experts like Professor Raina MacIntyre from the Kirby Institute. Professor MacIntyre says that denial is a major theme during this pandemic. That is what we have seen here, Mr Speaker - denialism.

Time expired.

[12.12 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Mr Speaker, what Tasmanians are becoming increasingly aware of, is that this Liberal Government is big on promises but bad on delivery. They are all promises with no action.

You heard my colleague, the member for Braddon, go through in great detail instances of where this Government has failed to deliver critical promises and critical services across the health and community care portfolios. Like my colleague member for Braddon, I could go through a number of areas where this Government has failed to deliver on infrastructure: the Bridgewater bridge; the northern suburbs passenger rail; and the fifth lane on the Southern Outlet - that is not only a cruel hoax for commuters of Kingborough and the Huon Valley regions, telling them that traffic congestion will be eased in those municipalities as a result of a few kilometres of road from Tolmans Hill to South Hobart, but will also be plunging residents into an overstretched housing market in the middle of a housing crisis.

My personal favourite that they failed deliver is the underground bus mall, which really was just a crazy pie in the sky promise on the eve on an election just to get votes knowing, I think, full well that they would never actually be able to deliver it.

Recently we saw the failed Commonwealth Games bid. It was over before it began; a bit of a flash in the pan. But last week we saw the biggest, something to rival with that underground bus mall pie in the sky promise - a new AFL ground floating out in the River Derwent.

Tasmanians are getting used to this Government failing to deliver. They are used to being disappointed time and time again. The promises get bigger, but the delivery gets worse. There is no area where this is more acutely felt right now than in the housing sector.

This Government came to power with big promises to increase the availability, supply and affordability of housing, but we have seen the exact opposite. When they came to power, there were 2400 families waiting on the wait list. That was the lowest figure in a decade. There are now more than 4300 families waiting on the housing register. When this Government came to power, the wait time to be housed in the social or government housing system was 25 weeks. The wait time now is 71 weeks, a tripling of the wait time while people are living in dire circumstances, sleeping in their cars, living in unsafe and insecure housing situations, not able to leave violent relationships, sleeping rough, couch surfing. All the time waiting longer.

There is a crisis at every level of the housing system. If you want to buy a house, prices now are soaring and selling sometimes for tens of thousands of dollars or more than the asking price.

Renting in the private market is almost completely out of reach for many Tasmanian families. The increased costs of buying put those private rents out of reach. An average family in Tasmania is paying 34 per cent of their income on rent. That is the very definition of housing stress. There are now 150 000 Tasmanians living in housing stress.

For people on low incomes renting in the private system, 43 per cent are in housing stress, so the figures are even worse. Deregulating the short-stay accommodation market has not

helped. The Liberals failed to take up the Labor Party's recommendation to put an indefinite pause on any new permits for whole dwellings in the short-stay market until Tasmanians are housed, until the pandemic is at an end.

There is also a crisis in the social and government housing sector, in the growing waiting list and the growing waiting time. Even in the emergency shelter sector there is a massive crisis. There were 18 000 turn-aways last year in the emergency shelter sector. This means somebody contacts an emergency shelter and they cannot be accommodated there that night because there is no room. That is an astronomical figure. When I first heard it, I thought I must have the decimal point in the wrong place. That is up from 15 000 the previous year and 14 000 the year before that. It is growing exponentially each year. At the Hobart Women's Shelter seven out of 10 adults and eight out of 10 children are turned away. That is the very definition of a system that is broken and showing no signs of improvement.

The Government made big promises. It said it would be building a house a day. Those promises, which are a little old, were not being delivered. It was not keeping up with its existing demand, let alone the predicted demand of the wait list. The Government's own numbers predict this will increase to more than 5000 in the next few years. Last week the Government doubled down and we heard the minister talk about it just now. He is promising 10 000 houses in the next 10 years. That is a big promise and I look forward to trying to keep this Government to account for that promise. Not only were they failing to deliver on their 'one house a day' promise, if they are going to deliver 10 000 houses in the next 10 years they will have to build three houses a day - 1000 houses a year. In the last 12 -month period they only delivered 251 houses. How will they possibly deliver 1000 a year when the figures are already so low?

The Government is out of touch. It does not know how to relate to the real pressures that are being felt by Tasmanians. It is not just the cost of housing and cost of rent, it is also the cost of fuel and groceries. They are higher than national averages.

Meanwhile Tasmanian wages are not keeping up. The ABS data showed us last month that wage growth was 3 per cent in Tasmania, which is below CPI of 4.5 per cent. There were 1400 jobs already lost this year in Tasmania and there are still 2000 less than pre-COVID.

Rents have increased. They have gone up about \$6000 in the past 12 months, 9 per cent in the south, 15 per cent in the north and 10 per cent in the north west.

The Premier keeps telling us how well the economy is going. It is not going well for the people who need it.

Time expired.

[12.19 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I had a laugh when I saw the topic today. I look across at the Opposition and I see a one-issue leader. I say to Labor, this is a failure to deliver.

On a more positive note, Labor might consider the word 'renewal'. I know that recycling is a big issue these days and they do like recycling their leaders, but sometimes in life you have to accept that something has worn out and you have to replace it.

There has been a lot said today about Health. I want to list here today, the completed projects we have done in the last 12 months for Health:

- opening additional bed spaces in Ward 6A and 3A in the Royal Hobart Hospital, and Ward 3D in the Launceston General Hospital;
- the Launceston General Hospital Ward 4K redevelopment;
- the Launceston General Hospital redevelopment Stage 1, Womens' and Childrens' tower and fire services upgrades;
- the King Island Stage 2 redevelopment;
- the ambulance stations in Smithton and Dodges Ferry;
- Flinders Island accommodation for health professionals;
- the Campbell Town nurses accommodation refurbishment;
- the Ambulance Tasmania state operations centre, Hobart, HVAC upgrade;
- the New Norfolk Hospital nurse call, body protection and hydraulic upgrades; and
- the Central Highlands Community Health Centre hydraulic upgrade.

These are just things we have done in infrastructure within the Health department. I do not have time to go through all the infrastructure projects. You see them when you drive around this state. You see the development that is going on. You probably run through one or two roadworks between each town on your way home.

The latest Health dashboard demonstrates that despite seeing continued increase in demand across our health system there are some encouraging improvements in performance as well as some ongoing challenges. We are beginning to see encouraging results from our investment, with the elective surgery waitlist decreasing by more than 1850 people from February 2021 to January this year. There are now fewer people on our waitlist that are waiting longer than clinically recommended. Through our elective surgery program we are aiming for around 30 000 additional elective surgeries over the next four years.

I want to see even more Tasmanians get their surgery within clinically recommended times. That is my priority, just like it is the minister's.

January also saw 9568 ambulance resources despatched to callouts which was 5.9 per cent higher than a year ago, and 15.9 per cent higher than two years ago. This is further evidence of the increase in demand we are seeing. Ambulance Tasmania managed response times of 14.8 minutes.

I thank the registered nurses and paramedics who undertook the secondary triage model, which has now been running for over 12 months, that provides advice and refers non-urgent cases to more appropriate care, such as GP telehealth or a community support service.

The outpatient waitlist continues to reflect the disruption of COVID-19, with a January figure of 59 616 compared to 59 420 in December. Behind these numbers are people who rely on us to do better. That is why one of our highest priorities this year is the development and implementation of an outpatient plan.

Like the elective surgery plan, the outpatient plan will provide a clear focused roadmap for the delivery of sustainable outpatient services over the next four years. It is being co-designed in cooperation with clinicians, patients and other key stakeholders. It will include service improvements which will transform the way outpatient services are delivered in Tasmania.

Oral health continues to present challenges, particularly due to the impacts of COVID-19 with a number of adults waiting for general care and for dentures. Our \$5 million election commitment to deliver an additional 20 000 dental appointments is on track. As of 31 January 2022, we have provided 5494 additional appointments. There has been some recent success with recruitment. Nine graduate dentists and therapists, along with nine additional dental and trainee dental assistants have been employed to help deliver additional appointments.

We are also investing in new digital denture technology due to come online in June this year which will see more efficient denture services for patients.

We have a plan to provide better healthcare for Tasmanians and we will continue to deliver on it. That means more elective surgery, additional health staff, investing in the health infrastructure we need to meet future demand, improving community-based care, expanding hospital avoidance programs and an increased investment in preventative health.

Let us not forget that it took a Liberal government to start publishing the outpatient waiting list. It really was the hidden list under the last Labor government. We are making this data available and we will be held accountable for it. We are aware of the outpatient elective surgery plan Labor took to the election. I was a bit underwhelmed to be honest, Mr Speaker. There was no clarity around how many additional elective surgeries Labor would do despite the question being asked on multiple occasions, and the detail around improving our patient list was equally vague. Our commitment is clear - to implement our health election commitments and to do everything we can to ensure Tasmanians get the right care, at the right place, at the right time.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

Motion to Note

Continued from 3 March 2022 (page 95).

[12.27 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, last week when I began my contribution to the state of the state address I went through some of what this Government has already shown us in the first few weeks, only of this year, which is really that they are out of touch of the expectations of the Tasmanian people and are failing to deliver on a number of portfolio areas.

Where I had progressed to in my speech was the COVID-19 border reopening and my theory is that the Government went 10 months early to an election because they knew that when the borders reopened that things would start to go pretty south for the Government.

Peter Gutwein looked across Bass Strait at what was happening to his premier colleagues in other states and territories and thought, 'I might like myself a bit of that benefit of incumbency so I might take the people to the polls 10 months early'. Sure enough, as I was getting to in my speech last week, the result of the disastrous lack of planning and the promises we were given in this place that everything was ready, the systems were ready and the education system was ready to cope, when teachers and families and people working in schools were telling us all as local members that that was not the case.

We were told the health system was ready to cope. Those things were not true. What we saw as a result of that was a shadow lockdown; that is, people made their own decisions to stay indoors, fearful of contracting the virus. People living with disabilities, people who are immunocompromised, were plunged into uncertainty. People who are elderly, people who are new parents, people who are caring for the elderly or people living with disability, were worried to leave their own homes.

They had been led to feel safe for two years but they felt nothing but uncertain now. Businesses closed, either to protect their workers and their customers from the risks of this increasing case load that we now were seeing, or because they were so short-staffed that they could not actually open and operate their businesses safely. It takes people to open a business.

The Government's reaction, I believe, was one of the biggest missteps we saw when businesses started to make those really difficult decisions. The Premier was very dismissive. He fronted the media and implied that businesses were jumping the gun as Public Health advice did not say they needed to close. He was completely out of touch with what those business owners and the workers who work in those businesses were going through - losing shifts, having to close because of the risk of COVID-19, because people were either COVID-19 positive, they were close contacts, or because they were closing for the safety of their staff, their workers and their customers. How heartless. What an absolute failure to deliver for Tasmanians who were worried and working really hard to make a living. The Premier is out of touch with the needs of people who are working in or running businesses in Tasmania. We are seeing the Government fail in other areas as well. In health - where there are 60 000 or more people now waiting for specialist appointments in the public health system. In education - where the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results are the worst in the nation and the retention for year 12 finishing rates are the worst in the nation, and where literacy rates - child and adult - are at worryingly low levels. The cost of living is a massive pressure for people at every demographic - private rents are up more than \$6000 a year since this Government came to power; petrol prices have soared to over \$2 a litre; water bills are set to increase by 15 per cent; and the cost of groceries and household costs are some of the highest in the nation.

These are the kinds of things that every Tasmanian household is facing these days. This Government is not listening, and they are not in touch with the way that they profess to manage the budget is not working for Tasmanians. It is not.

The Premier always tells us that Tasmania's economy is amongst the strongest performing in the nation. We heard him say those things in answer to a Dorothy Dixier in

Question Time today but you have to ask, when the Premier stands in this place and says that the Tasmanian economy is performing strongly, who is it performing strongly for? It is not performing strongly for people who are losing work. It is not performing strongly for people who are stringing together multiple casual jobs just to make ends meet. It is not performing strongly for people who are languishing on the public housing waiting list, waiting 71 weeks or more to be housed. It is not performing strongly for the 4300 families who are waiting on that priority housing wait list. It is not performing strongly for the 18 000 times that people are turned away from shelter accommodation each year. It is not performing well for people who are renting in the private market whose rents have gone up, who cannot save for a deposit anymore.

There is national data showing that housing prices are increasing at such a rapid rate that people cannot save for a deposit while also renting. It is not working well for people in that situation who are making a choice between can they pay for their rent, for their heating, for their living costs, or can they afford to eat that week. That is the reality that Tasmanians are facing. When the Premier stands in this place, or speaks to the media and says - 'Our economy is performing strongly', what does he say to the people sleeping in their cars on the side of the road? That is not fabricated; everyone in this place would have had people come into their offices seeking support - people who are homeless, who are sleeping rough, who are literally sleeping in their cars. There are some stories that I want to share and I do so with permission.

One person is happy for me to share her name. Her name is Sharnie and I have been working with her for some time. She has had a history of always renting privately and doing so very successfully. The reasons that her leases have ended is because the houses she has been renting have been sold. She moved into a caravan park with her three kids aged eight, three and one and during the nine months that she was living in that caravan park her new, beautiful baby girl, Tilly, arrived. Mum and four kids were now living in a caravan park cabin which was tiny. The cost of renting that place was \$450 a week, which was subsidised partly by Housing Tasmania.

The caravan park needed that place back for tourists, so Sharnie and her kids had to move out. Housing Connect arranged brokerage accommodation - short-term funding for accommodation for her in a pub which was far from her daughter's school. Her eldest daughter is in grade 3 this year and this is already the fourth school that she has been at. This gorgeous little girl said to her mum, she is happy to move again as long it is the last time. Can she move schools again but can it be the last time that she has to move schools, because she is sick of having to make new friends, explain her background, explain why they have not got a home.

Sharnie and her four kids were moved to a pub and that was arranged by Housing Connect and partly paid for by Housing Tasmania. Because of some other circumstances that were completely outside her control and were partly contributed to by her insecure housing, she was unable to come up with her share of the first week's costs of staying in that pub, which was \$200. That was because of the cost of moving, the cost of storage of her belongings, her daughter moving to the new school and needing a new school uniform, and some new things for her new school year.

Mr Speaker, I would like to think that we work in a system that is compassionate enough to understand somebody in those circumstances. She is someone who has done all the right things. She has ticked all the right boxes with housing. She has done everything that is asked of her; and yet she is still waiting now to be housed, with four young kids. That is not what

happened when she could not come up with that \$200. Do you know what happened? They would not let her move into that accommodation in the pub. There was a fully paid for, empty hotel room, ready for her and her four kids, and the hotel was instructed not to hand over the keys until she had come up with her \$200. She slept in the car for two nights with a three-month-old baby, a one-year-old toddler, a three-year-old and an eight-year-old. The first night that they slept in the car was the night before her eight-year-old started at her new school to begin grade 3.

We have talked about education results in this place and many people have raised it in their contributions to this debate over the last week, but that is hardly a good start to school in anyone's book, is it? The night before you are starting a brand-new school year in a brand-new school, you are having to sleep in a car with your brothers and sisters. That is the real face of this Government's inaction. That is the real face of this economy - that the Government says is performing so well - failing to deliver for real people, real Tasmanians. That is the real face of housing stress and homelessness in this state: someone who has done all the right things and yet still is left to wait.

There is another example that I want to share, but I will not share his name. He has been living in shelter accommodation for some time. He is desperately struggling. He needs his own place. He has doctor's reports explaining that his mental health is suffering. He has had suicidal ideation. He has complex health needs. Again, he is someone who is doing all the right things. He is ticking all the boxes that he is being asked to tick. One response, that we had as a result of advocating for this young man acknowledged that. The documents we received from the minister's office were that Housing Connect was also trying to assist him with private rental listings, which I know they do routinely but here in black and white is the answer: 'There are currently no affordable private rental listings'. That is in the response from the minister's office. What are people to do? It is acknowledged in responses that MPs get back from the minister's office - there are no affordable private listings to help that young man.

There are many others in that exact same situation -

Ms O'Connor - It is so expensive to live in Tasmania.

Ms HADDAD - That is true. It is so expensive to live in Tasmania now. The greater Hobart region is generally now the least affordable, or second least affordable, on the rental affordability index. It is becoming increasingly hard to live in Tasmania. In the meantime, wage growth is not keeping up with those increased costs of living for Tasmanians, and that is putting more people into really dire situations.

We also saw from the Premier's Address this massive promise of providing 10 000 houses in the social and government housing sector in 10 years. I went to that in my previous contribution in this place: 10 000 houses in 10 years means they are going to have to build about three houses a day. The previous promise was to deliver one house a day, and the Government was not keeping up with even that promise of their own. They were not keeping up with that promise to build one house a day. Meanwhile, even if they had been keeping up with that target of building one house a day, it would not have met the existing demand on the housing waitlist or the predicted amount. Now, they have doubled down on that, and will provide 10 000 houses in 10 years' time. They know they are not going to be able to deliver that. They are just giving false hope to Tasmanians. Conservative governments announce big things like that when they are under pressure. When conservative governments are on the

ropes, they jump for big infrastructure spends that they hope will distract the Tasmanian people into thinking things are moving along when they can see with their own eyes things are not.

They reach for big promises in housing, they reach for big promises in sport. They reached for the predictable old Liberal government friend that is tax cuts. The Premier has announced he will change the rules for land tax to create savings of \$800 to \$1600 a year for land and property owners. He has professed that these tax cuts will put downward pressure on rent. This can and will only be the case if those savings are passed on to tenants. It will provide very welcome relief for people who own investment properties. They are not all from the big end of town. Many are mum and dad investors who might own one rental property from which they are trying to gain financial stability for themselves and their families. That is not the problem. The problem is that the Premier has promised that this tax relief will reduce private rental costs. He has not told people how that will happen. He should not be allowed to get away with it. Unless he enforces it, those tax cuts will not reduce rents because they did not last time.

Rents have gone up \$6000 under this Government in Tasmania in the private rental sector. They have gone up in every region of the state. It is disingenuous for the Premier to tell people that these tax cuts will put downward pressure on rent. We will get one year into that and look back at those figures and see that has not been the case. He reaches for these things when he is under pressure. He reaches for these things when he can see the wheels are falling off this Government. He is losing ministers at a rate of one a week. He has had three reshuffles in a year. He is failing to deliver for Tasmania. He is out of touch with what is happening to Tasmanians and their families so he reaches for big shiny announcements. The underground bus mall is my personal favourite.

I catch buses and I am looking forward to catching a bus from the underground bus mall to the floating AFL stadium in the middle of the Derwent River so that I can watch an AFL match. Maybe I will just catch a ride on a flying pig: that is about as likely as me being able to catch a bus from the underground bus mall to watch the footy at a floating stadium. They are all promise and no delivery.

On that stadium, the reception has been lukewarm at best. The other night I scrolled through the Premier's Facebook page to look at comments from his constituents on the stadium announcement. One commenter, Geoff, said, 'that is so pointless, how about a health system that actually works and is not in crisis'. Pat said, 'forget it Peter, Launceston is a better place to draw people than Hobart'. Rachel said, 'How dare you! When families can't afford a roof over their heads, they are struggling with food on the table, hospitals that can't cope and you want to build a stadium for football games. That's so out of touch'.

He is out of touch. He is failing to provide the basics for people. The comments went on. Anika said, 'Major housing crisis, health system in crisis, mental health crisis and yet we need a multi-million-dollar waterfront facility to serve Tasmania's economy?'. Vicky said, 'I think it is bad timing at this point when people need homes and the sick are not getting the medical care or support that they need, with so much more important things for Tasmanians right now'. Finally, Marissa, said, 'As much as I love sports, this money needs to go to more important things like our health care system and workers'. These commentators clearly said to the Premier that this should not be their priority.

The Government says that their economic management is working for Tasmanians because the Budget is performing well on national scales. It is not performing well for those commenters who recognise that the system is not working for them or their families. The Government is continuously failing to deliver for people who are doing it tough, people who are working more than one job to pay for their mortgage or their private rent, the growing number of Tasmanians who are in need of social and government housing. That number will continue to grow as private rents and private house prices continue to soar.

The fastest growing cohort of people who are facing homelessness are women over the age of 55. Here we are on International Women's Day and I did not hear the Housing minister say anything in particular about what he is doing to address that cohort of growing need in our community, women over 55, who have worked their whole lives but had career breaks to raise children, who have less superannuation paid into their super accounts because they have potentially earned lower incomes than their male partners, or had time out of their career for when they are not earning super.

Relationships breakdowns are costly. The result of it, often, is that women are plunged into homelessness at a time when they should be looking forward to their retirement. This cohort of homeless Tasmanian women over 55 are in dire need of more action from this Government, as are Tasmanians right around the state, who are being failed by this Government, a government in chaos and without leadership.

[12.47 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, I rise to reply to the Premier's state of the state speech of last Tuesday.

First, I acknowledge the Aboriginal people of Tasmania, I acknowledge 219 years of dispossession from landscape and violence towards First Nations people, and this country, their island, lutruwita, Tasmania. I acknowledge that we are on the land of the muwinina and the nuenonne people. I pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I acknowledge with the greatest respect the warriors who fought to defend their country when the Europeans first arrived and the warriors in the Aboriginal community today who stand proud in their culture, deeply connected to country and community.

We are on a path in lutruwita towards truth telling and treaty. The first steps down that path have been laid through work commissioned by the Premier, to his credit, where he asked professors Tim McCormack and Kate Warner to work with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people to hear their hopes and their aspirations for truth telling and treaty, for genuine reconciliation and healing.

I noted, with a heavy heart, the response of some members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to the Premier's state of the state speech. It told me that what he said in that speech came as a surprise to them. It is not a good foundation for a consultative process that needs to be designed and led by Aboriginal people, that at that this parliamentary step there was such disquiet about the Premier's words. It was when he talked about a government not being here to determine Aboriginality or eligibility that we saw the unrest in the public gallery. It reminds us this is a very complex issue and we need to tread with the greatest of care. We cannot afford for this process not to work. It is far too important. We are held back as an island people by the fact that we have never come to terms and made recompense in any meaningful way for what happened to Aboriginal Tasmanians when the English arrived in 1803. The Greens stand

wholly committed to work with Aboriginal people and across this parliament to deliver that truth-telling process and Treaty.

You must pay more than lip service to Aboriginal people. We heard the minister for Parks be quite dismissive of the need for Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment inside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area in this place last week. One of the expressions of interest processes to develop lodges along the South Coast Track has potentially very significant impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage. I am certain that within the broader Tasmanian Aboriginal community there is enormous unease about how this Government manages or mismanages hugely culturally-significant lands, like those along the South Coast Track and in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

kunanyi is a sacred place to Tasmanian Aboriginal people yet the Government, at every step since 2014, has supported a desecration of the mountain for a cable car for a private development against the explicit wishes of Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

If we are serious about resetting this relationship, we must listen to what Tasmanian Aboriginal people are telling us about how they want their country - this landscape, this beautiful island - looked after and managed into the future.

We also need to do much better on the protection of Aboriginal heritage. If you are a developer in Tasmania, very rare is it that Aboriginal heritage will get in your way. This heritage belongs to Tasmanian Aboriginal people and it deserves respect.

I note that the Premier's state of the state speech gave passing mention to the environment. This is a positive because in previous years we have not even had passing mention. It was in quite cold language that demonstrated no connection to place. It was the language of circular economies and container deposits and waste levies. It was not the language of a government that understands what sets this island apart from the rest of the world is the natural environment - our wilderness, our forests.

We had three pages dedicated to sport and stadiums and a third of a page dedicated to our priceless natural treasures. It was a subsection within a speech that was so much about spin over substance.

What about being aspirational for nature? What about being aspirational for young people who right now are so stressed about the state of the climate?

It is the United Nations' Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. Young people are having significant mental health challenges when they look to the future. This is compounded, of course, by the impact of COVID-19 on their lives. There is an opportunity here to work within the framework of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, to bring Aboriginal people, together with young people, with the Mental Health Council of Tasmania, Landcare, Coastcare, NRMs, farmers, and other landowners, and do some of that repair work we know needs to be done. We see it all around us; there is an extraordinary opportunity here, that is a win, win, win. Repair the landscape, get young people working on the land. One of the most healing things you can do is to have your hands in the earth and making things grow.

This should be beyond politics. It is something we can do as a state; and we know that action equals hope. If we can point young people who are worried about the future in the

direction of action that leads to repair, that leads to more carbon being sequestered in the landscape, we are doing an enormous positive - not just for young people, but for all land managers, for our farmers.

We know from the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) findings, that Tasmanians overwhelmingly see through the spin, and they see that the perception of Tasmania as this clean, green, natural state is not matched by the facts and not matched by the effective government policy on this island's landscape and ecosystems. We need to stay true to PESRAC. We need to recognise that Tasmanians love this place. It does not matter how they vote.

One of the most meaningful revelations to me personally about how deeply Tasmanians love this wilderness has been over the course of the journey to save Lake Malbena and Halls Island from Daniel Hackett's heli-tourism proposal. I have spoken to people who have been lifelong Liberal voters, lifelong Labor voters, Greens voters, vote independent - to a man and a woman and a child, what it is that they love is the wilderness, and they know that it is their common wealth, that we are among- in many ways - the luckiest and the wealthiest people on the planet, because we live in an environment which has not yet been trashed. We need to do better by nature.

We have a Minister for Resources here who is overseeing the running dry of Tasmania's river systems; pollution in Tasmania's river systems; the over allocation of irrigation waters; not metering the water that is taken. As we know from the report he sought to conceal - Temporal and Spatial Patterns in River Health across Tasmania, and the Influence of Environmental Factors - almost every major river system on this island is impacted, and their health has taken a steep dive since the Liberals came to Government in 2014.

These rivers do not belong to the minister and they do not belong to anyone here. They belong to this island and they have an intrinsic right to be looked after. They also belong to everyone who will live on this island in the future because, contrary to what the minister says, water is not liquid gold; water is life, and without it, we are knackered.

I encourage the Government to recognise this is the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration; work across the parliament; work with all those outstanding organisations that are doing fantastic stuff on the ground but it is not coordinated yet and it is not harnessing the capacity of young people. It has not identified landscape scale projects, it has not really looked at what is happening to our river systems, but there is a golden opportunity for us to do something really different, really catalytic, and give young people hope for the future.

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

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

Motion to Note

Resumed from above.

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, before the break, I was talking about the importance of being aspirational for Tasmania's environment and there are

few issues I want to touch on before I move on to other parts of my contribution. At the moment, we have a government, and indeed a Labor Opposition, that supports putting a toxic mine waste dump inside a rainforest in takayna that has been proposed by a Chinese state-owned company, MMG. We need as a state to demand better from companies that come here to make profit. We should have the highest possible standards and, if you want to work in a place like takayna, you need to have the lightest of footsteps. But we have a government that is quite happy to see one of the great temperate wildernesses of the world being slowly trashed by mining, logging and other inappropriate activities.

We have people who live in and around Derby, a town that has seen the most extraordinary revival as a result of Tasmanian Forest Agreement funds where we now have people coming from all over the mainland and the world to take part in Blue Derby bike rides, and yet, Forestry Tasmania, the Government's GBE, is still logging coupes in and near Derby. There is a letter from more than 200 tourism operators to the Tasmanian Government saying knock it off, stop it, they are actually incompatible. A healthy tourism sector and industrial-scale native forest logging and burning that goes with it are incompatible. At face value, we all know that, but because it is ideological we cannot have a government that accepts it.

We also have, it was revealed on the weekend, a most extraordinary Huon pine forest that is around 2000 or 3000 years old on the Wilson River near the site of the proposed Venture Minerals Mount Lindsay mine. Again, we need to be smarter about the choices we make and we should not be caught in this false paradigm of jobs or the environment. There are actually a lot more jobs in a healthy brand and if this Government allows a mine to destroy a truly ancient pine forest for a mine then it will tell us everything we need to know about this Government's priorities. These Huon pine trees have been here since before the birth of Christ. We are talking about ancient, timeless, miraculous wonders, and yet this forest is threatened.

We have to do better. You cannot be taken seriously on climate - and this is our message to the Government - if you keep logging and burning native forests. Young people see straight through it. They know this is ideological, they know it is happening at public expense, and they know that practice on the part of the Tasmanian Government is releasing vast, as yet unquantified, volumes of carbon into the atmosphere. That is an intergenerational crime, but we are seeing intergenerational crimes being inflicted on children and young people in this state on multiple levels.

My daughter's best friend has spent the past three years working at a hardware store full-time saving, saving and saving. She pulled together what she thought was a deposit to buy a house in the Huon Valley and was so excited as she started house hunting about six months ago. My daughter's best friend is so shattered and demoralised by the experience of constantly missing out that she is about to blow that deposit by travelling around the world. Who can blame her?

This story has been repeated all over the island. We have Tasmanians who cannot afford the rent. We have people who are homeless because of the rents. We are the least affordable capital city in the country. Tasmanians are leaving this beautiful island to find somewhere they can afford to live on the mainland. We have young people who are giving up on the dream of being able to own their own home which, until not that long ago in Tasmania at least, was a dream well within reach. No longer.

A huge part of the reason for this act of intergenerational theft is federal and state government neglect of the need for more social and affordable housing. For the first three years under former premier Will Hodgman, no new money went into increasing the supply of affordable housing. Spin, spin, spin is what we got. Now we have a government that is playing catch-up. It is good to see them adopt the Greens target of 10 000 homes within a decade but on their track record Dr Woodruff and I are not particularly optimistic.

You could fix, to a significant extent, soaring rents within a very short space of time if you put some regulations around short-stay accommodation, had some rent controls like they do in the ACT and if you taxed vacant residences. What do we get from this Government? We get a \$220 million land tax gift to the propertied class and then a complete falsehood about the effect of this massive land tax cut, a falsehood called out, I might say, by economist Saul Eslake. Cutting land tax does not bring down rents. If it did, rents would be lower in Tasmania because there was a cut to land tax not more than a year ago.

This Government pays lip service to the aspirations of Tasmanians to be able to afford to live here, to rent here and to buy a home in Tasmania. When this Premier talks about being aspirational, he is out of touch with the dashed aspirations of so many Tasmanians who are being priced out of their paradise. The policy steps you can take to bring real rental relief are there, they are evidence based and we know they will work but, no, this Government will not rein in short-stay accommodation because it does not want to hurt investors. It will give them a land tax present instead. Spare me the rubbish about being aspirational on housing.

It is aspirational to have a good education and hope that you might be able to go into a career of your choosing, something you are passionate about, to make a contribution, to have a successful life. How can it be that after seven years of the Liberals in government on NAPLAN we are accelerating in reverse?

I commend to members Dr Lisa Denny's exceptional analysis of NAPLAN results over the past seven years; it is deeply confronting reading. Dr Denny says an analysis of 10 years of NAPLAN results reveals an alarming trend of low and declining literacy and numeracy, knowledge and skills for Tasmanian students as well as a substantial and widening socioeconomic gap and considerable gender gap. Where was the aspiration for Tasmanian children and young people when the Liberals came to office in 2014? What they did in their first year was sack one to two teachers from every single school and schools have been playing catch-up ever since.

Have a look at the Premier's Address. When they talk about investing in health and education, you do not see them talking about investing in people; it is buildings they talk about. It is infrastructure, hard infrastructure.

There was no acknowledgement in the Premier's Address of the need to have a strong, dedicated and independent public sector. No. Instead, what we have is a government that is dismantling the agency that has one of the most important front-facing roles of any in government, and that is Communities Tasmania. No rationale for that has really been given; no Dorothy Dix question on pulling apart Communities Tasmania. It really does tell us something about what this Government values.

I acknowledge that we have extraordinarily dedicated and decent people who are working on the commission of inquiry. I have spoken to survivors who have given preliminary

testimony to the commission and have been very heartened by the evident dedication that the commission has to giving survivors voice and acting on what they hear to make sure that we become the safest place in Australia for children and young people.

Closing the Ashley Youth Detention Centre is very much a part of that. This is the same Ashley Youth Detention Centre which has been torturing children and young people, damaging them for a century. The current Education minister told us, when he was previously the minister for Children, that it was a safe place for the detainees. We now know that not to be the case. Of course, this is the same minister who tells us that schools are safe places to send unvaccinated, unmasked children; the same minister who stood in front of the media yesterday announcing his extension of the back to school plan, who was really cheery because apparently it has been a really successful return to school.

It is not successful for 1747 children and young people to be infected with a virus that medical science is only just beginning to understand. No proportionality principle has been applied to those children and the return to school.

So far this year in Australia, there has been a COVID-19 death every 30 minutes. Not one of those Australians suffered a mild death. We have become somehow desensitised to such a staggering death toll. Death from, by, with, of, COVID-19, is becoming normalised. An approach to a potentially deadly, disabling bat virus - it is a bat virus - has effectively been to let it rip.

What did Tasmanians discover on 15 December last year? They discovered they are on their own. For two years we had a government that told us it was dedicated to keeping us safe. We had two years to get ready. What happened after 15 December? Well, for the first four days, no masks, as thousands and thousands of people poured in from the mainland; no masks, no restrictions. What did we have? We had government sanctioned super-spreader events like Party in the Apocalypse. Have a look at the reported case data after Party in the Apocalypse, where some of our youngest and brightest and most healthy young people contracted this virus. We had people who could not, for love nor money, book in a PCR test. They would go down to get a rapid antigen test, like my son did one day. He was in that queue for seven hours. We had whole families who believed they were infected, and they had one RAT delivered to their home.

It is an absolute, egregious lie to say that we were ready. We were not ready. Talk to some of the people who contracted COVID-19, particularly in those early days. Talk to some of the people who waited for seven days for a callback from the COVID@home program, only to speak to a doctor who would not give their last name; kept trying to tell them their painful symptoms were just a mild case of the disease; and asked did they have other stresses in their lives that perhaps were making them feel this terrible.

I spoke to a woman who is also a friend of mine, but would also be well known to people in this place, who contracted COVID-19 on 2 January, got a call back seven days later from COVID@home, and her experience of going through that illness - which was designated mild - brought me to tears. The trauma that this person still lives with to this day as, months later, she continues to work through her recovery; the trauma is profound.

We have a Government that continues to this day to call a variant of COVID-19 'mild'. All the evidence tells us that while Omicron may be less severe than Delta, Delta was twice as

severe as the original wild Wuhan variant. At every step of the way, we have had this Government minimise COVID-19. We have had this Government treat COVID-19 infection as it is some kind of trivial inconvenience. We had the federal Health Minister advise us to simply go and buy Panadol, while the New South Wales Health Minister, Brad Hazzard, basically said you are all going to get it anyway.

I do not buy that neoliberal garbage, Mr Speaker, and Tasmanians should not either. If we had a Government that was not so content to let this virus spread, there would be at scale public education about this virus; the known health consequences of this virus; the questions that science has not yet been able to answer; and there would be advice from Government on how to effectively shield yourself but no. Because of the messaging coming out of federal and state governments, there seems to be this belief within the population that it is over, that we are through this. Today, Tasmania recorded more than 1000 COVID-19 positive cases. An unknown number of them will be children in primary school. The Greens have been in very good company sounding the alarm on COVID-19.

Time expired.

[2.48 p.m.]

Mrs ALEXANDER (Bass - Inaugural Speech) - Mr Speaker, I stand today to address the parliament and the people of Tasmania for the first time. I am grateful to the people of Bass for this wonderful opportunity to be here today. As their elected representative, I am looking forward to representing their interests and identifying opportunities to make a positive contribution to Tasmania.

I hope to be able to tell enough about myself to convey just how much of a sense of wonder I have to be in this Chamber as an elected representative of the people of Bass.

Though I do not know the background of members sitting in this place, I hope I am safe to assume that all of you here today were born and raised in a western liberal democracy and have lived with a Westminster system of government since childhood. Even if some of you may not have taken an active interest in politics at a younger age, the totems and tablets of parliamentary politics were around you everywhere - from conversations with parents and other family members, to the television and radio news, or overhearing strangers talking in public places.

As you grew up, you would have begun to formulate and articulate your own ideas of what represented good policy and how things should be. By the time young people reach adulthood and register to vote, they will know their way around a political system.

Taking federal and state governments together, people know that every few years, the premier or the prime minister will call an election. There would be a field of candidates to choose from: Liberal, ALP, Greens and independents. Whether people go to the polling booth with a spring in their step or dragging their feet, mark the ballot and go home, it all happens naturally because of growing up knowing that voting in elections is something that everybody just does.

My experience growing up in socialist Romania was different. There was only one party. Voting was something more for form rather than with any intention of meaningful change. The country had one leader who always was voted in with a 99.99% majority. There were no

electorates with fields of candidates from which to choose. There were no town hall meetings, no T-shirts, no hats, no signs, no television ads or radio interviews. All of these things were missing.

What was also missing was any sense that you had a right to participate or have a say in the political process. Communist regimes are not really into customer feedback. You never had a sense that when you voted for that one candidate you were actually helping to shape your own, or your country's future.

In Australia we all have the opportunity to do just that. Too often we do not consciously realise that when we vote we are each putting forward our own view in how things should be done. Having always lived with a right to do so, we do not realise how liberating it is to complain, if we feel like it, about our politicians. Australia is a terrific country. Our own corner of paradise here in Tasmania is the best part of it.

As someone who has not always had that right to participate in choosing how and by whom I am governed, I believe the most important thing that I can do each and every single day I am in this place is to remember what a precious gift we have in having a right to choose, thanks to our democracy. As someone who has not always had that right or that ability, I promise that I will remember every single day that I am here on behalf of the people of Bass. I will remember that their feedback and concerns are far more important than their good wishes or congratulations. At the core of every concern there lies the beating heart of democracy.

I have always found it interesting to listen to those people who live in a free society demand that we embrace communism, or its equally ugly relation socialism. I cannot help but notice that the most ardent proponents of communism, socialism or socialist ideas have never experienced what it is to live the Marxist dream, or has ever said, 'I would love to live under communism as a worker or as a peasant'. In the version of communist utopia they call for, they always assume to be the ones making the rules for others to live by. Winston Churchill once said:

No-one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government, apart from all other forms of government that have been tried ...

As someone who grew up in a country governed by one of the other forms that have been tried, I can heartily endorse that sentiment. When you live in a democracy you expect things to make sense. You expect to be able to talk freely and to be able to chart the course of your destiny.

In a socialist country you do not do this. In socialist Romania, in about year 11 or 12, you had to undertake a full medical examination to determine if you had any illnesses and any disabilities that they considered may prevent you from performing a job. The medical report would highlight in fine detail what jobs they felt you were unable to do. Therefore you could not select any tertiary education that did not match your determined abilities. That report was paramount to your application for admission at university. If you had any disabilities or illnesses, you were not free to choose your career, unless it just so happened that what you wanted to do also coincided with a medical recommendation. Luckily, in my case, the requirements to study economics were not too onerous.

Competition at key universities was fierce with, as an example, medicine counting sometimes up to 75 applicants for one place. You had to prepare for your admission exams at least two years in advance. The emotional and psychological toll was high on many applicants, but there was no mental health or counselling support.

For boys who failed admission at university, military service was compulsory for 12 months away from home. If they secured a place at university it was still compulsory but only for nine months. I remember in year 12 all the boys were ordered to spend part of their summer holiday doing their patriotic duty as labourers building the canal between the Danube River and the Black Sea. So they went and laboured for free.

Mr Speaker, let me also explain how government controls information in a socialist totalitarian state. We had two hours of television a day, dedicated to news about the glorious achievements under the guidance of the Communist Party and its leader. For some form of sanity and connection with the outside world, we relied heavily on VCRs and video tapes smuggled into the country at great personal risk to the smuggler. We shared these tapes on the quiet, surreptitiously watching foreign movies and television serials. *Poldark* was particularly popular.

Freedom of movement was obviously a no-no. After all, why would you want to leave the socialist dream behind? For the few who had the opportunity to travel out of the country, your passport had to be returned within less than a week. Under no circumstances were you allowed to keep your passport at home. If you were caught in possession of more than US\$10 there were consequences.

Freedom in its full entirety is a precious gift. You realise how much you miss it when it is no longer there. Simple day-to-day activities could land you in big trouble when you live in a totalitarian regime. Rules are enacted with no logic, no sense and served to the people with no explanation.

There are many of these crazy, mad and irrational decisions my father shared with me from his early life. In the 1950s as a young medical student in his first year at university, he was summoned to the office of the intelligence officer of the faculty of medicine. Every workplace, school, office has an intelligence officer ready to report any saboteurs or subversives. He was questioned harshly about being in possession of subversive western literature. 'A corruption of the mind', he was told. My father was stunned and said he had not done anything of the kind. The officer then reached into the drawer and slammed the book on his desk saying, 'We searched your room and we found this'. The book in question was *Gone with the Wind*. Dad was let go with a first and final warning that if he was to commit any other similar offences he would be expelled from university, never to be allowed in again. He was asked to go to the toilet and tear each page apart and flush it down the toilet.

He also shared with me another story that for me, being an animal lover, upset me deeply. In the late 1940s or early 1950s, an order came through that all village households should not be in possession of more than one dog. The family had to make a choice and my dad said goodbye to two of his furry friends as they were shot.

Totalitarian regimes will inflict as much emotional, physical and mental pain as one cannot possibly imagine. They will keep you in fear and uncertainty, they will make you turn away from family values and distrust those around you. You will be asked to comply or else

you will be labelled as a 'traitor' and dealt with accordingly. They will know everything about you and you will know nothing about them. When people know everything about their government it is called democracy. When government knows everything about you it is called tyranny. Romania may have been the starting point on my 54-year journey to this place, but there were a number of stops along the way between Bucharest and Bass. If at times I may confuse my nominative with my accusative, it may be because English is my third language following behind Romanian and French.

As I have said, I have the good fortune to be the daughter of a doctor and my mother was a history teacher. I was born in Bucharest and when I was four my father was sent to Morocco as part of a contract between Romania and the Moroccan government. There were many of these contracts in the early 1970s and this was a good source of foreign currency for the government. In addition to the direct contract funding, each specialist was also asked to pay a quota of their salary to the embassy on a monthly basis. My parents believed in education and despite having to pay a portion of their salary to the Romanian government they still found the money for me to attend a French Catholic school in Fez. There was no lack of children's books, which they purchased for me with regularity.

The revolution which deposed Nicolae Ceausescu in 1989 had left Romania in turmoil, as revolutions are wont to do. I can certainly confirm that after relentless days and nights of tanks on the move and heavy machine-gun fire, you become emotionally exhausted. Even if you place your hands over your ears in a desperate attempt to dampen the noise, it is still there and keeps you awake night after night. You learn quickly when approaching checkpoints randomly set up around the streets that you do not know who holds the gun or whether they have ever received proper training, so the best thing to do is to put your hands up in the air and advance slowly. In the end you try very hard to understand who is fighting who, such is the confused state of revolutions.

You learn these things very quickly when you are only 22 years old. For those who believe revolution is a romantic act of freedom, let me tell you that when the 24-hour free-to-air reports have concluded, and it is not newsworthy any more, what follows is less romantic and it is called a power vacuum. It is messy and dangerous but fertile ground for those who have waited in the shadows - and there will be many of them, unfortunately.

In 1993 I left in search of time and space to breathe and perhaps find a normal life. I went to New Zealand where I spent five beautiful years, mainly in the South Island, enjoying working for a tourism company. The vast majority of our customers were international tourists from all over the world, with a high volume from Japan, South Korea and Europe. While many of these customers had queries and demands, not all of them could speak English. Such is the way that these things seem to happen, my Kiwi colleagues decided that because I had a foreign accent I would automatically be able to understand all other foreign languages, be it Japanese or German or all points in between. Quite often the situation was that the tourist actually struggled to understand the Kiwi accent. I remember one American tourist being absolutely confused over being asked to check in and demanded to know why he was being asked about a chicken.

From New Zealand I landed in Western Australia and there began my more than two decades-long association with the not-for-profit sector that has encompassed the St John Ambulance, Save the Children, Cancer Council of Western Australia and the Western Australian Fire and Emergency Management Authority.

While I was with Cancer Council in Western Australia, my husband, who had spent a year in Tasmania in the early 1990s, suggested we drive across the country and spend a month in Tasmania. He promised I would love the place, and he was right. Three years later we were on our way back and it has been our home ever since. We have lived in this beautiful and unique place since 2010. Shortly after arriving I commenced working in aged care with Presbyterian Care Tasmania until 2018 when I was appointed CEO of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Tasmania.

We in this Chamber are all a product of our lived and learned experiences. We might differ in our opinions about priorities and approach but I firmly believe that every single member of this House holds a commitment to their convictions and has one goal: to improve the lives of every Tasmanian.

Much is said about partnerships between various sectors. In my experience we achieve better outcomes when government, the private sector and community organisations work together. In one of John F. Kennedy's most famous quotes he said, 'Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.'. My version of President Kennedy's line is 'ask not what our communities can do for us, ask what we can do for our communities'.

When we talk about spending taxpayers' money, let us not forget that it is the small amounts, such as well-targeted grants placed in the hands of community organisations that are the boots on the ground, that can make a real difference. The eyes and ears of their members will see a need and will address that need.

Given my long history in the not-for-profit sector, many people approached me and asked me why I was running for the Liberal Party. The answer is because my lived experience in Tasmania has demonstrated to me that this Liberal Government truly does care about those in need in our community. As an example, I would like to talk about an issue close to my heart: reducing homelessness and helping those at risk of homelessness. Last week, the Premier, the Minister for Housing and I announced the bold plan to spend \$1.5 billion to supply 10 000 new homes, a great initiative and one that I wholeheartedly support. Importantly, it is a prime example of collaboration between the state government, private sector and community organisations that best delivers these projects and addresses the needs.

Community organisations can bring significant additional knowledge to the bricks and mortar partnership, ensuring that people who move into homes have, when required, access to wraparound services and supports so they can remain in their homes and retain the roof over their heads. This is paramount.

In a research paper prepared by Vivienne Skinner and Phillippa Carnemolla in May 2021 titled *Outcomes Associated with Providing Secure, Stable and Permanent Housing for People Who Have Been Homeless: An International Scoping Review*, they analysed 100 international studies about prioritising permanent housing as a solution for homelessness. Their research revealed secure housing improves outcomes for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness in four key areas.

Number one was health. Every study analysed in the paper saw a drop in accessing health services once an individual was permanently housed. Physical and mental health saw improvements.

Number two was criminality. Studies reported that once permanently housed, less time was spent in jail, with fewer encounters with police and arrests. Housing also provides safety from criminal behaviour, particularly for women and children who live in dangerous conditions. In the 2016 census, one of the fastest growing groups of homelessness was women over the age of 55. This is often due to domestic and family violence.

Number three was quality of life. Housing is an early step in rebuilding identity and restoring a sense of personhood. A Canadian study of Housing First participants found that once settled in housing, participants' lives changed from being survival oriented to peaceful.

The last key outcome is reduction in the use of social services. Studies also revealed that permanent housing created value for communities and taxpayers through a reduction in the use of services such as the justice system, hospitals and health and services for mental health and addiction. The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute found that the costs saved to services for a single person in housing would be more than \$1 million over a lifetime. Other areas that saw improvement include education and employment, community participation and reduced substance abuse.

It is my personal experience of how, when we work together, we can achieve amazing outcomes for our communities and especially for the most vulnerable in those communities.

Through my recent work, I have met some wonderful people. There are so many service providers in Tasmania who dedicate countless hours to help those in need in our community. It is my hope as a member for Bass, I can help to support the work of these service providers and community organisations.

Mr Speaker, it is an honour to follow in the footsteps of two wonderful female state Bass MPs - Sarah Courtney and the late Sue Napier. Both women were held in great esteem in the electorate and both served their constituents in Tasmania with distinction and passion. My hope is to emulate their commitment to service and duty to every Tasmanian, and in particular the people of Bass.

I stand here today thanks to the commitment and belief of a number of people who supported me during the election campaign. I thank the Premier for his support and encouragement to join the Bass ticket at the election, as well as fellow Bass member, Michael Ferguson. My Liberal partyroom colleagues have been especially welcoming and supportive and I am looking forward to working hard with them over the coming years.

My campaign team had something of an international flavour - in a sense, reflecting the welcoming spirit of Australia and our diversity. My team included an Englishman, my husband Jason; a Welshman, Mark; two Australians, Rotarian member Andrea and work colleague Bernadette; and my good Persian-Swedish friend, Sherri, who lives in Sydney and never voted Liberal in her life - she actually voted Green. Sherri was born in Iran, her family fled the revolution and settled in Sweden. Sherri and I may differ in some of our beliefs and voting preferences but we are a perfect example of how society should work.

Respect and friendship should not be hindered by political ideology. We should not unfriend our friends and we should not see life as black and white. Life and people are not about colour or religion or gender; life is more complex than that.

To Sherri and the rest of my team, I could not have done it without you. Thank you to you all from the bottom of my heart. I also thank my parents, who are not here today. My father is in Romania and unfortunately my mother passed away at a young age. However, I am sure that for the last 34 years she has looked over me, and though she may have raised her teacher's eyebrow from time to time, I hope that she is proud of my achievements.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mrs ALEXANDER - Mr Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind that my successes are solely due to the values my parents have instilled in me and the education they have worked so hard to provide.

To the voters of Bass who have placed their faith in me to represent their interests, I will repay your loyalty by listening to you and carrying your ideas and desires forward for consideration by our Government. Thank you.

I take this opportunity to thank the staff at Parliament House, and those at the office in Launceston, who have been very welcoming and provided so much information and support. Nothing has been too hard for them, setting aside time from their busy work schedule to look after me.

Finally, to my husband, Jason, who cannot be here today. I know that he is watching these proceedings and he is supporting me in spirit. Jason is my counsel and my greatest supporter. He has encouraged me in every endeavour and he has always been there for me in times of crisis, doubt and tough decisions.

In the last 10 days of the campaign, Jason helped me with letterbox drops, walking 203 kilometres or total of almost 260 000 steps, at a great cost to himself. He, more than anyone, has my love, affection and thanks.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I believe that whatever title or office we may be privileged to hold, it is what we do that defines who we are. It is up to us to decide what kind of person we want to be and what legacy we want to leave behind. Thank you.

Members - Hear, hear.

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I commend Mrs Alexander, the newest member for Bass, on an excellent speech. First speeches are amazing. For those of us who have listened to quite a number, it gives a wonderful insight into new members. I look forward to working with you in Bass.

As I stand in the House for the first time in this parliamentary session, I will start by providing recognition of the deep history and culture of our island. I acknowledge the traditional owners, the palawa people of the land upon which we stand today, lutruwita/Tasmania. I acknowledge that the Tasmanian Aboriginal people have loved, cared, and been part of this land for over 40 000 years. I deeply respect the impact of being on country, and recognise that they have survived invasion, dispossession, and continue to maintain their identity, culture, and Aboriginal rights. They do so with the greatest generosity as they share the most painful of stories with courage and strength. I acknowledge any

Aboriginal people here today or listening, and acknowledge elders past and present, and I look forward to the powerful work we will see from future leaders as they emerge.

I join other members on this side as we reaffirm Tasmanian Labor's commitment to treaty, and justice for Tasmanian Aboriginal people, and our hope that we can work together for truth-telling, reconciliation, and the return of lands. After the reaction from the community last week, I urge the Premier to not squander what is a great opportunity that we have in Tasmania right now for treaty and healing.

Further, I stand here today in response to the Premier's Address and International Women's Day, and note that globally 47 000 women and girls were killed by their male partners or family members in 2020. Those are only the deaths that we know about. Forty-seven countries still have no repercussions for husbands who rape their wives; 2.7 billion women are legally restricted from having the same choice of jobs as men; 45 countries do not have specific laws against domestic violence; 30 per cent of women globally have experienced sexual or physical violence in their lifetime; and Australia's gender pay gap is 14.2 per cent.

Despite domestic violence laws, public awareness and access to legal protection, Australian men are still killing women, partners or exes at the rate of one a week.

Reproductive rights remain a political football. Here in Australia, access varies by state, and in some parts of the United States laws have passed making terminations inaccessible no matter what the reason behind a woman's decision. Despite legislation passing this House in 2013, only recently have publicly funded abortions been accessible by Tasmanian women.

According to a major report in 2020, climate change is increasing violence against women and girls. Case studies have shown increases in domestic abuse, human trafficking, sexual assault and violence against women environmental rights defenders.

International Women's Day is a once a year chance - once a year, aren't we lucky - to remind governments, businesses and everyone else that women are not going anywhere, and are prepared to take action to achieve human rights.

These issues are compounding for the challenges already faced by women of colour, women with disabilities, queer or trans women, and we stand in partnership with them.

I also note in response to the perennial question that many of us have received in the years since the day commenced, that International Men's Day is 19 November, and that if you only ever ask that question through the gendered lens of International Women's Day events, then you are not actually asking about Men's Day, but undermining women.

Am I delighted that we have an entire day to ourselves or am I further disheartened that our battle never ends?

This is my first time in the House since I was a close contact of a COVID-19 case and missed last week, and I missed a couple of really important motions in this House. I was not here for the motion on Hillcrest and can only send my deepest sympathy and compassion to the families and friends of those impacted and the broader educational and local community.

I was not here for the motion on the current invasion on Ukraine, and I too stand for the people of Ukraine as they battle, not just for their homes, but for the principle of democracy that we have held dear since World War II.

I also note the bravery of those Russian citizens who protest, knowing the repercussions of such an action by a government that acts to silence its people. I note the disproportionate impact of war on those most vulnerable in our communities, often women and children, and that so many young people are involved in this conflict, either defending their homes or as part of a conscripted force. I join the global community in its condemnation of this aggression and wanting a peaceful end.

The reason I was away from parliament is due to COVID-19. I want to talk a little about COVID-19 today. Twenty-six people in Tasmania have died since COVID-19 first hit our island state in 2020. The same number have died in the last two months as the number who died in 2020, and I take this moment to remember all of them. Each one of them had value, a story, and were deeply loved by their family and friends. I caution, as I have in the past, against the language that we use around this tragic loss of lives.

In 2020 we were shocked and also somewhat frightened of the tragic loss of lives to COVID-19. Now, as each death is noted in the Health department daily briefing, we comfort ourselves with the words, 'underlying health conditions'. We must be careful in the language we use not to diminish the loss of those lives. I understand Public Health messaging. I know it is to give comfort that this strain is not as dangerous as the first, and that our vaccination strategy is working. This may well be true, but each of these lives mattered. Their underlying health issues did not mean that their lives were about to end in the manner in which they did. Many of them would have gone on living full and active lives in our community. Their family's grief is not lessened. Their right to be safe is not lessened and many Tasmanians have underlying health issues.

Similarly, the language around 'mild' and the words 'cold and flu-like symptoms' undermines the seriousness of this condition. It is a serious issue and international research is proving that. One for which the longer-term health impacts are unclear. It can, for many, have long-lasting effects. We talk about the number of people who have been cleared from quarantine. Not all of those people are well. Not all of those people go back to work the next day.

We have much to understand about long COVID-19. Other jurisdictions around the world are investing heavily in understanding and treatment. Even last year, the United Kingdom was establishing specific clinics for the treatment of long COVID-19 in children. In Australia we do not appear to be doing that.

For someone who got COVID-19 in that first month I feel some comfort and the right to raise these concerns because my case was what was referred to as 'moderate'. I do not ever remember being as sick as I was when I had 'moderate' COVID-19. Why should I raise that today? It goes to this Government's ability to get things right, to deliver on their words, to keep our community safe. Late last year we asked a lot of questions in this Chamber about our state's preparedness. The Health minister repeatedly said that we were, and I quote because I thought it was interesting language, 'As prepared as we could be'.

The Premier said the state had levers they could use to keep the community safe from COVID-19. Those levers were contact tracking and tracing and the use of restrictions. The Government assured the Tasmanian community that there was a plan. That plan was thrown out of the window pretty quickly after the border reopened, with the Government abandoning contact tracing and tracking because it was simply too hard. It was one of the key levers they said they had at their disposal to keep the community safe. Case numbers quickly escalated beyond 2000 a day. Today, there were over 1000. Some 5600 are currently with COVID-19. That is because they finished day seven but not because they no longer have COVID-19.

Hospitals are at the highest COVID-19 escalation, something we were clearly not prepared for. Many hospital staff, particularly those at the Launceston General Hospital, did not even have places inside the building where they could have their lunch. COVID-19 preparedness was such that they had to go outside. Going outside was a challenge because they were discouraged from doing that because removing and returning in your PPE was increasing infections. Many people did not even get to eat during that time. Nursing staff were being told to take their breaks. The Government was instructing the hospitals to make sure they were taking their breaks. They were not provided the relief to do so, so how prepared was that?

Health services were cancelled. I will talk about the impact of that in a moment.

The testing queues in Launceston were up the hill to Ravenswood or blocking businesses all the way through South Launceston. The system was quickly overwhelmed. People were told they could use a Rapid Antigen Test. No-one could find one. If they could, they were paying massive out-of-pocket costs. How prepared was that? Many people who needed Rapid Antigen Tests could not leave the house in order to get them. It was weeks before the Government put in place any mechanism to get them there. I delivered them to families because they could not access them.

Businesses shut down. They were left without guidance and support and had the Premier judging them for the decisions they were making for the safety of their staff and customers and to stop significant loss of income. He accused them of overreacting and of failing to be adaptive. 'Be creative', he said. These are the businesses that survived the past few years. They were not incompetent businesses that were struggling. They were responsive, active businesses that had already survived difficult times but could not survive this. Businesses were bleeding and the Government had to be dragged kicking and screaming to a support package. How prepared was that?

Casual staff were left without shifts and without income. They were struggling to get the food that they needed. Most of them could not afford to purchase a RAT at the ridiculous prices they were going for. How prepared was that?

These were real impacts on real people and it hurt them. It hurt them socially, economically and in their health access.

I get really annoyed when, as leaders, we stand around and talk about how thankful we are. It has been said many times in this House that we give those health workers and those frontline staff across all of our sectors our thanks, but our thanks do not go a long way in paying bills, in securing safe and affordable housing, or in assisting the struggle to cope with the rising cost of living. They certainly do not get you off an appallingly long hospital waiting list. If this Government was genuine in thanks, it would act to support workers in secure, well-paying

jobs. If this Government was genuine it would act to ensure that housing and health were accessible and affordable.

During the pandemic, governments across Australia demonstrated that there were levers they could pull to change the economic and social wellbeing of Australians. They chose to do it then, they choose not to do it now. If we were truly thankful, if we truly appreciated these workers and other members of our community we would keep using those levers. We would ensure that all workers were supported. We would ensure that all benefits provided ensure the basic standard of living. Too many Australians, too many Tasmanians, are not just falling through the cracks but they are struggling to cross the abyss caused by government policy failure. This Government is failing Tasmanians, whether it be in failing to act or in the damning reality of failing to deliver.

I want to take this moment to read in a letter from a constituent of mine, Justin, who has written begging help from this Government. He has gone to the media begging for help and is waiting in unimaginable pain for surgery. The first letter that he writes draws the minister's attention to the fact that it is 276 days when he wrote this on the 18 February since he last wrote and 449 days since he was placed on the waiting list for a knee replacement. He had not had an answer. It is now 465 days since he has been placed on the list. He says:

I have endured extreme chronic pain in my right leg and back since a spinal cord injury in December 1991. In September 2020 I developed osteoarthritis in my right knee which has since rapidly deteriorated resulting in further severe pain which requires a full knee replacement to remedy. I was placed on the waiting list as a category 3 on 26 November 2020. In addition I have major depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and I am now wheelchair-dependent and house bound with a poor quality of life.

There are many days when it is difficult to see any purpose in carrying on living, especially as there is no publicly funded paid management available in Launceston, in the state's second city. I have received advice from an orthopaedic surgeon that the wait list at the LGH will be 500 to 600 days, meaning that I may have to endure my present situation until August 2022. This has been backed up by statements from the Premier during the recent campaign.

Mr Harding is incredibly distressed that he has not had an answer. He is a former ministerial adviser in another government, not this one obviously and not in this state. We are waiting months and months for responses. As MPs we wait, but constituents are waiting longer. Justin is just one of over 10 000 who wait on that waiting list. There are 10 242 other people waiting. They do not do so having fun, going out skiing, going out for coffee. They do so in pain and they do so in fear. Many of them, because they are immunocompromised as a result of their illnesses, cannot go out because with COVID-19 they are very much housebound.

In the Premier's Address there were many announcements. There always are with this Premier. It is the inability to deliver that is the hallmark of the Government and the hallmark of this Premier. The Premier says he is aspirational. It is a tricky use of language to explain away his failure. I would have thought about this as I drove over the Tamar Bridge and down the four-lane highway and transited the underground bus mall in Hobart to go to the Commonwealth Games, except it appears these commitments were a little aspirational.

To explain it another way, former prime minister John Howard called his aspirational commitments that he reneged on 'non-core promises'. Premier Gutwein calls them aspirational. Another word for this is fraudulent. There are other words that are unparliamentary. They are announcements they have no intention of delivery. Those announcements take up column inches or social media space. They distract from the Government's problems. It is cynical and it is dishonest.

Some of the things this Government promises and fails to deliver are just plain cruel. When you fail to get the basics right, when you fail to deliver the things that make life possible, the things that ensure economic and social stability and safety, you consign Tasmanians to an uncertain future for people who are trying to cope with the increased cost of living. While private sector wages went up 3.3 per cent, public sector employees saw wage rises of just 2.6 per cent, which is nearly a 2 per cent real wage cut for nurses, who have worked so hard during the pandemic, for our scientists, our pathology staff, our cleaners, our catering staff, our orderlies. There was a nearly 2 per cent real wage cut for the paramedics doing countless hours of overtime and spending hours ramped in our swamped and distressed EDs. There was a 2 per cent cut for the teachers shepherding students and parents through the toughest start to a school year in living memory, as students, staff and their families negotiate both catching COVID and caring for those who do, and those who are in isolation as close contacts.

Many families are again trying to balance caring roles, working from home, educating from home, often whilst being unwell themselves. The stress of 2020 has not passed, the exhaustion is real, and when the Premier's minister gives data about the number of children with COVID-19, what he fails to take into consideration is the number of other children in those families who are at home, extended family members who are in isolation, and those parents who cannot go to work.

Other cost-of-living increases include petrol costs which are out of control. It might be okay for us in this room, we all get covered for that, but it is not the reality for other people. I have spoken to some young people who are now contemplating selling their cars because what is the point; they can never afford to get a full tank. It is over \$2 a litre now, 80 cents a litre higher than 18 months ago. Where is the petrol price control legislation this Government promised?

TasWater has announced it will be putting water bills up by 15 per cent over the next four years: \$450 extra from Tasmanian families. Aurora is going to be applying an additional fee of \$20 for a new app, whether you use it or not, and it is yet unclear how much individual houses will pay for a new waste tax. I am a big fan of reducing waste but this is a blunt tool for waste collection with no corresponding incentive to reduce waste.

Rent increases continue, if you can find somewhere to rent. Tasmania is now the least affordable state in which to rent a home, whether in cities or in the regions. The average Tasmanian family spends 34 per cent of their income on rent. I remember speaking to people working in this sector in the north-east of Tasmania saying they have never seen as many homeless people in our regional communities.

When so much of your income goes on rent, it means you have to make difficult choices when it comes to the basics, and food prices are absolutely increasing. I spoke to a really distressed woman the other day who prides herself on budgeting well. She lives week to week and she runs that budget with absolute precision; she is fantastic at it. She has not only had to

reduce the amount and range of food and items she buys for her children, but she has had to eat into her rent money because she has blown her food budget for the first time ever. She has always been able to do it, but she will have to go into debt if she feeds her children the sort of food that she was feeding them only months ago. That is appalling.

Finding a way to pay all these bills is also getting harder, because last year Tasmanians experienced a real wage cut of 1.5 per cent; wages went up 3 per cent, living costs went up 4.5 per cent, and there is now a generation of people for whom the Australian dream of home ownership is either a nightmare, or worse, simply does not exist. These same young people do not believe they will ever have a full-time permanent secure job. None of us faced that when we entered the workforce. We all thought we could find that. I talk to young people every day who do not think that is a reality.

This is a premier and a government that are masking their inability to deliver in the language of aspiration. Starkly set out in the list of major infrastructure projects that are delayed and overbudgeted are the Bridgewater bridge, announced more than a dozen times and we are still waiting for some action on that. The ship loader at Burnie was supposed to be shovel-ready in 2019, apparently now 2024 - we will see. The Cradle Mountain cableway is years behind. The new Tamar bridge is probably in the same place as the underground bus mall or the four-lane Midland Highway. Then there is Macquarie Point; we could spend some time on that - \$78 million for what? There is the promise of \$580 million for a new Launceston General Hospital extension but no explanation yet as to who is going to pay, and this Premier's federal colleagues are silent on their share of this non-core promise. In tune with their other non-core promises, or aspirational promises, I fear the commitments made in the state of the state last week will never be realised.

There are 4300 families on the waiting list for housing. I want to talk about the people who were turned away from shelters statewide last year. My colleague, Ms Haddad, talked about the 18 000 times people have been turned away, and the Government will say that is okay because they get turned away several times from different places so it is not really that figure. According to a report from the Hobart Women's Shelter, from July 2020 to December 2021 they went through and individually identified all these people so they could talk about the numbers, and I commend them for this work. There were over 800 women and almost 1000 accompanying children seeking emergency accommodation in that time period, and over 1351 women and children were turned away due to a lack of space. That means seven out of every 10 women and eight out of every 10 accompanying children were turned away at the Hobart Women's Shelter alone.

These are the women who know how to contact the shelter, who know how to get through the system somehow. There are many who do not. The reported numbers are more than double the national number of women who are turned away from crisis accommodation across Australia. Even if you can get into a shelter and are lucky enough to get squeezed in, you might get to sleep in one of the converted shipping containers up the back and then you will need to contend with the mould infestation - it is not a healthy place to be - and that is if the lease for the shipping containers and the land is even continued.

Why do I raise this today? Because on International Woman's Day and in fact every day, it is important to note that women in Tasmania form 71 per cent of the people who are not assisted by specialist homelessness services in Tasmania, the highest proportion of women

unassisted in any state or territory in Australia. Access to housing, together with access to health, is absolutely gendered.

The Equity Economics report *Nowhere to Go - the Benefits of Providing Long-Term Social Housing to Women that have Experienced Family and Domestic Violence* says the primary reason women and children seek specialist homelessness services is because of violence, but only 3.2 per cent of them are currently receiving the long-term housing solutions they need. It also talks, as the member previously did, about the economic impact of investing in this. Equity Economics analysis shows that if you provided 16 810 social housing units it would cost around \$7.6 billion, obviously less than it would cost to build them without community housing provider support; deliver immediate economic benefits of \$15.3 billion; create 47 000 jobs across the economy; would avoid \$122.5 million a year in cost due to women returning to a violent partner, because that is where they go if we do not find them somewhere to sleep - we have all dealt with women who have gone back to unsafe environments; and would avoid \$257 million in cost due to women experiencing homelessness after leaving their homes due to family and domestic violence.

The Premier last week announced grand plans for 10 000 new social houses. I wish I could be as excited about this as members on the other side, but the reality is that this Government does not deliver. Last year they delivered just 251 of those houses they committed to build. In fact, they have never met any one of the promises on new social housing builds. Was that an aspirational announcement, was it non-core, or was it simply dishonest?

The Premier could not be unaware of the tents that have been set up in numerous places on Elizabeth Street. We both live near them; we have both seen them. They are in the grounds of the church opposite his own office building, living in our Cataract Gorge. Perhaps we should not be surprised if he does not see them because this is a government that had the possessions of a homeless person who was sleeping on their building's front steps in Launceston thrown away. That is the measure of the compassion of this Government and this Premier.

So how does the Government respond to housing? What is their modus operandi in responding to this pressure? How do they respond to all their failures? Let us look at their failure to invest in TasTAFE. Their answer: 'Let's underinvest in TasTAFE for years, then let's carve it out of the public sector so we can have plausible deniability and effectively wash our hands of the problem', and more importantly for them, the scrutiny.

After years of neglect in public housing, the playbook is the same. We will simply take Housing Tasmania out of the hands of the incompetent minister Ferguson and make it an independent body. Option one, do the work. Option two, find a way for distance and plausible deniability. This Government always takes option two. Aspirational? Simply weasel words to avoid responsibility for bailing the 4300 families who are waiting for public housing. These families are waiting on average 71 weeks for placement as they couch surf, sleep in cars, or sleep rough. Not so much aspirational as cruel.

Back to the Government playbook. When faced with being held accountable, what does this Government do? It distracts with aspirational announcements such as a \$750 million floating stadium in Hobart within five years. How long before this too is a non-core promise? If it did get delivered, I think we could kiss goodbye to games in the north so I believe that is a non-core promise as well. In fact, by even using the word 'aspirational' the Premier is providing a tacit admission that he knows it is not possible. He knows he is not going to do it.

He knows it is going to languish at the bottom of a long list of infrastructure projects they have announced but never delivered. It is nothing more than a massive distraction from the Cabinet drama from a government that is failing Tasmanians in their day-to-day living needs. How cynical, how cruel.

Mr Deputy Speaker, ensuring that we get the best start in life for our children is the most important thing we can do for our future. I well recall the voices of those on the government benches when in opposition about education. I well recall the things they said across the Chamber and I now note well their failings. I question again their public and indeed their private commitment to public education. We are the worst performing state across every age group for reading. We are the worst in every age group for spelling. We are the second worst in every age group in writing, the worst in every age group in grammar and punctuation, and the worst in years 5, 7 and 9 in numeracy.

In fact, as Tasmanian children move through our education system, they fall further and further behind their mainland peers. I remember when kids came from the mainland and they had to drop back a year because our system was so good. It is not the case now. Over the past 10 years our results have gone backwards in 14 of the 20 indicators measured under NAPLAN.

We can see the consequence of this for our economy already, because without a commitment to public education, the future is bleak. Thirty-nine per cent of school leavers are not engaged in work or further study - nearly double what it was when those opposite came to power. There are more than 4000 unemployed young Tasmanians and the youth unemployment rate is higher than the national average; and I remind you, to be employed, you only have to have worked one hour.

This Government inherited a budget free of net debt after Labor went in and cleaned up the Liberals last debt disaster of the 1990s; and yet, where are we now? The Premier and Treasurer are borrowing \$2 million a day every day for the next four years - more than \$1 billion of debt racked up even before the shadow of COVID-19.

Debt in itself is not a bad thing if you can show the things that you deliver for it; but has that debt delivered the investment Tasmanians need? Let us look. The condition of our roads is worse than ever. Homelessness is at record levels. School results are going backwards. The health system is sinking into crisis. Real incomes are falling.

This Premier wants a legacy piece. He wants it so badly; something he can point to. What Tasmanians will remember of this Premier is that every time he was being held accountable for his failure to get the basics right, he would announce another aspirational media play, another non-core promise. They will remember that when we needed action, he gave spin. They will remember these things, and I can only hope that the damage that he has done can be repaired because the future of our state and that of our children needs more than faux aspiration for cynical media players. We need action. We need homes. We need healthcare. We need stable and secure jobs and we need wages that meet the cost of living, and we need it now.

I note the Premier's Address.

[3.42 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I will focus my contribution to this debate on the immediate needs of Tasmanians - the old, the homeless, those on welfare and generally every Tasmanian and Tasmanian family that is struggling right now.

I acknowledge the long-term investments outlined by the Premier and I am pleased, albeit with qualifications, that the Government is looking beyond the political election cycle to anticipate the needs of Tasmanians in the next decade, not just this one. However, I have doubts about the Government's ability to deliver projects to budget and on time.

The Government's track record for hitting targets is not good. Blow-outs and delays of the Royal Hobart Hospital rebuild; the perennial Bridgewater bridge announcements - and I note that the member for Bass suggested about a dozen, and I have counted about 29 so far; a decade of thumb twiddling over the Northern Suburbs Light Rail; the Tasman Bridge; and do not even get me started on the running joke that is the Macquarie Point Development. Is there not a hint of a thought bubble with some of the new projects recently announced? The Commonwealth Games were floated just a few weeks ago, only to disappear into the ether. Out of the same ether, we have a \$750 million football stadium at the Regatta Grounds. Nevertheless, for good and bad, I suppose, the Government has a 10-year vision of sorts for Tasmania. That is great, as far as it goes but the Premier failed to show that he genuinely understands the hardships many Tasmanians are facing right now.

It is a common theme that surrounds what this Government does in everything it says. Very little real empathy with the battlers in the suburbs. Mind you, the Labor members here are no better. We have had three sitting days this year so far and Labor has failed to hold the Government to account on any of the problems and concerns of everyday Tasmanians. Where is Labor on housing affordability, education quality, health costs, surgery waiting lists, the devastation caused by pokie machines and a dozen other bread and butter realities that ordinary families are grappling with every day? Where were those questions? Where is Labor? Missing in action.

In my time here today I will outline some policies and programs the Premier could have included in his speech - measures that Tasmanians need right now, not on the never-never. Look at the housing crisis. It is so much more than a housing crisis; for many it is an absolute disaster. There are thousands of Tasmanians in housing stress, couch surfing, sleeping rough, homeless, or paying rent they simply cannot afford. Three or more families sharing a single house. These people need help, right now, and I mean, tonight - not next week, or year, or in a decade; they need help right now. It is disappointing and heartbreaking, that the Premier did not recognise their plight in his speech.

Here are some suggestions that he summarily dismissed in parliament last week, that could have been announced in his speech. One move to quickly ease housing pressure would be to limit short-stay accommodation, such as Airbnb, to rooms in the owner's principal place of residence. This would free up entire homes and apartments, to be returned to the long-term rental market, or owner-occupation. Victoria and New South Wales are looking at various adaptations of this policy. Why not Tasmania? The Premier turned the idea down flat.

Another ready source of housing would be to release the hundreds of empty homes lying idle in our cities and suburbs. The Tenants' Union of Tasmania recently published data from TasWater that showed there are 192 residential properties across the Hobart City Council

municipality that had a high chance of vacancy, 115 in the neighbouring Glenorchy City Council, and 256 in Launceston City Council. These properties used less than 10 per cent of the average household water consumption for three consecutive years, and therefore were almost certainly vacant. These are 563 inner-city residential properties that we know of, that sit empty, during a housing disaster. A conservative estimate is that there are potentially 2000 empty homes in Tasmania - 2000 homes could be 2000 families with a roof over their heads.

In cities as diverse as Vancouver and Melbourne, for example, homes left empty for more than six months without a reasonable explanation are taxed 1 per cent of the value of the property. Why can we not do something similar here in Tasmania? Another reform turned down flat. What did the Premier do instead? He provided \$220 million of land tax relief to property owners. He justified this as a measure that would put downward pressure on rents. Anyone who has completed first year economics would know that will not happen. What will happen is a whopping payday for wealthy property owners. There is nothing in this for tenants.

We know that last year's cuts did not result in more affordable rent; quite the opposite in fact, with rent still significantly increasing, and more and more Tasmanians experiencing housing stress. The fact is that residential rents are primarily determined by market forces, not the cost landlords incur. Respected economist Saul Eslake agreed. He said: 'It's a myth propagated by the property industry, that land taxes affect rents, they don't'. The rich continue to get richer, and the poor tenant gets it in the neck, again. The Premier needs to come up with concrete policies and programs that will genuinely provide rent relief to struggling Tasmanians now and not do the bidding of the landlord lobby.

He made a big deal over the housing market entry program and boosting the first owners grant program, which may make a marginal difference in assisting people into a home - eventually. However, these programs may, economists say, distort the market, as the main outcome will be an increase in the price of homes by the amount of the subsidy.

What about the homeless, or the thousands of Tasmanians close to it? There was nothing from the Premier on reducing the waiting times for affordable social housing. What we should have seen are concrete plans to immediately increase the stock of public housing, homeless shelters, and appropriate dwellings for those with special needs. The Premier is keen to crow about how strong the Tasmanian economy is but that is not keeping our vulnerable people safe and warm at night.

I turn now to the education policy which scarcely received a mention in the Premier's speech except for some vague infrastructure promises and reannouncements. Again, as it was with housing, the Premier failed to deal with the everyday pressures. He failed in any way to address the problems with the quality of education our children are receiving as they sit in classrooms. In the end, is this not the most important thing we can do? The literacy and numeracy skills of our young people are an embarrassment. How could we get education so wrong? Respected UTAS demographer, Dr Lisa Denny, analysed NAPLAN data for a cohort of Tasmanian students across 10 years. She found that by the time that group reached grade 3, 16.5 per cent were ranked either below or at national minimum standard in reading. Alarming, that increased to 28.5 per cent of students by the time that cohort reached year 9.

Dr Denny pointed out that the national minimum standard sets a very low level of proficiency for literacy and numeracy skills, with students at that level potentially requiring additional assistance to enable them to achieve their potential. One-third of our students cannot

even achieve that low mark. They are struggling to make any headway with reading and writing as they progress through school. That is an absolute disgrace.

I have no doubt that all members of this House would agree that education is the key to young people thriving. It is an important protective factor against social and economic disadvantage. However, we consistently see over many years a chronic under funding of public education. We cannot even fully fund the Schooling Resource Standard. It is hardly surprising then that we have poor literacy and numeracy outcomes. It is another false economy.

The Premier should have included in his speech a commitment to immediately fund the Schooling Resource Standard. That is not a gold standard either. That is a bare minimum requirement. We do not even meet that. However, it would mean that our overworked teachers could deliver the minimum level of quality education and not have to stretch budgets, dip into their own pockets for materials and learning aids, or watch their pupils simply go without. We are failing our students and we are failing our teachers. As a society with all our first world riches that is shameful.

The state of our health system also needs immediate intervention. I will take a moment to stand with the Premier in his acknowledgment and appreciation of our health and hospital workers who have borne the brunt of Tasmania's COVID-19 response. However, I do know from the many health care workers who have approached me that there is a disconnect between clinical staff and administrative and clinical masters. I hear of bed blocks, understaffing, stress and sheer exhaustion. We are running a health service on the goodwill of health professionals but there is a limit to how much they can take. They are at breaking point.

The Premier had nothing in his speech about fixing the immediate problems in health care. He ignored the calls from doctors, nurses and allied health workers that improvements to our hospital system are needed now before it collapses completely. The Premier should have announced a package of interventions, policy changes and funding to get on top of the interruptions caused by the pandemic, including the blowout in the elective surgery list, the backlog of patients needing to see specialists, excessive ambulance ramping, bed blocks and so much more.

We know just about the best way to relieve pressures on tertiary and frontline health providers is to increase investments in programs that treat and keep people in their home and community. Putting people in hospitals is not only expensive, it is bad for their long-term health.

It seems that we are constantly playing catch-up, spending more and more money just to manage the symptoms of our broken health system rather than treating the underlying condition.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has given us the title of being the country's unhealthiest state. We have the highest stress levels, body mass index, blood pressure and smoking rate in the country. We have the highest rate of heart, stroke and vascular disease. We have the highest rate of chronic kidney disease, the highest rate of adult obesity and the highest incidence of depression. With these kinds of indicators, unless we change the way we deliver healthcare it is easy to see how health could become a bottomless pit.

The Premier acknowledged in his speech that when people are treated in the community with the right help they can recover sooner, but then failed to back that up with adequate investment or programs. The Government needs to immediately fund allied health and community care services.

Many areas should be targeted. In his speech, the Premier talked about the new Police, Ambulance and Commission Early Response team, or PACER, which I understand does a fantastic job delivering support to people within the community by focusing on those experiencing mental health episodes. It is only a two-year pilot and only in the south of the state. Why waste two years to tell us something we already know? The PACER program should be funded and staffed statewide now, to give our doctors, police, paramedics and mental health professionals the support they need now and to keep people out of hospital.

Another matter that needs urgent attention is a shortage of GPs. I am hearing from my constituents that many people simply cannot find a GP who will take them on. The 'No new patients' sign has gone up in practices around my electorate. There are well-known GP shortages in the regions. Many of my constituents can only afford a visit to the GP if it is bulk billed. Finding a bulk-billing medical practice is close to impossible. If they can secure an elusive doctor's appointment, the chances are they have to pay a contribution and they cannot afford it.

I visited my GP last week and was charged \$82 for a simple consultation. After rebate, I was out of pocket \$42.90. I took a double-look and a deep breath when I saw the bill. I am one of the lucky ones because I could afford it. Anyone who understands the battle many Tasmanians are facing at the moment will know that finding \$40-plus for a GP visit is simply out of the question for many.

If people cannot access affordable primary health care, two things happen. One is that they remain untreated, which means they get sicker. That means they end up with chronic conditions in our hospitals or they present at the hospital emergency department, which is overstretched, and they go back to their homes and communities and the cycle starts again. I appreciate that fixing the GP shortage is a complex issue that involves action from all three levels of government. I urge the Premier to make it a priority.

Dental and oral health are also pressing matters. Recent figures released by the Health department show that patients are waiting on average two years to get an appointment with a public dentist. Further, a report commissioned by St Luke's Health found that 62 per cent of Tasmanians avoided or delayed visiting the dentist because of the cost. It is well understood that oral health is essential to maintaining a person's general health and wellbeing. Poor oral health causes considerable pain and suffering by changing what people eat, their speech and their quality of life and wellbeing. All this adds to the cost of healthcare. If you fix oral health early you reduce the risk and severity of other health issues. For example, I have seen a report that linked bacteria from untreated gum disease to serious health problems like diabetes, heart disease, stroke and even premature birth.

In Tasmania, I understand dental problems to be the most common reason for preventable hospital admissions. You may recall the media reports last year where dentists in Hobart's northern suburbs, my patch, told us that to save on future dental costs many young people want all their teeth taken out and have dentures made. The media reported one dentist as relaying one particularly grim day. The dentist said five young children under five years of age were

all having extractions because of dental decay. By the end of the afternoon the dentist had removed 60 teeth. How could it possibly come to this?

The Premier is aware of these problems and has some programs in place, but my plea to him is to double or triple his efforts as poor dental health is ruining the lives of many Tasmanians and placing an intolerable burden on our whole health system.

Today, I have tried to highlight the immediate needs of everyday Tasmanians and make a plea to the Premier not to leave them behind or forget them. The Premier's speech was full of rhetoric on growing the economy and providing jobs. I get that. This is a conservative government and that is what we should expect. Broadly speaking, I agree with the Premier. A strong economy is important but it is not everything. It is nowhere near everything. What worries me is the unspoken neoliberal assumption that economic growth will trickle down. Well, it does not. As we have seen elsewhere in the world, tax breaks and benefits for the wealthy do not trickle down to everyone else. The rich get richer, and the poor - well, we know exactly what happens to them.

Today, I have focused on three fundamentals we should be, as a society, able to provide to our people: decent housing, a good education and effective health care. Nonetheless, that is nowhere near the end of it. We face many more problems that desperately need government attention, including dysfunction in the aged care and disability sectors; the harm problem gambling addiction causes to society; animal welfare, particularly in the racing sector; gender equality; election donation reform and the too often hidden tragedy of domestic violence. The Government can add these to the list of bread and butter issues they either ignore, dispute or underdeliver on. I have made the case that through underfunding and inefficiencies this Government, and to be fair its later predecessors, has allowed too much of us to fall off the economic bandwagon. Regrettably, the Premier's speech was an opportunity lost to really recognise the plight of many Tasmanians who struggle to get by.

Having said that, I believe all of us are primarily here to make this island we call home a true paradise for everyone. My plea for the Premier is, in your quest to build the Tasmanian economy, please take a look in the rear vision mirror and understand that many people need your help right now not in 10 year's time. Please, Premier, do not leave them behind.

[4.01 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Racing) - Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise to reply on the state of the state. I start by saying it is such a great honour to be here today as minister for this Government. I am humbled and grateful to be given the responsibility of the portfolios of Small Business, Hospitality and Events, Disability Services, Women and Racing. It is early days but I have spent the first few days literally diving into these portfolios. I am excited by the opportunities and also motivated by the challenges. As the Premier said in his Address we must not just focus on the horizon we must lift our eyes beyond that.

As a previous small business owner myself, I am thrilled to be taking on the Small Business portfolio and continuing the significant work that is being done by our Government to support our small business sector. The past two years have been unprecedented as we have navigated our way through the COVID-19 pandemic. Thankfully, Tasmania went into the pandemic from a position of strength and we have worked hard to maintain this. Right now, we are one of the safest places on the planet and our economy is strong. We know the past two

years has been an extremely tough time on business and it continues to be challenging as we work towards a new normal.

Over the past two years, small business has felt the effects of travel restrictions and lockdowns but there is no greater supporter of Tasmanians 39 000 small businesses than the Tasmanian Liberal Government. Since the start of the pandemic our small businesses have received more than \$160 million in COVID-19 specific support programs. In fact, during the height of the pandemic in 2020, our Government provided the highest level of support for businesses per capita of any jurisdiction in the country. Last year we also worked closely with the Commonwealth Government to provide more than \$70 million in direct support for small businesses to deal with the challenges associated with interstate border closures through our super charged micro and small business border closure critical grant program which was well received.

Last year we also supported those businesses in southern Tasmania who were required to go into lockdown for three days by providing almost \$3.5 million in support through our southern lockdown grant program. As we now transition to living with COVID-19 our Government is continuing to support those businesses facing challenges, most recently making funding available through a second tranche of our COVID-19 business impact support program.

The purpose of this program is to provide support for those businesses that are experiencing exposure, reduced trading caused by a loss of staff due to COVID-19 exposure or loss of business due to significantly lower than usual customer demand, so impact on revenues. Whilst applications for round 1 are still being finalised I am pleased to report that so far more than \$1.8 million has been distributed to 938 applicants. Round 2 of the programs opened on the 15 February and so far, 470 businesses have received more than \$1 million.

We are also committed to ensuring the business community can access specialist advice and resources as we enter this new operating environment. To assist, \$1.2 million over four years has been allocated through our COVID-19 Small Business Advice and Financial Guidance program. To date, more than 200 small businesses have been awarded a total of \$305 000. As the new Minister for Small Business, this year I am looking forward to announcing the successful recipients of our \$2 million over three years Small Business Incubator and Accelerator pilot program. This fantastic new program aims to encourage start-ups, as well as help small businesses to grow their ventures by providing them with the specialist advice and support and assistance they need to decrease risk and increase sustainable, viable business development. It is specialist advice at the right time.

I am also looking forward to supporting our regional chambers of commerce to assist small businesses in our regional areas. I am delighted about this. We have allocated \$300 000 over three years for regional chambers to promote business collaboration and development that will contribute to strong and diverse local economies. Of course it is not only financial support that our Government is providing to our small business sector. Free business advice is also available to both new and established businesses through our Enterprise Centres Tasmania program. These services continue to aid businesses that are navigating the current operating environment. I acknowledge and thank the small businesses and their staff for their resilience and courage through the COVID-19 pandemic. It has taken great strength and we know that in many cases you bore the brunt of the pandemic. Thank you for your work. Tasmania's small businesses have been resilient throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and our strong Tasmanian

Liberal Government will continue to work with you through the transition phase of living with COVID.

The Tasmanian Government recognises the critical importance of the hospitality sector to the Tasmanian economy. With over 2400 businesses employing 8.1 per cent of the Tasmanian workforce, the hospitality sector underpins Tasmania's visitor economy and helps to make Tasmania a great place to live and work. Tasmanian households spend over \$1.5 billion annually in hotels, cafes and restaurants and this sector too has been on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A significant proportion of the Tasmanian Government's \$160 million COVID-specific support programs went to businesses in the hospitality sector. Working closely with the hospitality businesses and industry bodies, the Tasmanian Government has committed over \$39 million to specific hospitality support programs including \$20 million allocated across three rounds of travel vouchers during 2020 and 2021, resulting in \$11.3 million of redemptions so far and \$11.9 million estimated spend on food and beverages. A total \$8 million has also been committed to a new Tourism Innovation and Development Grant program, which is open for submission of proposals until 4 pm on Friday 18 March 2022. There is also \$1 million to establish a new tourism and hospitality industry-led not-for-profit training organisation now known as VXT or Visitor Experience Training.

The Hospitality Energy Rebate Grant program provides more than \$1 million to reimburse energy bills. The Regional Visitor Attraction Hardship Grant program provides more than \$1.8 million to businesses critical to attracting regional visitation. There is \$2.2 million to develop Hospitality 2030, a long-term plan and shared vision for the hospitality industry. There is \$2.8 million to support the Tasmanian Hospitality Association's Great Customer Experience program, \$800 000 for the Clubs Tasmania program and \$1.5 million to establish carbon audits and formulate a pathway for the tourism and hospitality sectors to achieve a standard of operation that will be globally recognised and move the sector closer to being carbon neutral. Importantly, we have also provided \$1 million towards a mental health support program and \$300 000 to deliver business continuity and cash flow advice in partnership with the THA, the TICT and Collins SPA.

In relation to Events, we know the huge benefits of supporting a program of events that celebrate our communities, showcase our regions and promote artistic cultural and sporting excellence and participation.

In 2021-22, \$16.5 million was committed to 72 event partnerships. Supported events including things that we all know and love such as the Super Cars, Dark MOFO, MONA FOMA, Trans Tasmania, Mountain Bike Enduro, Rowing Australian Nationals - which we were at - Bicheno Food and Wine Festival, Festival of Voices, East Coast Harvest Odyssey and the Maydena Bike Park Championships, just to name a few.

Prior to COVID-19, \$1 invested by Events Tasmania, generated an estimated return on investment of over \$9, demonstrating the value of continued government investment in the events sector. Like the small business and hospitality sectors, the events sector was heavily impacted by COVID-19. The Tasmanian Government has provided specific support to the events sector of over \$3.2 million, including the Regional Event Recovery Fund, which provides a total of \$1.15 million to support event organisers, the Event Ready Grant Program which has provided more than \$800 000 to help Tasmanian events to implement COVID-19

safe requirements and the Event Infrastructure and Critical Support Small Business Grant program, which has provided \$1.3 million to assist local small businesses that provide vital event support infrastructure and other services that are essential to the running of events.

We have left no stone unturned in supporting Tasmania's small businesses, particularly those in the hospitality and events sectors and we will continue to work with them as we continue to chart our way through this pandemic.

We have welcomed Tasmanians home and visitors back. As we transition to living with COVID-19, Tasmania is in advantageous position, viewed globally as unique and safe with world-leading and environmental credentials and a strong, prosperous economy.

I take a moment to talk about my new portfolio of Disability Services, which is very close and dear to my heart. It is both a privilege and an honour for me to be standing in this place as Minister for Disability Services. This is an area in which I have worked, advocated and lobbied for many years. Like so many advocates, I could not help but be touched by the deep concerns, particularly from parents about who would care for their children when no one else could.

Whilst we know the NDIS is imperfect, it is one of the most complex and important reforms seen in Australia in recent years and it has been a substantial step forward. I have helped constituents with disability access issues, securing housing improvements to help with safety and access. I have helped longstanding constituents with disability housing, finances and guardianship issues. I am a longstanding supporter of the great work of organisations such as Blueline Laundry and their efforts as a social enterprise, which provides work and dignity to their workers including people with disability. I am a strong supporter of the Choir of High Hopes, which is an organisation I helped start many years ago and which I have supported over many years. It is all about inclusion.

At a personal level, like so many people, I have been touched by the challenges of disability and the pressures that can be placed on families and so, it is with great anticipation that I step into this space now as a minister. The Tasmanian Government is committed to supporting Tasmanians living with disability to access the best possible services and support they need. This includes establishing the first ever Tasmanian Disability Services Commissioner; continuing our investment of more than \$1 million in annual funding for independent advocacy organisations including Speak Out Advocacy, Advocacy Tasmania, and the Association for Children with Disability; and supporting the ParaQuad Tasmania Physical Disability Sports Program, which is \$150 000 over three years.

This builds on our earlier commitments to support Tasmanians living with disabilities, including the review of the Disability Services Act 2011 and \$3 million announced to fund an additional 600 training places in Certificate III in individual support; a crucial qualification staff need so they can work in the aged care and disability support sectors.

I am committed to engaging with Tasmanians with a disability as we roll out our election commitments, including more staff for the Tasmanian Autism Diagnostic Service, secure funding for advocacy organisations and more resources for physical disability sports programs. In addition, the Tasmanian Government will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of Tasmanians with a disability and the service providers that support them, to ensure that the NDIS delivers the best possible outcomes for Tasmanians.

In relation the Women's portfolio, we all want to ensure that Tasmanians have equal opportunities to participate in our state's social, political, cultural, and economic life.

In its January State of the States report, CommSec ranked our economy as the best performing in Australia for the eighth quarter in a row. Employment is at near record levels with 259 100 Tasmanians in work, and our unemployment rate at 3.8 per cent is the lowest it has ever been in our history. We have jobs looking for people, with growth in job vacancies 72.6 per cent higher than before the pandemic.

The landscape we live and work in is rapidly changing. The last two years have been like no other and it is more important than ever that opportunities for our women and girls are front and centre in our vision for a stronger and more resilient Tasmania.

Over the past three years, our work to achieve gender equality has been guided by the Tasmanian Women's Strategy. Under this strategy, the Tasmanian Government has made important progress towards improving women's financial security, leadership and participation opportunities, health and wellbeing and, importantly, safety. We are working now to finalise the next iteration of the Tasmanian Women's Strategy which will build on our current work with a renewed focus on achieving gender equality, with women's leadership at the forefront to ensure that more women are supported to be the leaders of tomorrow.

In the 2021-22 Budget, we committed nearly \$3 million to programs that will recruit, retain and advance women into occupations in which females are traditionally unrepresented. We have already seen results from this investment. For example, through the \$2 million Supporting Women to Succeed grant program, the Housing Industry Association is providing short courses and leadership scholarships to its female members to help them not only to get jobs but to aim high and get the promotions.

The Civil Contractors Federation is running pre-employment courses aimed at women to help them into the many jobs right across the state in the construction industry. Centacare Evolve is running a program to support female apprentices in its affordable housing construction. Through the Women and Leadership program, more than 80 women have gained qualifications through the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

These are just a few examples of the results that have already come from the Tasmanian Women's Strategy. There is no doubt that an important part of creating future change is increasing the visibility of diverse female leaders and role models and we will increase our efforts to support women to aspire to, and participate in, decision-making and leadership positions through the new strategy.

I am very excited about the work that is being done, and I particularly thank the staff and the departmental people that are working on this strategy.

Turning to Racing, we know that racing is a critical industry for Tasmania. The Tasmanian Liberal Government is a strong supporter of the racing industry. According to a recent report, the industry generates more than \$185 million per year in economic activity in the state. This is of particular benefit to rural and regional areas. More than 5800 Tasmanians are either employed in the industry, or are direct participants, and the Tasmanian Government support for the industry gives it the confidence it needs to keep growing. The industry sustains 1550 FTEs, of which 64 per cent are a direct result of racing industry activity.

Increased stakes are the single most important driver for participation in Tasmania's racing industry. The Tasmanian Liberal Government is continuing to back Tasmania's racing industry with further investment including an annual increase in stakes across all three racing codes of 16 per cent over four years, including 6 per cent in 2021-22. We have already delivered on that commitment, with an 8 per cent code funding increase in October 2021, and a 4 per cent increase in January 2022. This has delivered a 10 per cent increase to harness stakes, an 11.1 per cent increase to thoroughbred stakes and an 11.7 per cent increase to greyhound stakes in our first year.

The Government has recently announced that the returns from the point of consumption revenue for the 2020-21 financial year was \$14.65 million, about \$2.6 million above budget. More than \$6.83 million has been shared with industry to fund stakes increases, infrastructure upgrades and continued improvement in animal welfare outcomes. This provides great confidence and optimism for industry to continue to invest.

As I have already said, it is critical that the act under which the Tasmanian racing industry operates is modern and contemporary. That is why the Tasmanian Government has commenced a review of the Racing Regulation Act 2004, which has not been substantially reviewed since its inception. It is timely to review the Racing Regulation Act 2004, with the view to not only strengthen and enhance integrity functions, but to also improve animal welfare outcomes for the Tasmanian racing industry. The Government is committed to improving animal welfare outcomes in the racing industry across all three codes. The Government is investing more money than ever before into greyhound and horse welfare to ensure they are treated with dignity and care before, during and after their racing days.

The racing industry is resilient, passionate and always has great optimism. The COVID-19 shutdown in 2020 showed how spirited the industry is and how quickly they have bounced back. I am looking forward to working closely with the industry.

As I have said, I am motivated and excited to get to work in these new portfolio areas. I have hit the ground running and I have been reaching out to stakeholders, taking meetings and communicating with key people in each of these portfolio areas. I will continue to do so on a statewide basis, going forward.

I again acknowledge and thank Jane Howlett MLC, for the extensive work she did across many of these portfolios. I look forward to delivering our plan to secure Tasmania's future.

[4.25 p.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin - Minister for Sport and Recreation) - Mr Deputy Speaker, also the Minister for Community Services and Development, Science and Technology and Heritage, all of which I will touch on at some stage in the next half hour or so.

It was an honour for the first time as a member of his Cabinet to listen to the Premier deliver his Address. I commend the Premier for his leadership in investing the opportunities Tasmania currently has in front of it. This Liberal Government is focused on delivering a strong plan to secure Tasmania's future in 2022. As we step into living with COVID-19, Tasmania remains one of the safest places in the world to live and our economy leads the nation on many indicators. I believe we are in a unique position to grasp the opportunities ahead so that more Tasmanians can access skills and training, secure a job and build a career, invest in a home and have access to quality community facilities and services.

In every region and community across Tasmania I have already made it clear, and I will make it clear again today, that I want to help people to be better connected and supported and to encourage and enable greater participation to support their health and wellbeing. Any of us, at any time, can find ourselves in need of community services.

I am acutely aware of this fact as I take on the portfolio of Community Services and Development. Our investment of over \$14 million since March 2020 supported the Tasmanian community in response to the outbreak of COVID-19, helping individuals, the community sector and the sport and recreation sector that I am also responsible for. We continue to provide a range of support to Tasmanians facing economic and other hardship as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have quickly responded to change in community demands and we are constantly reviewing and adjusting our supports to ensure we are providing what the community needs.

As at 8 February 2022, over \$1.8 million in direct financial assistance has been provided to over 100 000 Tasmanians through a range of assistance measures in our Pandemic Isolation Assistance Grants program. These include grants of up to \$750 for eligible individuals who are a confirmed case, a close contact, or are required to care for a dependent who is a confirmed case or close contact. There is also a \$250 payment to eligible applicants to help cover lost income or earnings while isolating and/or waiting for a PCR test result. There is a \$250 payment to eligible applicants who have lost income, or earnings as a result of getting the COVID-19 vaccination or have experienced side effects within three days of being vaccinated. There is also an additional \$750 for eligible Tasmanians returning to the state who are required to quarantine.

In addition, we continue to work with our partners, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, to deliver essential supplies and psychosocial support to individuals and families in need. Our COVID-19 care community sector supports have been very well received with the CEO of TasCOSS, Adrienne Picone, commenting that our initiative and quick response to the outbreak has been described as 'nation leading'. That opinion has been backed up by other organisations, including the CEO of Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania. These initiatives include our initial allocation of \$100 000 in funding for TasCOSS to distribute grants for PPE, RATs and masks, which was quickly exhausted and we responded to this strong demand with a total of just over \$253 000 in additional funding being provided.

As for Tasmanians directed to isolate because they are symptomatic and waiting for a test result, or a COVID-19-positive person caring for someone who was COVID-19-positive or who had been advised to isolate as a close contact, our COVID-19 Care Package includes continuation of funding to the Salvation Army and its many local community partners for the provision of everyday basics of food, medicines or housing for those in need. These supports are on top of existing individual funding, for those who have lost work as a result of COVID-19, which I outlined earlier. Our COVID-19 Care Packages ensure continuity of services for our vital community sector organisations.

Community Services is one of the largest sectors in the state, employing more than 17 800 local workers, who are also supported by a workforce of around 35 000 volunteers. We are working in partnership with TasCOSS and the industry to implement our Community Services Industry Plan 2021-2031, funding for which was key policy commitment at last year's election.

As a government, we want to address disadvantage, supporting inclusive communities. We want to embrace diversity and we want to ensure all Tasmanians have the opportunity to participate in the social, cultural and economic life of Tasmania. As the new minister, I put on the record my gratitude for the many stakeholders and groups in the sector who have already provided me with valuable briefings in the information, or have made the time to meet with me and my team in these first weeks. This has helped me no end as I have worked hard to get up to speed in this very important portfolio.

Our community services industry plan is forward looking and, importantly, acknowledges the vital role of the care industry and looking after people right across the state. The vision for the industry plan is for a connected sector that supports all Tasmanians to have the same opportunities and enriches our states cultural, social and economic wellbeing. Yesterday I was proud to announce the plan's first implementation tranche which includes \$50 000 a year for three years to launch a scholarship fund to strengthen governance and build a solid foundation for the boards and organisations in this sector through a greater awareness of not-for-profit director's fundamental duties in the community sector organisations.

As the Premier outlined in his Address, we have also provided unprecedented levels of community and business support, delivering two social and economic support packages of more than \$1.3 billion, including First Home Builder grants and our significant social housing record build.

To build stronger communities we need to support and help people establish themselves into a community. To help Tasmanians take their first step onto the property ladder, their eligibility requirements of our successful home share program will be changed by reducing the requirement for a deposit to 2 per cent of the purchase price rather than trying to save for a 5 per cent deposit. Our new housing market entry program will allow more Tasmanians to access this program through very reasonable income and asset tests.

This on top of the doubling of the state's equity contribution to a maximum of \$200 000 or 40 per cent of the purchase price for purchasers of new homes or units, and up to a maximum of \$150 000 or 30 per cent of the purchase price for eligible established homes or units will help to ensure more people get into a home. We are also opening up access to eligible first home buyers to purchase existing homes rather than have to build a new home, adding to the more than 3750 who have built their first homes thanks to our first home owners' grants. I put on the record my support for such incentives and changes that have been proposed. Extending the First Home Owners grant of \$30 000 for another 12 months from 1 July 2022 and making this grant available to those who use our housing market entry program to build a new home will help thousands more Tasmanians get a roof over their heads.

As the Premier has outlined, we have a strong pipeline of work ahead of us which is delivering better outcomes for every region in Tasmania in housing, education and health, renewable energy, tourism and hospitality and across our primary industries' resources and advanced manufacturing sectors. It is these significant investments which are helping to build strong and inclusive communities that support Tasmanians in their health and wellbeing wherever they live.

Our new \$2.8 million Neighbourhood House Community Care Adviser Pilot is already delivering practical support to meet increased individual and community needs, building on the inclusive and open access model at the core of the network. It was great to meet Michael

Bishop, the CEO of the Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania, last week and be briefed on how this Government's initiative is helping people who need assistance. Implementation of the pilot is now well underway, addressing the more complex issues presented to houses such as mental health, addictive behaviours and relationship breakdowns providing place-based and outreach support for participating houses and their communities.

This initiative is part of our \$5.2 million in additional support for the Neighbourhood House's network which includes an extra \$2 million to bolster the Neighbourhood House Capital Improvement Program to further improve amenities and houses across the state and \$400 000 to assist with governance across the network as well. To better connect communities, this Government is embarking on arguably the most progressive agenda for public transport in decades, investing in projects that provide Tasmanians with improved transport options.

We have already implemented improved bus networks across the three regions leading to faster, more frequent and more direct services. We are investing \$81.5 million to modernise public transport which is designed to encourage more Tasmanians to use it. It includes \$20 million for extra school and commuter buses on busy routes, \$20 million dollars to develop new park and ride facilities for commuters in growing residential areas near Rokeby, Sorell and the southern beaches communities and in Hobart's northern suburbs. It also includes \$10 million to upgrade all access and all-weather bus stops at priority locations.

In addition to this we are committing \$31.5 million on a contemporary integrated ticketing solution across all public transport operators with real-time information and modern payment options. The 2021-22 Budget also included a record \$10.7 billion investment into Health over 30 years. That was \$900 million more than the previous year, and around \$4 billion more than the previous Labor-Greens government in 2013.

As the Premier outlined in his Address, our planned forecast investment is more than \$1 billion over 10 years in critical health infrastructure to ensure that generations of Tasmanians to come will be able to access care where and when they need it, regardless of where they live, while also helping to attract and retain staff in our major hospitals. This includes investing \$580 million into the LGH redevelopment master plan to deliver a new mental health facility and a new tower on the current Northside site, providing additional health services capacity to meet future demand.

In the south, we are expanding stage two of the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, which represents over \$200 million in new facilities, including 90 new patient beds, a fit-for-purpose older persons unit, an expanded ICU, expanded emergency department, and new neurology, stroke and medical sub-specialties wards. While much of the focus is currently on stage two, we are looking to the future. We are engaging with the Commonwealth Government to provide joint funding for stage three of the Royal Hobart Hospital development. This will deliver an estimated \$665 million for increased mental health services and specialised multi-disciplinary sub-acute services, including rehabilitation, palliative care, geriatric evaluation and management care and psycho-geriatric care.

On the subject of care, we acknowledge the vital role and significant contribution of unpaid carers to the health, well-being, and security of their family members and friends who need support and assistance. Carers deserve recognition for what they do in and for our communities. We are delivering on our commitment by progressing the introduction of carer recognition legislation. This legislation will formally acknowledge the thousands of carers in

our community and promote and value the importance of care relationships. It recognises the commitment of unpaid Tasmanian carers and supports their active participation in economic, social and community life for themselves and the people for whom they care.

These actions all continue to build upon the significant investments we have already made to ensure Tasmanians get the right care in the right place at the right time.

We are also investing \$9 million to upgrade the Ambulance Tasmania fleet with 30 new ambulances this financial year. This will rapidly update the ambulance fleet and allow Ambulance Tasmania to have vehicles on standby to respond to increasing demand.

Our district hospitals also play a key role in caring for Tasmanians in rural and regional areas of the state, which is why we are providing \$5 million in additional funding for new equipment to help support healthcare and communities as we find new ways to enjoy what our state has to offer.

By supporting Tasmanians and the communities that they live in we are building strong communities, which builds a stronger Tasmania. This connection was very apparent to me over the weekend. It was an absolute honour to attend the Hillcrest charity AFL match between Richmond and Hawthorn in Devonport. It was amazing to see the north west community coming together to show their support, bringing them together through their love of both sport and their community.

I reiterate that when our Government talks about delivering elite sporting content and infrastructure in our state, we are focusing on the positive impacts this will have at a community and grassroots level. We are committed to help more Tasmanians to get active, to lead a healthy lifestyle no matter where they live, what their age, or their circumstances.

Our Ticket to Play program is removing one of the main barriers to Tasmania's children participating in sport, and that is cost. Swimming is one of the most popular organised physical activities for children, but swimming lessons can be expensive, especially for families with several children. We responded to this by extending the Ticket to Play program to include eligible learn-to-swim providers, with 16 registered swim centres now active in the program. I am sure everybody in this place would agree that as an island state this is a particularly important initiative.

The response to Ticket to Play from the community and activity providers has been overwhelmingly positive. In 2021-22 we doubled the funding for the program, with an additional \$3 million committed from 2021-22 to 2023-24. The increased funding has meant that in 2020-21 and 2021-22 each eligible participant will receive two \$100 vouchers to use either at two different sporting activities or both at one activity provider at two different times of the year. Sport is the lifeblood of communities across Tasmania. We will continue to invest in initiatives and programs that provide opportunities for all Tasmanians to participate.

Recently, two WNBL regular season matches were played between the Bendigo Spirit and the Southside Flyers at the MyState Bank Arena. I was lucky enough to attend one of those games. The visit to our state by these clubs is another great example of the positive impacts elite sporting clubs can have in local communities. While they were here, the clubs travelled all over the state to engage in community clinics for junior players. What a fantastic

opportunity this was to highlight the pathway for women and girls in basketball and to promote not only participation but also leadership in the sport.

These matches and the community engagement from both teams strongly supports our aim for Tasmania to field a team in the WNBL in coming years. On this International Women's Day what a good time it is to reiterate the fact that Tasmania should have its own WNBL team to complement the work that the JackJumpers are doing.

I commend the Flyers and the Spirit for helping to grow the sport of basketball in Tasmania. I sincerely thank them for helping to inspire the next generation of players.

As part of the 2021-22 Tasmanian Budget we are also investing more than \$38 million in more than 140 sports organisations to deliver programs and infrastructure statewide. A Tasmanian AFL team and a new stadium means nothing unless the Tasmanian teams that play there are giving back to the communities around the state that support them. As the Minister for Sport and Recreation, that is my strong commitment and my commitment to those communities across Tasmania.

We have already delivered so much in the sport and recreation space, including \$40 000 to Bowls Tasmania to ensure Tasmania has its own team in the Bowls Premier League. Just last Friday, I did an event with Football Tasmania where we promoted \$10 million in upgrades to football facilities at four key locations across the state in preparation for hopefully hosting international base camps for the FIFA Women's World Cup next year.

We have doubled the funding for the 2021-22 Improving the Playing Field Grants Program and applications for that are now at the assessment stage. We will continue to deliver through our investments across all levels of sport, including \$2 million for Queenborough Oval, \$1 million for the Stage 1 of the New Town Sporting Precinct masterplan, \$500 000 for an expansion at the Hobart Gymnastics Academy and \$750 000 to redevelop the Northern Hockey Centre at St Leonards. We have committed \$2.5 million towards the Pembroke Park redevelopment in Sorell, as well as \$1 million in funding for new change rooms, extra public toilets, storage and medical rooms at the Launceston City Football Club. It is all investment in grassroots infrastructure. It is our investments in grassroots community sports that will build our future sporting heroes and community achievers from the ground up.

Blundstone Arena and UTAS Stadium meet the needs for major sporting events right now, but we do indeed need to plan for the future and take a long-term approach to sporting and entertainment infrastructure investment.

I support a men's and, on this International Women's Day, a women's Tasmanian AFL team. It was excellent to recently see some of Tasmania's best exports to the AFL talking about the plans for the new stadium in Hobart. Jack Riewoldt said:

A roofed stadium in the CBD, can you imagine what that's going to do for Tasmanian football. But not just that, for the economy, for jobs in Tasmania, for all sorts of sports and music arts and everything else that goes with it.

When he was speaking about the Premier, he said he has -

commanded the respect from the AFL and they have duly listened. Along with the taskforce they are the leading the charge for this team to come in in what is hopefully the not too distant future.

Gerard Whateley, one of the highest profile football journalists in the country, said -

To deny Tasmania this now would be chronically shortsighted and mean-spirited. Tassie will build it and the AFL must come.

I could not agree more.

As the Premier outlined in his Address, the Government has recently undertaken preliminary feasibility work to understand what opportunities there are to develop a major entertainment, sporting and events stadium with a capacity of up to 27 000 seats as well as up to 30 000 for a major concert or event, including standing space, within easy commuting distance of the Hobart CBD and connected to a variety of transport modes. It builds on the Government's plans for significant investments into our existing major facilities such as MyState Bank Arena, UTAS Stadium in Launceston and Dial Park at Penguin.

The Government is also very much aware that the location holds great significance for Tasmanian soldiers who have served their country. The Government will work closely with the RSL on how such a stadium could enhance the Cenotaph area and invite people to remember and celebrate our returned and serving men and women year-round.

The area is also important for the Royal Hobart Regatta, which is one of Australia's oldest continuous aquatic events. The Government will work with the Regatta Association to incorporate their needs into the development and explore opportunities that could shore up the longevity of the event into the future.

This vision for our sporting and entertainment will deliver significant social and economic outcomes for the entire state. It says we are serious and unlocks the potential for a whole host of events, performances, concerts and functions to help drive economic outcomes across Tasmania. As I said before, it will mean nothing unless the Tasmanian teams that play there are giving back to the communities around the state that support them.

While every sector across our state makes an essential contribution to the growth and prosperity in Tasmania, our future is increasingly dependent of the success of our ICT sector and the development of digital capabilities across the economy.

As the new minister, I put on the record my gratitude for the stakeholders who have made the time to meet with me and my team in this first weeks. Ours is a government that recognises the important contribution that the ICT sector makes not just to the Tasmanian economy in its own right but also as an enabler of business and service delivery and as a disrupter of traditional markers and sectors that is playing a transformational role across our economy. According to the 2021 Digital Pulse report produced by the Australian Computers Society, the ICT industry provides more than 9000 jobs in Tasmania and many thousands more indirectly. This is projected to grow to more than 12 000 jobs by 2026 and we want to grow it even further than that.

That is why last month the Government announced that it has engaged Deloitte Access Economics to measure the current capabilities of Tasmania's technology sector, the first study of its kind in more than a decade, so we can assess the industry's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. Deloitte has distributed an ICT sector survey to Tasmanian companies that produce, provide or use technology products or services, which will give them the chance to contribute to the industries future. The data gathered will be used to deepen our understanding of sector demographics, industry players, their areas of expertise, export market involvement and workforce outlook.

Analysis of the sectors products and services will inform our ability to market export-ready companies via our trade advocates in the US, Singapore, Japan and China. They will also inform a range of other key priorities including: the identification of skills gaps, qualifications and industry certifications to inform the focus of Skills Tasmania, TasTAFE and the university; promotion of the sectors capabilities by the Office of the Co-ordinator General as part of its investment attraction activities; the Department of Education's mapping of skills pathways to ensure the curriculum enables students to build their knowledge from primary school and enable the vast range of ICT career opportunities to be better understood; and also the development of a Tasmanian tech sector brand and toolkit with in-brand Tasmania.

I am proud of the record that our Government has in enhancing Tasmania's communications networks. Since coming to government, we have invested many millions of dollars in ongoing projects in partnership with the Commonwealth and mobile carriers, including major works at Flinders and King islands, and along the Great Eastern Drive and at more than 60 mobile black spot locations across the state. I also want to mention the Tasmanian Government's free wi-fi network, which we built in partnership with Telstra. That is active at 72 locations across the state, offering locals and tourists internet access at no cost.

Many Tasmanians will be aware of last week's telecommunications outage that impacted Telstra's main linkages from the mainland for a number of hours. While Telstra will now be undertaking a full investigation into these events, it must be said that this was an unprecedented event that has never before occurred and I hope never occurs again.

Nonetheless, through TasNetworks, we are progressing investigations of the Marinus Link interconnector. This is in addition to its delivery of low-cost reliable and clean energy, but it would also serve as an additional fibre-optic link to the mainland and serve as additional security redundancy, supplementing the two Telstra interconnectors and Basslink. Further, we are also in discussions with private sector proponents such as HyperOne to provide even greater additional redundancies.

Our Government is leading from the front. We are rolling out digital improvements across our agencies to contemporise our public service and better connect Tasmanians to the government services that they need and expect. Across all agencies we are investing well over \$145 million dollars into digital infrastructure and service delivery across the forward estimates.

Mr Speaker, I do have more in the Science and Technology portfolio but I can see I am running out of time and I do want to touch on the Heritage portfolio as well.

In relation to the Heritage portfolio, I recognise the importance of our built heritages' connection to place. I also understand the importance of our shared history and how it needs to be carefully and responsibly managed.

As the Premier has said, we have welcomed Tasmanians home and visitors back, and as we transition to living with COVID-19, Tasmania is in an advantageous position, viewed globally as unique and safe, with its world-leading and environmental credentials and a strong prosperous economy. We will continue to invest in next generation infrastructure for Tasmanians. This includes strengthening and protecting our built heritage. Many local families and businesses have strong connection to place through our shared heritage. I also recognise it is a vital element of our state's brand and will continue to play an important part of the visitor economy.

Tasmania's historic heritage is of great importance to this state and considerable work is being done by the Tasmanian Heritage Council to ensure that the Tasmanian Heritage Register is an accurate reflection of heritage places of greatest importance to Tasmania. The council is working through its five-year plan to evolve the register, which sets a vision for the register and lays the foundation to identify pathways that improve existing register entries as well as fill notable gaps by adding new places. Improving the entries means property owners and developers can more clearly understand why the place is being protected for the future, which features are important to protect and where the boundary of the heritage listing ends.

We are also investing to help grow Tasmania's convict heritage tourism. We are planning for our future while also acknowledging our past. Our investments include over \$5 million into the Cascade Female Factory, an award-winning heritage tourism site that tells the stories of female convicts who came to Tasmania. I recently visited the Female Factory in South Hobart. I have to say that as someone who has lived in the south of the state my entire life, I am embarrassed about how little I knew or understood about the Female Factory and the story it has to tell in Tasmania's history.

The new History and Interpretation Centre will provide enhanced visitor facilities, including a welcome space, a tourist assembly area, interpretation gallery, research room and a gift shop. A multi-purpose space will enable the delivery of the education program employee and volunteer facilities to include offices, lunchroom, kitchen and bathrooms. Practical completion of this work has been achieved and I look forward to the site reopening to visitors as soon as practically possible once interpretation, operational aspects and employee training is finalised.

In the heritage space I am also really excited about delivering \$1.25 million commitment to develop a convict memorial hub at the Penitentiary Chapel in Hobart, having entered into a funding agreement with the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority. It is a perfect opportunity to invest in a project that will link all of our convict heritage sites across the state, instead of telling the story in a piecemeal approach as we are at the minute and to have a consistent approach across the state that links these sites together.

It is the Tasmanian Liberal Government that is committed to making lasting change in the lives of Tasmanians. We are investing to create a truly better future for our state and we are making a difference to many Tasmanians lives. Disappointingly, Labor have yet support any of what was announced in the State of the State address. They seemingly want to play politics and risk the opportunities that this state has. We are committed to leading an

aspirational state and we reject the relentless negativity and the appalling cynicism that we have seen from Labor in the past two weeks.

In his state of the state speech, the Premier announced a 10-year vision across a number of areas but specifically in Health and Housing that was worth more than \$2.5 billion. We need to build job-creating infrastructure. That is why it is so disappointing to see those opposite painting this as an either/or opportunity that we cannot invest in both Health and Housing and infrastructure that will drive this economy forward. That is what we are about, and that is what we are going to do in 2022.

[4.53 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to note the Premier's state of the state speech. The word 'aspirational' has been thrown around this parliament. In the state of the state speech, 'aspire' or 'aspirational' was used at least eight times. We have seen a theme of it being used in virtually every question time. It is almost like it is the *Sesame Street* word of the day - aspirational.

It is important to be aspirational. There is nothing wrong with being aspirational. You should have aspirations for your state. You should have aspirations across a whole range of portfolios areas. What was sadly missing from the state of the state speech and the acknowledgement of it - because it is the state of the state, it is not another political election speech about what you might do should you be elected. This Government was elected in 2014, so it has eight years of a track record. Some of the words that I was hoping to hear the Premier utter but did not hear were the words 'deliver', 'fulfill', 'supply', 'carry out', 'finish', 'live up to', 'implement', 'make good', 'concluded', 'attain'. Here's one: 'ahead of schedule'. We did not hear that from the Premier. 'Accomplished', 'finalised', 'done'. When all you do is talk about aspiration without actually delivering, it is just words.

The fundamental problem is the credibility issues that this Government has. They are very quick to talk about the hope and aspiration, and you have to support hope and aspiration, regardless of the policy intent. We may have disagreements, but if a government has aspirations and hope for the state that should be encouraged.

There is also accountability. That is being able to deliver on the things that you announce. What we have seen from this Government, whenever they are under the pump, or when a bad set of numbers come out, we see the big announcements. We see the big, shiny thing in the distance to distract us from the reality of everyday Tasmanians.

When we critique that aspiration as an aspiration in the absence of detail, people on this side of the House are seen as negative. Those people who critique the Government are seen as talking the state down.

All of us in this Chamber have strong aspirations for this state. We also want to see fundamental responsibility of government at a state level to be delivered and the challenges that Tasmanians face to be resolved.

The prime example of the spin over substance approach of this Government was the Commonwealth Games announcement on the day that they lost an embattled Education minister in circumstances which were less than ideal. People who criticised the Premier for the announcement were seen as critical and talking the state down. I do wish her the best in

her future and acknowledge my service with her in this place. Her resignation is a matter for her.

On a day that clearly was not a good day for the Government, they then announced the Commonwealth Games bid, unbeknown to anyone. There were no third parties. Usually when this Government makes an announcement such as this, the third parties are already rolled out; they are ready to back the announcement of the Government. Even the cities that would potentially host the Commonwealth Games events were none the wiser. They found out through the media. That is a rolled-gold example of spin over substance - a government under the pump in one policy area throwing a 'dead cat announcement' on the table to distract people from the realities.

It was poor form by the Government because it caught people on the hop; some sports and codes would have loved to host events. Had there been a professional and comprehensive approach to the bid, there could have been some events that were hosted in Tasmania. That would have been of benefit to those codes, those sports and to the communities where those games would be hosted.

The manner in which the Government went about it, to use it as a political distraction, embarrassed sports, codes and magnificent athletes who said it would be a good thing, because there was no serious bid for the Commonwealth Games or any events. It not only embarrassed those athletes and those codes, but it embarrassed the state. If we are to be taken seriously, because we are a small state in the federation and we do achieve beyond our weight division at times, those kinds of announcements embarrass the state and hold us back when we do seriously bid for games.

The other announcement from the state of the state report, which I hope has more substance to it, is the announcement of a bid for an AFL team and the stadium that is proposed for Hobart. I support an AFL team for Tasmania. A facility such as that could also host an A League soccer team. It will also potentially host significant events in rugby league and rugby union. It is a stadium that could potentially benefit the state. The construction jobs that would be involved, the events that could be attracted, the economic triggers of both the construction and the running of a facility such as that and the potential to move from the lower to middle tier in convention hosting means it is not a bad idea. There are a lot of arguments about the north and south and there are a lot of arguments about the existing infrastructure.

We saw spin over substance with the Ashes: the torrent of tweets and media about the bid to get the Ashes. The focus of the Government was to get the Ashes. Fantastic, we got the Ashes but when there is serious data and serious reporting on housing, health, education and a whole range of government services, we do not see that kind of profile given to the announcements and the honest rigour applied under the policy settings in those areas.

Usually, it is bad news and it comes out late on a Friday night or it comes out imbedded in between large reports in an attempt to distract from reality. The media has to do extra work to try to find the data and information.

We saw the torrent of tweets around the Ashes, we saw the Commonwealth Games. Unfortunately, the way the Premier announces these issues and these aspirations, as he calls them, it looks like a distraction from some of core services of the Government. There is always a place for aspiration, there is always a place for hope, but you must have your here and now.

How can we believe the aspirations of the Government when it fails to deliver in so many elements of its core functions - providing good quality health services; a roof over the head for those Tasmanians that are in desperate need; high quality education to give the next generation of Tasmanians the best possible start in life? It is hard to believe the aspiration and it is hard not to be critical of a Government regarding the aspirational elements when they refuse to acknowledge or try to spin their way out of some of the sobering data sets that impact on the lives of Tasmanians by making Commonwealth Games announcements.

There are more than 4300 families on the housing waiting list. It is a figure that climbs every year. The average wait time for a social housing applicant is now approaching 15 months. That is 15 months of living on a couch and car, in a tent, surfing between friends and family. I am not alone as a local member of parliament having people come into our office in the most desperate of circumstances and situations. I will not repeat them here because I could give a 40-minute speech on the last, maybe, month of new people who have come into my office and sought assistance from the circumstances they are in.

The dream of owning a home is out of reach for so many Tasmanian families. Owning a home is almost a bonus. You are lucky if you can get a rental property that is within your budget.

That should not surprise the Government. It has been in government for eight years. Straight after the 2018 election the Government called a housing crisis summit in the Premier's office, to bring everyone together because it was an urgent issue. Since that summit, things have become worse. It has deteriorated. The Government, unfortunately, did not seem to comprehend the size of the problem. If I can recall the quote directly, the leader of Government Business in the debate last year referred to people seeking houses as being 'on the fringes of society'. I do not think it was disparaging to the individuals; I think what he was trying to say is that most people have a roof over their head and the people that seek housing are on the fringes.

I believe that is a systemic approach from this Government and it is part of the problem. They do not fully comprehend the nature of the problem. In the Premier's Address and new initiatives, all we heard were market-based responses. There was no comprehension that the market has failed people, and the market has failed in housing in Tasmania. If all you do is to feed the issues that drive demand up, you exacerbate the supply problem. You exacerbate the housing crisis. That has been the Government's approach for the last six to eight years when this housing issue started to reach its crisis point. If the market is the problem, more market initiatives will not fix it. You just freeze people further out of the housing market.

I think it was the Leader of the Greens who referred to aspirations for key delivery of government services. We all have aspirations for health, but when you have a Government that spends more time tweeting and spinning about sport - and I love my sport; it was fantastic we had The Ashes. It is fantastic that we are seeking to get an AFL team, an A-league team and we will be able to host events. That is all great, but if that is all you seem to be doing, in terms of the big picture and the aspiration, why can you not be aspirational for an improved health service? Tasmanians are almost three times as likely to wait over a year for public elective surgery, compared to the mainland. That is not acceptable.

We have the worst statewide ambulance response times in the country. Ten per cent of patients on elective surgery waitlist end up waiting an average of 588 days, compared to the

national average of 348. When we say elective surgery, I know that term has been explained a lot, but that is a hip, that is a knee, that is an ankle, that is something that is significant. People are on the waiting list for so long for a knee, or a for a hip, that a whole range of other medical conditions manifest themselves in that person, because they are not able to get up and get moving and get walking around because of their hip, or because of their knee. Waiting for an average of 588 days is more than painful; arguably, it is cruel.

We have had elective surgery blowouts. The waiting list exceeds over 10 000 people; that is from January of this year. Four out of five presentations at the Royal Hobart Hospital ED are not seen within clinically recommended timeframes. 60 per cent of urgent Royal Hobart Hospital ED presentations are not seen within clinically recommended time frames. We have a record outpatient waiting list. It is basically 11 per cent of the population. Oral health wait list exceeds 16 493 people, and these include people waiting for dentures and other basic dental procedures which have impacts on a person's quality of life. I have had the odd tooth issue and I tell you what, those days, the waiting lists, trying to get into a dentist to get your tooth fixed - it is painful. It is cruel.

There is an underspend of \$132 million in health infrastructure and upgrades that were budgeted in 2021. Less than half of the DHHS capital works budgeted for 2021 was spent. Over 25 per cent of patients admitted to the Royal Hobart Hospital via ambulance are ramped for over 30 minutes. There is the promised ambulance station upgrade; we have not seen them and patients are waiting over 120 days for urgent surgery that should be done within 30 days. Category 1 elective surgeries are 91 days over the recommended time frame. Elective surgery waiting lists are costing the Tasmanian economy \$120 million each year.

How about the Government becomes aspirational to improve our health outcomes in Tasmania? The Government talks a lot about how much they value our health and frontline health workers but when there was an opportunity to provide them a COVID-19 allowance they squibbed it and they set the bar way too high for that allowance to kick in. In those matters, you are judged by your actions, not by your words; and by your actions, I contend that this Government undervalues our inspirational health workers, particularly our frontline health workers.

In education and training, it should be pretty aspirational for our school system. We have the second worst year 12 completion rate in the country. Almost half Tasmanians are functionally illiterate; and an Infrastructure Australia report says Tasmania needs roughly twice the civil construction workforce to complete public infrastructure commitments between now and 2025.

Other speakers have referred to the educational outcomes of our primary and higher level, and the Denny report has been referred to by a number of speakers. These are heartbreaking statistics, which mean that we will fail the next generation of Tasmanians. We will rob them of reaching their full prospects.

What is the answer from this Government, in terms of TAFE and training? They talk about how great the industry infrastructure pipeline is. Their response is, instead of taking responsibility for the escalation - they have been in charge of the system for eight years, and I do not believe it is a coincidence that we are in a massive skills gap, because they have underfunded TAFE. What is their response when there is a problem? Let us spin, let us semi-privatise, or quasi-privatise TAFE - basically, give the responsibility away from Government,

away from the role of the minister to take responsibility for that, and set up an organisation outside of Government. That is not taking responsibility, that is not acknowledging the problem; that is basically giving up, and Tasmanians will be failed for it.

Turning to infrastructure - there are so many debates in this House on the underspending of infrastructure, billions of dollars of announcements, and the billions of dollars of under-delivery. On average, you fail to deliver on at least 50 per cent of your commitments, yet in each Premier's Address, each Budget speech, each election speech, big numbers are announced about here is the biggest investment in the state's history. However, a chronic under-delivery means that, for example, traffic congestion across our cities in Tasmania is acute and the infrastructure of the future that will build productivity and improve commuter times will be failed.

I know that the minister for Infrastructure gets up and talks about that last year of investment in the Labor government of 2013-14. What he fails to do is look at the previous number of years, where there was a billion dollars' worth of investment, where we built the Brighton Transport Hub, the Brighton Bypass, the Kingston Bypass and the East Tamar Highway Bypass - over a billion dollars' worth of infrastructure. When you cherry-pick one of the years in between a number of the packages being delivered to the industry, it paints a picture, that suits Mr Ferguson I am sure but then he referred very quickly in his speech, to the Liberal Midland Highway 10-year infrastructure upgrade plan.

It is interesting he would use that example because six months out from the 2014 election, the Liberal Opposition's only infrastructure announcement or policy was the four lane Midland Highway, which we know has not been delivered and will not be delivered by this Government. Then he claims that there was this 10-year Midland Highway plan; well, that is the plan that Labor built with every council up and down the length and breadth of the Midland Highway and that Labor announced in the lead-up to the 2014 election. I signed the commitment with the then Infrastructure Minister, Anthony Albanese, in the lead-up to the 2014 election. Then we were expecting an announcement from the Hodgman Liberal team about their four-lane Midland Highway, and the then shadow infrastructure minister, Mr Hidding, rolled up to an election forum with me, and basically got up and said, 'There will be no questions here because whatever Labor are promising, we will do what they're doing'. All of a sudden, he crab walked away from the four lane, dual-carriage Midland Highway commitment, and picked up Labor's plan.

The greatest form of flattery, you have the current minister for Infrastructure talking about the Liberal 10-year Midland Highway strategy, which is effectively Labor's strategy. Thank you, well done for delivering it. We got the commitment for money. When you look at traffic congestion in Hobart, in the capital city, it is absolutely chronic.

It was in 2016 or 2017 when the then infrastructure minister, Rene Hidding, called a crisis meeting about how to deal with traffic congestion in Hobart. What has been the Government's response since that time? They have taken over Davey and Macquarie streets and it has taken them now nearly two years just to seal a section of Davey Street. Wow, what an amazing delivery. They are wasting and spending all this money on this proposed fifth lane on the outlet which will do nothing to deal with the bottleneck problem that creates the traffic jams in the top of Macquarie and Davey streets.

The biggest investment in the last 15 years in improving traffic in Hobart was under the Labor government when we built the Brighton Transport Hub and moved all the industry traffic out of the CBD of Hobart out to Brighton to this transport hub. It has kept thousands of small, large, and medium-sized industry traffic out of the CBD because they did not need to come down to Evans Street and pick up the stuff off the train and then deliver it around the south of the state. It essentially stopped at Brighton. That was the biggest and most important investment.

In the greater Hobart area, there has not been an investment by the Liberal Government that was not already announced and committed to by previous governments. Yet this Government says that we need more people on public transport. Look at the state of Metro: a high turnover, low morale of staff. I am getting emails and messages on social media every day on services that do not turn up and people waiting at the bus stop.

If your answer is not to build the infrastructure that you promise, tick. We heard this morning that the Tasman Bridge upgrades have now been delayed a number of years. Again, another major delay. If the answer is public transport, the people of Hobart are losing confidence in Metro because the buses are not turning up. There is high staff turnover, they are under-funded and under-supported. If public transport is the answer, the Government is not doing the work to ensure that the travelling public will have the confidence to move from their cars onto the buses and using Metro as a viable transport. If they cannot trust it, if they cannot ensure that the bus will turn up in time or when it says and they cannot get to work or get to school, people will lose confidence in it and stay in their cars.

The one initiative that took years to deliver, and we still are not out of the pilot phase, is the Hobart Derwent ferries. This is a great initiative; something we have supported, and I have supported, for many years. I think the service has proved up but what does this Government do? They just extend the trial. 'We will have a bit more of a look at it.' That does not give the travelling public the confidence to make decisions long term, either to give up their car park in town and say that they will catch the ferry to work: so chronic under-investment in infrastructure. Big announcement; chronic under-investment.

Also announced was dissolving of the Department of Communities Tasmania. In the state of the state speech, the Premier talked about how he wants to breakdown the silos of government but breaking up the department of Communities and creating an authority outside of government for housing increases the potential for silos. Public housing is at crisis point for the state Government. It has been for a number of years. If the answer is that with all their market-base solutions, which I think are feeding the problem, creating an authority outside of government is almost like they do not want to take responsibility for the resolution. You want to have someone to blame. You will create a silo outside of government. That, to me, is a recipe for disaster. What it will do is those people involved in housing will spend the next six to 12 months reorganising the new department and where they sit and where they fit and less time on delivering the outcomes for the Tasmanian community. It is the wrong idea at the wrong time and the consequences will be profound.

The decision around Child and Family Services moving into Education is a significant change. We have already heard in the public domain the example from South Australia where a commission of inquiry recommended that child protection services be taken out of the education department because of a lack of focus on the protection of our young people. I hope history does not repeat itself, where a key function of government with the intent and focus -

and focus is a resource - to support our young people gets absorbed into a much larger department

I hope the consequences are that the people in this House in 10 years' time are not facing the same outcome that they did in South Australia where a royal commission made recommendations and government has apologised for poor outcomes. That is a dangerous step. Again, in any major public service reshuffle the next 12 months will be lost in people getting positions and structures at a time when the focus needs to be there.

In concluding, it is very clear that aspiration is important; it is important to provide people hope. It is important to come up with the big ideas that will trigger activity or improvement in the state's economy or improvement in outcomes but when the aspiration and the focus is on such a narrow effort by this Government, all Tasmania loses. Let us see a government that provides a state of the state report that shows demonstrable improvement in our health services, in putting roofs over people's heads and in providing educational attainment. I think it is not out of the realm of possibility for the state to say that we want to be the nation's average. That does not sound aspirational and it probably will not get in a tweet from the government media team but getting up to the average of the country would be a great outcome for Tasmania in the short term.

Once we achieve that then we move on to becoming nation leaders, as we should aspire to be. This Government and this Premier throw ideas out. It was not a thought bubble; it was a cynical announcement around a Commonwealth games, designed to take attention from what was a particularly bad day and a bad moment for this Government. They have got form with that. It embarrasses the state. It makes it harder for us to be taken seriously on a national stage when these things occur. The focus of this Government should be to not only chase the big ideas but actually deliver on the things that they are elected to do - roads, health, education and housing.

[5.23 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I start by acknowledging the palawa people of Tasmania as the original and continuing owners, the custodians of this beautiful island, lutruwita Tasmania. It was land stolen from them through violence; a dispossession that has brought a long arc of injustice, grief, pain and anger that continues in our community today.

The Greens are a party committed to truth telling, to treaty, to the return of stolen lands and to changing the date of our nation's day. We are also committed through the truth-telling process which will unfold this year, a very important year, to listening with truly open hearts and hearing with our ears open and being willing and prepared to take the actions that come from that truth-telling process.

Indigenous peoples have lived for tens of thousands of years with sustainable practices in all lands across this planet but in recent centuries, contemporary societies have been responsible for treating nature like it is our worst enemy, dominating it and polluting it and doing everything possible to destroy it. Now the United Nations has identified in this decade, three crises which are threatening all peoples on earth: climate change, biodiversity loss and now they have added a third, pollution.

We have been gripped in Tasmania and globally in a COVID-19 pandemic that is ongoing, and we do not know where that will take us. It is a journey that has diverted our focus

over the last two years and our resourcing from the fight to prevent planetary heating to unsustainable levels. Climate change is not a distant future, it is not happening in a far-off country. We have all seen the devastating loss and damage from climate inaction across Australia in the 2020 bushfire summer and right now, we are all being gripped and still are at the ongoing flood hotspots and the damage that is unfolding in south-east Queensland, in northern New South Wales, especially Lismore and down into New South Wales.

I pay my respects to the families of people who have died in those floods, and to others who are waiting to hear about family members and friends who are still missing. I also pay my respects to the tens of thousands of people who are enduring a process of clean-up, and the thousands of people who have lost their home. Some of the people in the Lismore area and parts of the Hawkesbury have lost their homes multiple times. For some people, this is the third time in three years where their house has been inundated. People's houses have been flooded to the third storey. They have been flooded to two metres above and beyond the greatest previous recorded highest flood height. They thought they were safe, and some communities have totally rebuilt in recent times and all of their flood-proofing methods have been in vain.

There are communities in parts of eastern Australia that have been flooded that have far more resources, particularly Brisbane and parts of Sydney, than many vulnerable regional local government areas in Tasmania. I listened to the Mayor of Lismore talking about the 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the whole road network that has been completely destroyed in his shire, and the 2000 houses in his community that have been completely destroyed. His clean-up bill and restoration bill and rebuilding bill is in the high hundreds of millions of dollars.

These are costs which we cannot continue to bear. There are also costs which insurance companies may be, or already are, refusing to insure against. These are future situations that are developing in front of us where whole communities, maybe this time or maybe next year or in a few years' time, may not be able to rebuild at all. We are looking at a shrinking of areas, a densifying of people needing to live together in increasingly smaller parts of Australia that are safe from floods.

However, we know that no part of Australia is safe from the extremes of a climate that our heating planet is bringing us. We also know that the tremendous power and incredible computing intelligence, and intelligence of the people, in our national weather agency could not respond fast enough. They could not keep up with the astounding complexity and volatility of the overheated climate system. It was not a failure of the Bureau of Meteorology to predict what was happening in time; in fact, the Bureau of Meteorology's forecasts over the last two decades have been getting far more accurate. Instead, what is happening is that weather events are happening in places that they never used to. There is no past historical record in areas for meteorologists to use to base predictions of what they can see coming on the radar. They do not know how it is going to play out because rising temperatures have so rapidly changed the weather system, and rainfall is disrupting forecasts.

In Tasmania, in Australia and in other parts of the world, we will not necessarily be able to predict and forecast the emergency support services that we need to be in place at a time for communities. Communities must have the support now to prepare themselves, to provide the resilience, and to create the networks of support. They need support to understand how they will cope and survive in periods where they may be cut off from electricity, cut off from water,

cut off from food and cut off from emergency health services for unknown periods of time because that is what is happening to people in Australia right now.

What we are experiencing in Australia and around the world is at just 1.1 degrees of warming. In the words of Antonio Guterres, the Head of the United Nations:

Every fraction of a degree matters.
Every voice can make a difference.
And every second counts.

The latest IPCC report is on climate change and its impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. The IPCC report which was delivered on Monday this week, is, according to Antonio Guterres, '... an atlas of human suffering and a damning indictment of failed climate leadership'. He is not a man to mince his words. He has a huge planet of issues that he is responsible for speaking about. Responsible, as we hear his voice, talking about the invasion of the peaceful people in Iraq. He is also bringing his mind on our behalf to these global issues of climate heating.

I praise the tremendous work of Tasmanian climate scientists who have been key contributing authors and other research contributors to this latest IPCC report. We are indeed in the forefront in Australia with our climate change research - we always have been. As a party, the Greens strongly support evidence-based policy, and we will never stop defending the need for independence of scientists and for the resourcing they need to do the work they do, on our behalf. The IPCC found, in their report, that people's health, lives and livelihoods, as well as property and critical infrastructure, including energy and transport systems, are being increasingly damaged and badly affected by hazards from heatwaves, storms, droughts and flooding, as well as slow onset changes of sea level rise. This is a grave point and we have to do everything we can to avoid the mounting loss of life and the loss of biodiversity and infrastructure and we must have an ambitious and accelerated program.

The IPCC report makes it very clear the challenges we have in front of us, this decade. We have to deal with climate risks that are appearing faster. They will get more severe and they will do that more quickly. We are not prepared, according to the report, even for the current impacts. The current situation is costing lives. That is the failure of governments in Australia and around the world to take leadership and to end the use of fossil fuels for an energy source and the amount of emissions that they create. More warming will bring us many more problems. Limiting warming to 1.5 degrees would make a substantial difference to the losses and damages that we are expecting through the heating of the planet that is in place but even that will not eliminate those losses.

The conclusion of the report is that we have to restore nature. We have to protect at least 30 per cent of the earth by 2030, so that it is able to protect us. The other comprehensive finding of the report is all of this must be done in the context of bringing down carbon emissions as rapidly as possible.

The Premier did not waste words in his speech talking about the desperate need for climate change, preparation and planning. He spent three pages talking about sport and stadiums but he did not talk about the need to legislate for a safe climate.

The IPCC's message is clear: the faster we cut emissions, the more climate damage we can avoid. Tasmania has to step up. We have been increasing our emissions in real terms over

the past 20 years in transport, agriculture and mining. The Government still refuses to show leadership and to legislate targets for a reduction in emissions in those sectors and other sectors.

The Greens have a safe climate bill to be tabled. When the Government brings on its state climate action bill, we will be moving to amend that bill to reflect the standard we have placed in our bill, which is based on science. It is based on the urgency for action to cut emissions and it is based on the need to prepare for the future risk that all of our communities face.

The Premier and his Liberal ministers like to falsely claim that we are scaring children by talking about the way the world is. We know from listening directly to children in the climate action rallies, listening to child psychologists who speak to us that young people do not want to be gaslit. They want to have their reality affirmed by people in leadership. They want plans for transformative action to match the climate-heating threats that we all face.

We have an opportunity to make a real difference for our children and for everyone in the world living in low-lying areas that are already wading through rising waters. We can, for starters, end native forest logging in Burnie. That would keep our existing carbon stores in native forests intact rather than adding them, coupe by coupe, to the burden of global emissions.

I want to draw your attention, Mr Speaker, to this excellent declaration that was made at the Glasgow UN Climate Change Conference last November. The Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use emphasises the critical and interdependent world of forests of all types on biodiversity and sustainable land use, understands the need to achieve a balance between greenhouse gas emissions and the removal of sinks, affirms the commitment to conservation protections, sustainable management and restoration of forests and other terrestrial systems, and commits to halt and reverse forest loss and degradation by 2030.

It was signed by Australia among 124 other nations. This is something Tasmania must act on. We have to end native forest logging. We have to end land clearing, burning, destruction of habitat for the swift parrot, the Tasmanian masked owl and the other critically endangered animals like the Tasmanian devil, the wedge-tailed eagle. We have to retrain and redeploy Forestry Tasmania workers and we have to completely overhaul the planning laws which are deficient as they provide for offsets as a form of conservation.

Now is not the time for offsets because we do not have other land available to use for offset mechanisms. We need to recognise that the reseedling of monocultures and the drying out of landscapes that comes from clear-felling and burning not only trashes the forest communities and the biodiversity but it also significantly increases bushfire risk to local communities.

Climate change is massively overheating the atmosphere. There are new pyrocumulus clouds and fire storms that demand a totally different fire response and more resourcing for our mostly volunteer first responders to protect, as best as we can, our communities and wilderness. We were fortunate this year but it will not always be like that. I commend this season's response to the fire that was threatening the Olegas Truchanas stand: an important part of the Tasmanian World Heritage Area.

We are very concerned about preparations for the future. We have had fires in Tasmania in 2013, 2016 and 2019. We want to know from the minister what have they learnt from these,

and how is that being put into place. Because UNESCO was concerned about the 2018-19 fires in TWWHA, they required Tasmania to prepare a comprehensive fire management plan for the TWWHA. That consultation process finished on 22 October 2021. The work that comes out of that is critical to future protection of wilderness and the flow-on effect of fires that get away and threaten surrounding communities, like it did at Geeveston in 2019.

We would like to hear from the minister about that fire management plan. We want to know if the Government is going to urgently lobby the federal government to coordinate the massive increase in aerial firefighting capability we will need in future. What are we going to do in situations where other parts of Australia are burning? Is the Premier going to increase the number of remote area firefighters? It is a high priority.

Will the Government implement the fire management plan in this term of parliament? We need a plan to shift away from all fossil fuels immediately. It is a matter for every member of this House. Coal is deadly and expensive. We want a commitment from the Premier that the Government will end subsidies for thermal coal exploration and ban any thermal coal or gas mining in Tasmania or other coastal areas.

Swift parrots are almost extinct. The fantastic work done by scientist Jen Sanger and 18 other bird scientists provides a case for swift parrot protection. It involves ending the clear-felling and burning of nesting and flowering habitat required by the swift parrot for its survival. This is an essential step in what must be a major commitment that we make as a state, in this UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. This decade has started and runs to 2030. It is the same deadline that the IPCC has provided the human community to have an urgent and strong response to climate heating. We need to have healthy ecosystems to counteract climate change. We need them to stop the collapse of biodiversity and to provide us with the conditions that we need as people to grow food, to gift us with clean air and water, and every other natural material we use.

Ms O'Connor, the Leader of the Greens, outlined some of the work we will need to do to ramp up the political momentum for restoration across Tasmania's degraded landscapes, forests, flood basins, wetlands, rivers and grasslands. A critical step in ecosystem restoration is not only the mechanics of restoration itself, but the regulations that have to be in place to make sure we are able to do the work of protection and conservation. That requires a functioning EPA. At the moment, in a biodiversity crisis, we must have a strong and independent EPA that is dedicated to putting the environment first. What we have is one which at every opportunity is required by statements of expectation issued by the minister to facilitate the needs of developers first and the environment tags along at the end, if they get there at all.

We have had a premier welcoming with open arms JBS's entry to Tasmania, the takeover of Huon Aquaculture. This company is currently in so many US ports, in multiple US EPA cases for violating clean water acts and dumping effluent. They have deforested over 42 000 hectares of Amazonian forests, not to mention abattoir waste into Porkys Creek on King Island and walking away from the island's workers. It is frightening news for fishers and coastal communities that have seen the environmental damage that has already been caused.

For those of us in the community who have watched the degradation of our marine waters from the essentially unregulated activities of industrial fish farming, to have the Premier of Tasmania welcome with open arms the biggest industrial producer of protein on the planet, a vandal of a company, which has always put the workers and the environment last, treated them

as a by-product to making money, is frightening. It is particularly frightening when we have such a weak and ineffectual EPA, not because of the work of the staff but because of the laws that they work under.

It is the failure to regulate to put the environment first. There has been no effective change to the functioning of the so-called independent EPA; the second attempt at making it independent is just as cynical as the first. We will be constantly making this a focus of our work over the next year because it is critical to protecting the environment.

I want to talk about the issue that illustrates the heart of this Premier and the choice he has made about who he is going to put first in Tasmania. He has chosen to put first the interests of businesses: vested interests of the tourism industry, of the hospitality industry, companies that will seek to have their needs met. They have been kept quiet for two years by the force of a world coming to terms with a pandemic.

Ms O'Connor and I had a great deal of faith and respect in the actions of the Premier in the first two years of the pandemic until his complete change prior to the opening of the borders, where he moved from slowing the spread of disease and flattening the curve and adopted a 'let it rip' strategy. People who are vulnerable have come last. He has made a commitment to an essentially dangerous public health response of living with COVID-19. That is code for focusing on the interests of the world and abandoning sick and old people, abandoning immunocompromised people and abandoning people with disability. It is a mainstream message of ableism.

It is failing to resource the public health protections that we need to put in place to keep Tasmanians safe. The word 'airborne' might be in some of the policy documents of the Government but they are not in the resourcing of the Minister for Health and they are not in the regulations that are being made about how people must seek to protect themselves in the community.

Unless there is mandatory universal mask wearing, the first and best approach to dealing with an airborne virus, then it says everything about the Premier's complete dismissal of this as an issue. He has decided to move on. It is too hard. He wants to normalise it. It completely disregards the serious and frightening prospect of a large level of chronic disease burden in Tasmania from the ongoing issues of long COVID-19.

We have not yet seen how long COVID-19 will play out. We have more than 50 000 Tasmanians who have been infected with COVID-19 and the research is very clear that some third of people will get long COVID-19 symptoms. They can cause long-term complications, such as twice the risk of heart attacks, stroke, heart failure and blood clots a year after the infection. The virus persists in the brain, the heart, the lungs and other organs. We know that it can create holes in parts of the brain which are similar to Alzheimer's disease. We know that it creates long-term lung damage. We know it will result in a chronic burden of serious illness - as if we needed more to deal with in Tasmania. We have one of the most under resourced health systems in Australia.

I want to give a shout out to all the nurses and midwives, their health care staff, the psychologists and psychiatrists, the doctors, the allied health workers, the emergency responders, the volunteer and paramedics who work in Ambulance Tasmania who have been working at breaking point now for over two years. The ANMF had to go to the Industrial

Commission to try to get some fair intervention because the Government has failed to resource nurses and midwives to the ratios that we need to keep staff safe and to have quality patient care.

We must do better than that. The Premier can do better than that. Instead of talking about stadiums and circuses, he needs to focus on the real things that everyday Tasmanians are facing; that is a house over their head when they need it and particularly getting health care when they need it. This is not the time to throw away our public health response of testing, tracing and surveillance. We know effective mask wearing makes a difference and we know we have to focus on preparation for this winter. We cannot assume the pandemic is over because it is not.

[5.53 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, it is time to come home, we need you. This is a shout out to all ex-Tasmanians. Tasmania needs you to come back. The jobs are here. The business opportunities are here. Tasmania is open for business.

Ms O'Connor - The housing isn't. You could find a place to live in the old days.

Mr SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, order.

Mr TUCKER - The bad old days have gone where Tasmania's biggest export was our kids. Now everyone should keep coming home. Ex-Tasmanians, if you are thinking about coming home, now is the time.

I rise to speak in strong support of the Premier's Address. Three years ago, I was elected to this House and in the first year I witnessed 12 months of the most successful economic growth that Tasmania has enjoyed for generations. We went from being in recession in 2012-13, under Labor and the Greens to rebuilding the Tasmanian economy from a basket case to the most successful and confident jurisdiction in Australia.

Then came the second 12-month period when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and it was simply unprecedented. We were quite literally in uncharted waters, with no rule book and no end in sight as 25 000 Tasmanians lost their jobs, businesses closed and hundreds of thousands of people died around the world.

In the past three years, I have driven kilometre after kilometre around this massive Lyons electorate, consisting of over 35 000 square kilometres and 11 municipalities, as I know that you are aware. I have spoken to thousands of regional Tasmanians, mayors and community groups. About a month before the pandemic struck, Peter Gutwein became Tasmania's 46th Premier. Everybody I talked to in the community said he was fortuitously the right man at the right time to take on the enormous challenge.

The Premier achieved this with quite a simple and honest approach. He fronted a publicly broadcast press conference every day for months. He levelled with Tasmanians about the current situation and the challenges we all faced together. He was blunt, he was honest, and Tasmanians respected that. The Premier promised to keep Tasmanians safe; he delivered. The Premier promised to protect Tasmanians from interstate hotspots if they could threaten Tasmania; he delivered. The Premier promised an infrastructure and jobs package to help Tasmanians recover jobs and confidence; he delivered. The Premier promised to lead a

compassionate government and he delivered the most generous economic and social support package in the country.

Tasmania's successful suppression of the virus has led to the labour market's strong recovery since the height of the pandemic in Tasmania in May 2020. Tasmania leads the nation out of the eight states and territories for the best performing economy, leading on four of the eight indicators, and is ranked second on another two. Tasmania is ranked first on unemployment, retail spending, equipment investment and dwelling starts. Tasmania also ranked second on construction work done and economic growth. This year, 2022, represents Tasmania's history and future as we emerge from the pandemic, learning different ways our state will adjust to live with COVID-19.

There are no dead ends for the Liberal Government. We are on a fast track, successfully jumping any hurdles faced, landing on our feet, gaining momentum, and running full steam ahead.

The Liberal Government looks straight ahead. There are fantastic highways and roads leading all around our captivating state. Our Premier has his hands firmly on the steering wheel, unlike the Opposition, which I feel are still asleep in the bus shelter and, to be quite honest, are still one big public relations mess.

All I see as I travel around, putting those kilometres behind me, is progress, employment opportunities, strong growth development and, more importantly, happy, positive people. This is why we need you to keep coming home. Our road to recovery is very busy indeed: trucks, campervans, buses everywhere. There is optimism in the air. There is a sense of purpose and direction.

I also see record prices being paid for our primary produce. We know that Tasmania's primary industries have been a shining light through the pandemic. Our healthy, clean produce is even more sought after, and our farmers have never been more confident. The Tasmanian Government set an ambitious goal of growing the value of Tasmania's agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050, and we are on target.

I see schools being built, new police stations in New Norfolk, Longford; new ambulance stations, new family and affordable houses, and new hospitals. We have a great story to tell our children and grandkids in the future. You live in a state that is a world leader in renewables, in pioneering the world's cleanest fuel. To think that within a decade, most of the trucks, buses, and even ships, like the *Spirit of Tasmania* ferries will be powered by clean hydrogen is a remarkable vision.

During my journeys around Lyons, I drop into many regional areas, and the message is the same; John, please pass on our thanks to the Premier and his team for keeping us safe.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Tasmanian Theatre Awards Arts Tasmania and Asialink Arts

[6.00 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for the Arts) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to congratulate the Theatre Council of Tasmania for the 2022 Tasmanian Theatre Awards, which took place at Wrest Point on Saturday night. I know Ms O'Byrne was present on that evening.

As Minister for the Arts, but also as a very passionate patron and advocate for the Tasmanian theatre sector and indeed, our creative and cultural industries generally, I am delighted to continue to personally support the Tasmanian Theatre Awards, as a silver sponsor of this event and I have been for some years now, even prior to being minister.

The extraordinary depth of talent recognised by the 2022 Tasmanian Theatre Awards demonstrates the sheer resilience and strength of our arts sector and the importance of Tasmanian theatre and the performing arts within our local communities, especially during the challenging circumstances that we have experienced over the past two years because of COVID-19.

This year's awards provided the first opportunity for the sector to really come together in person and celebrate the significant achievements and resilience shown during the COVID-19 pandemic following a reduced awards ceremony last year but nonetheless, still very enjoyable. That was held at the atrium in the Henry Jones Art Hotel, which was very appropriate.

I sincerely congratulate all award category winners and nominees across professional, community and musical theatre. The award categories run into four pages, a long list of incredible award winners and nominees. In particular, I will highlight just some of the winners who were honoured at Saturday night's awards: namely Archipelago Productions whose production of *The Maids* sold out at the Playhouse in Hobart last year and dominated the professional theatre category on Saturday night; Launceston's Encore Theatre Company whose production of *Mamma Mia!* led in the musical theatre category. Who doesn't like ABBA? I challenge them to say so.

Mr Barnett - I love ABBA.

Ms ARCHER - Yes, here we go. Thank you, Mr Barnett. I listen to it while I am out on my nightly walk, quite frequently, which probably says a lot about me.

I pay tribute to Acting True and Huon Valley Theatre, which won a range of awards, including Outstanding Production in Community Theatre for *A View from the Bridge*.

I also congratulate Robert Jarman who was honoured with the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award for his enduring leadership and immeasurable contribution to Tasmanian Theatre. Robert is a true Tasmanian icon who has provided inspiration and dedication to Tasmanian theatre over many decades and is truly deserving of this prestigious award. I have watched him do solo performances on stage and carry an audience for hours on his own, which is no mean feat. He really is a truly deserving winner of that accolade.

Importantly, I take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to Petr Diviš and the entire board, the Theatre Council of Tasmania for their ongoing advocacy and determination throughout COVID-19 to help ensure that our Government's support continued to be directed where it is needed and therefore, meeting the needs of our creative and cultural industries.

On Saturday evening, sadly, Petr announced he will be stepping down from his position as president of the Theatre Council. As Minister for the Arts, I personally thank Petr for his tireless work over the past two years, as president in particular of the Theatre Council of Tasmania, as well as his further work behind the scenes over many years as coordinator and executive producer for the Theatre Awards. He is also a very talented pianist. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Petr in his role as president and I know he will be sorely missed.

Before closing I would like to acknowledge some of the other important and exciting work currently going on in the sector. Specifically, the week before last I had the privilege of providing the opening remarks for the first event as part of a new partnership between the Tasmanian Government through Arts Tasmania and Asialink Arts. This new partnership will play a key role in industry development for the Tasmanian arts sector on our pathway to recovery, enabling Tasmania's cultural and creative industries to increase its presence in our region and provide access to key Asian markets, such as Singapore.

The forum was a great success, with more than 100 Tasmanian participants registering for the event. We also had some international attendees, namely His Excellency, the Honourable Will Hodgman, High Commissioner to Singapore. I had great pleasure in virtually addressing him. I got a bit of a giggle back.

I very much look forward to seeing the opportunities and relationships that come out of this new partnership, enabled through the investment of our Government. We will continue to support the Tasmanian cultural and creative industries in establishing new pathways and exchanges and build on our existing strong friendships and networks.

Endometriosis Awareness and WomenKind

[6.06 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I am sure it comes as no surprise that on this International Women's Day I have taken the opportunity in my earlier speech today to raise the issue of gendered impact of Government decisions on women, and the gendered nature of access to health, housing and government services that disadvantage women when they seek to access these services.

I wish to raise the issue of a gender lens applied to women in seeking health care. I want to raise again the issue of endometriosis. It is a condition that affects one in nine Australian women where tissues similar to the lining of the uterus form in other parts of the body. It is painful. For some it is debilitating and it is regularly misdiagnosed. Its treatment is both invasive and expensive.

It is also treated in a gendered way because I am quite sure that when a man presents at ED with significant and crippling abdominal pain, they are not sent home with Panadol and

told to take a walk or use a heat pack. We would order tests for said man. We dismiss women's pain as women's issues.

I am co-convenor of a group in the north called Women Kind. We hold social events and give opportunities for people to come together to hear some incredible speakers, raise funds, or gather donations for local causes, and enjoy friendship and humour. We have held International Women's Day events. We have had speakers on women's services, on the media portrayal of women and Grace Tame has spoken to us. Late last year the theme was a high tea for endometriosis awareness.

We had some amazing speakers, including Olivia Hicks, Tasmanian endo ambassador, and Amanda Duncan from the Two Sisters Foundation. Both women are activists. Both women are amazing speakers. Both women had endometriosis. Both women spoke of years of having their pain dismissed, of being ignored, of being disbelieved, being told they had stomach migraines, being told they just had bad period pain. They were even told - I love this one - that they should sit with their back against a glass window in the sun to cure the pain. They were told they were hypochondriacs. One of them was told that due to the nature of her purple hair colour she was simply trying to get attention and they did not want to see her again. Both women have had to pay for expensive surgery. It is both devastating and inspiring to hear their speeches.

Today this was posted on social media by a 19-year-old woman I know rather well, Sophia Arumugam in Launceston. As the voices of lived experience are the most powerful, I will read it in tonight:

Happy International Women's Day. As it is also Endometriosis Awareness Month, I think today is a great day to highlight the gaps of knowledge we all face when it comes to women's health.

For over six years my life has been more and more defined by undiagnosed health issues: debilitating pain that progressively got worse. It affects my ability to participate in my education, work and social life, and is a significant factor of breakdowns in my mental and physical health as well as relationships.

After facing years of dismissal from doctors, last year I was able to get a full diagnosis of endometriosis, an extremely painful but common disease that affects one in nine women in Australia.

While six years may seem like a long time for a diagnosis, I was actually extremely lucky, as most women have to wait until their 30s and 40s to get a final diagnosis.

It comes with a whole list of symptoms, like chronic fatigue, decreased effectiveness of your immune system, infertility, pelvic pain, food intolerances, periods that mimic that one scene from *The Shining*, ovarian cysts, hormonal disruptions. I am not exaggerating when I say the list goes on.

Everyone's body is different. It has to endure and fight different aspects of the disease. No one experience could give justice to how exhausting and painful it can be.

I am beyond privileged to be able to seek help through various doctors and have an amazing support system from my loved ones. However, not everyone is as lucky and not everyone has the opportunity to advocate for their health and their body as freely as me.

Race and economic status play an essential role in access to treatment.

Disturbingly, despite having a similar disease incidence, women of colour are less likely to be diagnosed than Caucasians, and are in fact 1.6 times less likely to be admitted to hospital for endometriosis. If you manage to get a diagnosis, it is another form of healthcare that is more readily available to those who can afford it. If you can afford private health care then you can access specialist gynaecologists quickly but wait times even for that are growing.

Sixty-five per cent of endometriosis hospitalisations in Australia are either self-funded or funded by private health care but even with private health care, women with endometriosis pay on average, \$3670 a year in out-of-pocket expenses for tests, treatments and surgeries. This does not take into account the money they essentially lose as they are unable to work when they are in pain.

Awareness and education are essential for development in treatment but also just to understand and empathise with us. I am always here to talk if anyone has any questions or similar experiences to share.

On this International Women's Day, and on every day, we should address women's access to healthcare, we should recognise the gendered treatment and access and we should act. We should be better allies to women and to their health needs. It is not enough to say happy International Women's Day, you inspire us and wish people well. We actually have to remove those gender-based barriers to a host of things, including access to health services.

I commend the work of Endometriosis Australia and the strength of women who keep fighting against a system that seeks to discount them. Happy International Women's Day. Be better allies to women.

International Women's Day - Break the Bias

[6.11 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr Speaker, I too rise to mark International Women's Day, and to note that this year's theme is Break the Bias, to help end discrimination and inequality in our communities. Some members may know this, many women in the Chamber will know this, but International Women's Day was first celebrated on 8 March, in Russia.

On 8 March 1917 in Petrograd, or 23 February of 1917 on the Julian calendar, women textile workers began a demonstration that eventually engulfed the whole city. They were demanding bread and peace, an end to World War I, to food shortages and to Tsarism.

While International Women's Day was only celebrated in communist countries for decades, it was adopted by the United Nations in 1967, the year of my birth.

Given the terrible state of the world, it will be difficult for many people, and particularly women who mark this day, to comprehend the Russian origins of International Women's Day. If you look at what is happening in Putin's Russia, he decriminalised domestic violence in February 2017, he is undertaking persecution of feminists in Russia and he has jailed the musicians from Pussy Riot for daring to challenge him. This is a little man who clearly fears strong women, as so many little men do.

The other autocrat in the world, dictator Xi Jinping, in his country, China, Uyghur women are imprisoned, their children are taken away from them, they are subject to forced marriage, forced sterilisation and slavery. For Chinese women, in the past two or three years, there has been a crackdown on the budding feminist movement in China. Weak men fear strong women.

While here we have the relative luxury of democracy in a troubled and increasingly fascistic world, we have the privilege of free speech and a free press and the privilege of public dissent. I acknowledge those women who came before us in this Chamber, who really copped it. Our predecessors in the Greens, Christine Milne, Di Hollister, Peg Putt, the mighty Judy Jackson, Fran Bladel, Lara Giddings, who was a pioneer as the first female premier, the wonderful, hardworking and decent Sue Napier and to thank them for the work that they did to make this place a safer place for women.

We have to defend our democracy and the right we have to free speech. It is a responsibility we should take seriously on our island. An example of what we are up against, of course, is the Gutwein Government's anti-protest laws. These will be laws that will threaten gutsy Tasmanian champions who would dare to speak up, should they do so in the wrong place. Under the law, people like Grace Tame and those who rallied in support of Brittany Higgins on that incredible day on the lawns of Parliament last year, and all women who have been abused or harassed in the workplace. Those laws - the Gutwein Government's anti-protest laws - are designed to put frighteners on anyone who is standing up to the Government.

This morning, the new Minister for Women in response to a question from Ms Johnston said:

As I look around this Chamber, I see good Tasmanian female politicians and
I would like to acknowledge everybody in the Chamber today on that score.

Well, thank you, Ms Ogilvie, for the Greens' place in your compliment. We do not mind being called 'good women' but we would prefer to be who the corrupt misogynist sex predator, former US President, Donald Trump, called 'nasty women' when he was having a crack at Hillary Clinton. 'Nasty women' are so often the ones who stand up to bad governments and bad policy for all the right reasons. 'Nasty women' rattle cages.

In Tasmania, we have so many fierce champions. These are good women and they are 'nasty women'. Just a sample - the already mentioned, mighty Grace Tame; proud palawa

women Heather Sculthorpe, Nala Mansell, Teresa Sainty, Kartanya Maynard; former Governor and law reformer, Professor Kate Warner; human rights defender with her own extraordinary story of survival, of flight, arrival and a new beginning here, Grace Williams; former Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Robin Banks; equality campaigner, Martine Delaney. There are also Tasmanian women like Kristen Desmond; Jane Wardlaw; Dr Lisa Denny and Rosalie Martin who stand up for people with disabilities, young people and for those trying to break the cycle of prison; and of course, the forest defenders: Jenny Weber; Dr Jen Sanger and Blue Derby Wild's Louise Morris.

Just today, a group of Bob Brown Foundation (BBF) 'good' and 'nasty' women, led by the tenacious Dr Lisa Searle, walked into an active logging coupe in the Esperance forests within 500 metres of the Southwest National Park to highlight the ongoing devastation of swift parrot habitat. We will often find Lisa up a mighty old tree to defend the forest.

Mr Speaker, well-behaved women do not change the world, they do not shake up the place and call out corruption, racism, sexism or climate crimes. It is the 'nasty' women in lutruwita - whether they be a bit more tempered in their approach or more loud and fierce - they are the ones who change the world; and my wonderful colleague who is also another great and 'nasty', for the right reasons, woman, Dr Rosalie Woodruff and we will stand by these Tasmanian women and all women every day of our work.

Dr Woodruff - Hear, hear.

Renewable Energy - Benefits

[6.18 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) - Mr Speaker, tonight, I speak about renewable energy and it is one of Tasmania's greatest opportunities. While there is much discussion about this, there are often questions about what are the benefits for me here in Tasmania? The benefits for Tasmanians now and to future generations are because it is putting downward pressure on electricity prices. We now have amongst the lowest in Australia in terms of regulated electricity prices. That is fantastic in terms of cost of living and cost of doing business for Tasmanians. In addition, there are plans for Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation, Green Hydrogen, delivering thousands of jobs, billions in investment and growing our state economy.

What does that mean? It means that Tasmania is a great place to live, and becoming even better to live and to bring up a family. You need a stronger economy to deliver more housing, hospitals, doctors, nurses, schools, teachers and roads. Our plans are on track. We already have zero net emissions for six of the last seven years and have that world-leading target of zero net emissions by 2030.

In addition to that, I will focus on the plans for green hydrogen production for a few moments. We are excited about that in Tasmania, as a Government, because it is 10 per cent to 15 per cent more cost competitive here in Tasmania because of the beautiful synergy of hydro and wind. When the wind is not blowing, we have hydro - in fact, the Battery of the Nation - and that will deliver so many opportunities. Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation, and green hydrogen are complementary, and I emphasise the importance of that. This is all consistent with our Tasmanian renewable energy target, our Renewable Energy Action Plan,

and our Tasmanian Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan. That is because we have 100 per cent, fully self-sufficient renewal energy and we are on track for 200 per cent. That is now being legislated with support across this parliament and that is very much appreciated.

We have affordable, reliable, clean electricity, and that is delivering benefits for Tasmanians. The green hydrogen action plan says that by 2024 we will be producing green hydrogen, exporting green hydrogen by 2027, and being a world class global producer of green hydrogen by 2030.

We are talking about Bell Bay as a hydrogen hub, and that is very exciting. I will comment on that shortly. I put on the record my thanks that this state has recently signed a green hydrogen Memorandum of Understanding with the port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands. I thank Ambassador Marion Derckx from the Netherlands, who I met with just before the end of last year. We signed the memorandum of understanding together. I also recognise my counterpart, Hilde Crevits, Minister for the Economy, Employment, Social Economy, Innovation and Agriculture, Flanders region of Belgium. It was excellent to have online meetings with her and her team in Belgium not so long ago.

These are important agreements. They demonstrate the strong and compelling interest in Tasmanian produced green hydrogen. It will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise, essential for the production, consumption, and export of green hydrogen. There are synergies there. They have been identified. They can see Tasmania as leading Australia and the world. They want that relationship and we are delighted to have it.

The Blue Economy CRC is very much involved and interested in using and in growing green hydrogen in aquaculture operations, offshore energy, and the like.

In terms of the MOUs, both regions have indicated strong demand for green hydrogen, with the region of Flanders indicating they already have existing demand of 500 000 tonnes per annum of hydrogen for their chemical sector alone. They would be very pleased to replace this usage with Tasmanian-sourced green hydrogen.

We have an additional MOU with the state of Bremen in Germany, also in the closing stages of negotiations, and all to benefit Tasmanians, with jobs, opportunity, and a cleaner world.

The Tasmanian Green Hydrogen International Engagement and Export Strategy is in the final stages of development, and I will have more to say about that.

I put on record my thanks to Renewables, Climate, and Future Industries Tasmania (RECFIT) for their terrific support to me, as minister, to the Premier, and to the Government across the board. They have consulted widely on these MOUs and on the strategy they are now implementing - the Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan, and our Renewable Energy Action Plan. This is with the support of the Office of Coordinator General, and I acknowledge his leadership with his team, and in so doing the trade units in the Department of State Growth and the Department of State Growth more generally, and with my Commonwealth counterparts.

We have put a lot of time and effort into the Bell Bay hydrogen hub submission. It is in the final stages of consideration now, and I acknowledge that Bell Bay is ideally placed with access to road, rail, port, and access to water and electricity.

My thanks to Susie Bower at the Bell Bay Advanced Manufacturing Zone for her leadership and her team. I also acknowledge Bridget Archer, federal member for Bass, who is a strong advocate for the hydrogen hub at Bell Bay. She has been ongoing in her support together with Senator Wendy Askew, who has written about it in opinion pieces and is a very strong advocate with the Tasmanian Liberal Senate team. We are delighted with that full support, from Gavin Pearce as well, member for Braddon. He knows how important it is.

We have big plans and it is all backed in because we have affordable, reliable clean energy in Tasmania. We are very hopeful of success but time will tell. We are in the later stages of that consideration by the federal government and we look forward to that decision.

Homelessness - Actions of Former Minister

[6.25 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, in late June 2021, I spoke on the adjournment in relation to a constituent experiencing homelessness. Mr Ferguson was in the Chamber at the time. I implored with him as the then minister for Housing to assist the homeless person with finding suitable accommodation. Because I would like to protect the constituent's personal information, I will refer to him as 'the constituent' tonight.

I wrote to the minister around the same time as when I raised this in the House in June 2021. His very professional office staff processed the paperwork around 23 June last year. At the same time, I asked my office staff to continuously contact Mr Ferguson's office and we kept a log of all those entries so we knew when we contacted the office on behalf of the constituent so we could represent him. I will run through how that worked out for us.

The letter I sent read:

Dear Minister Ferguson,

[My constituent] has recently presented to my Bridgewater office. He is homeless and has been on the priority list for public housing for over one year. He has spent the last year living in his car.

I also attached correspondence from the constituent's doctor, which provided alarming information pertaining to his diminishing health and feelings of hopelessness. There were six serious illnesses which were listed by that doctor. We went on to state that:

He was recently admitted to hospital with acute kidney injury acquired from the use of anti-inflammatory medication taken for his chronic pain, and that he had engaged in various sheltered accommodation facilities for single men including but not limited to Flint House, Bethlehem House, and the recently repurposed Waratah Hotel.

It was also my understanding, as I stated in the letter, that the constituent had been actively working with service providers such as Anglicare and Centacare Evolve Housing. He had an experience in one of these facilities which resulted in the theft and destruction of his personal property.

I raised that with the minister in the House in June 2021. Furthermore, we contacted the minister's office sometimes on a daily basis and his staff were fantastic. They were absolutely lovely. One staff member even agreed for the constituent to contact them directly in order to share information. I am advised that the result of that conversation was not very promising. Housing doubled down, stating that the constituent needed to repeat the process over again, and that there were crisis shelters suitable for him. We had already outlined that this was not going to be appropriate.

From July we made an estimated 18 calls between my office and the minister's office on behalf of our homeless constituent. My staff member is finding it hard to sleep at night because it was winter and he was concerned about this constituent living in his car with all these horrendous health issues. For example, there are some logins: 9 September; no progress; 7 September, needed to return a call; 3 September, diverted to Launceston; 2 September, no progress.

We had also received correspondence from the constituent's doctor. We provided that to the Minister for Housing. I do not want to disclose the constituent's identity, but this is what the doctor said:

I have been asked to contact you by my patient. He is currently homeless living in his car. He has had multiple medical conditions.

She lists the medical conditions.

He advises me that is feeling hopeless now. I have rung the Department of Housing who tell me he is on the waiting list and there is nothing more they can do until a unit becomes available. He has recounted all the efforts he has made to get a roof over his head. He has contacted your department, I believe, several times and he was put into a caravan park. His car was smashed and all the things were stolen. I am very concerned for his health and I feel he is at high risk of suicide and also of dying on the street prematurely, from conditions that could be stabilised if he were housed.

This was in July last year that this correspondence was provided to the minister's office. This is after he had already been sleeping in a car for 14 months.

I hope more can be done for this unfortunate man.

In November 2021 the constituent advised our office that he had managed to find a friend who was letting him sleep on his couch. He still had not had any success from Housing Tasmania in finding a property and he wrote:

Jen,

I am not as homeless now, as I have got a couch to sleep on after 14 months in my car, but I am staying in a unit with a family now and I get up and go every morning and come back to sleep. Thanks Jen, we just keep hopes up and keep trying. Thanks for listening and helping.

In December we spoke to him again and he said:

I am still waiting for housing with no offers other than Flint House. I am heartbroken that there are so many houses and units available and I have not been offered anything.

In February 2022 we corresponded again. I asked him how he was and said:

I am doing alright. Got a couch to sleep on at the moment. You would think that Housing would look after us but that is far from the truth. I have lots of medical needs. I am not coping and I am struggling.

On 4 March, a few days ago, he wrote to me again -

Just wanted to let you know I am still without a home, or unit and I have been staying on a couch but it has dried up and I need to be out. I really need help, Jen.

This is now a 92-week wait, 23 months, for a person on a disability pension with severe medical issues, a person that 12 months ago the Government was advised the doctor was concerned that he might take his own life. So, despite numerous contact points made by my office and assurances by the Minister for Housing, this man still remains homeless, despite medical advice that stated the constituent was at risk of taking his life. The system is broken. The process is broken. You have to do better than this.

Robbins Island - Windfarm

[6.32 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I rise to talk about the extremely concerning development, the high industrialisation of one of Australia's most significant bird wetland areas, certainly Tasmania's most important migratory bird and shore bird area. An enormous windfarm is proposed for Robbins Island: 122 turbines, 270 metres high.

It is more than apparent that we have to do everything to bring down global emissions. Climate heating is happening at a rapid rate, but so too the IPCC and United Nations scientists have called on world leaders to make sure that in the decisions that we take for creating more renewable energy for bringing down emissions we do not at the same time destroy biodiversity, damaging intact ecosystems. As a planet we are also on an equal race to stop biodiversity which is falling off a cliff planetary-wide and do everything we can. We are in a race against time to restore degraded ecosystems and to protect the functioning ecosystems that we have as a planet.

This windfarm is in the wrong place. It is on the Government's head that it is in that place. They have absolutely failed, time and again, despite being asked, cajoled and having had strong calls from us and many other people in the conservation and business community to plan for renewable energy infrastructure so that it can be done in a way that puts the conservation of our critically endangered and threatened species, our forest communities and our marine environment first and foremost in the decisions about the most appropriate siting for extremely important windfarms. This is not rocket science. This can be done. The reason it is not being done and has not been done is because an addiction to silence strangles the Government in its decision making, even when it is against its best interest. There is a failure to account for the

big decisions that have been taken on behalf of Tasmanians about our future infrastructure, our renewable energy capacity, our ability to properly protect the natural environment, which is everything for us because it is the basis of our intact ecosystems, our clean air and water. Fundamentally it is beautiful in its own right.

The strong advice from the orange bellied parrot group is that this is the wrong place for a wind farm because those 400 kilometre per hour moving turbine blades will slice to pieces those small birds that stop and either rest or take permanent refuge for the season on Robbins Island.

Robbins Island is a beautiful sanctuary for an enormous number of birds but it is also part of the Boullanger Bay passage and has a flourishing marine environment that would be damaged and irreparably changed by the causeway, jetty and road infrastructure that is required for such an enormous industrial takeover of an island. It is right in the geographic centre of the internationally significant bird flightway.

Many groups have put in submissions to the Circular Head Council. That process has now been finalised. About 400 groups and individuals have put in submissions about this wind farm. Birdlife volunteers have been walking Robbins Island for decades and have the best records of the shorebirds that live there. The group is very clear that the effects of the proposed wind farm will have an enormous impact on the island and the surrounding wetlands. Poorly sited wind farms kill birds and this project will join that group.

The developer has failed to prepare a DPMP that takes account of the evidence of the shore birds and their habitat. It is relying on outdated research that they have conducted themselves. It is flawed. The DPMP will go through a process with the Circular Head Council but it has to stand up to the EPBC Act. There is no way that the proposal as it stands will do anything other than cause serious damage to critically endangered species that Tasmania and the world must keep with us.

International Women's Day - Events

[6.39 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Women) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to acknowledge what has been a fantastic day for International Women's Day in Tasmania and to share with the House some of the great events to which I was invited. I acknowledge the work that goes into creating those events and activities. This is a large thing to pull on every year. I thought it was worthwhile to recap how the day has gone. It was an early start, with an International Women's Day breakfast.

The Governor, the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, spoke at length and very deeply about her experience with bias. Her speech was titled 'Breaking the Bias'. She spoke of things that perhaps we perhaps might not have known about her and her career, particularly her career in the law, which is a very male dominated sector. She took us on a journey through her career as she progressed through the law. In particular she spoke of when she was interested in becoming a partner in a firm that to that time had not had female partners. For her, that was breaking through the barriers and once having arrived in that place reaching out and reaching down into the profession and bringing other women through.

At my table were some very interesting women, including the keynote speaker. This was at the International Women's Day breakfast organised by DFAT. We thank them for their work.

Elaine Pearson, the CEO of Human Rights Watch Australia, spoke very eloquently and deeply and sensibly about some of the issues that are happening to women internationally. Something that really resonated with me was her description of when the Taliban rolled into Kabul, how they still are searching house to house, how the restructure of the university sector has been underway and is now segregated male and female. All male jobs are allocated and therefore education opportunities allocated to those male jobs.

The world has changed very much for the daughters of Afghanistan. She talked about women there burning their degrees, burning their credentials, burning the photos of them having been at university and school. That was incredibly sad. I note that the Afghanistan women's orchestra was able to escape Afghanistan.

I am so pleased to be the Minister for Women on this day. I had an event at lunchtime with St Josephs Affordable Homes. Ben Wilson, CEO of Centacare Evolve Housing, Melanie Ransley, the Build Up Tassie coach, who is mentoring female apprentices, Iris Rimmer and Cianna Fitzpatrick, two fantastic young Tasmanian women apprentices, and Belinda Clarke, the executive manager business development of Centacare Evolve and St Joseph Affordable Homes. What a great day that was.

Seeing these young women coming up through the ranks in non-traditional work roles is phenomenal. They were just great sorts. They do work that I do not think I could do. It is quite stupendous to see female constructors. I was pleased at that event to be able to speak about the scholarships we have funded again for Australian Institute of Company Directors courses. Belinda Clarke is a past recipient of those scholarships. It just shows where things can go. On International Women's Day we saw the great breadth of work that many groups are doing and the way in which the Tasmanian Government has been able to support a real diversity of activity across a number of areas of women's leadership and participation. We have spoken about horizon thinking in parliament this week, but on the horizon for me are those passion areas around the challenges that we have with that modern slavery problem, the south-east Asian construction and garment manufacturing sector, and what we need to do as good citizens in our region. That is something we can do more work on.

I reiterate that our hearts are broken and bleeding and worried about our sisters in Ukraine. We hear stories of terrible distress for many women while that fight is going on. It is a dreadful thing. Peace is the answer. How we get there is the challenge. I hope that we can do more to assist and help with that, particularly from Tasmania because we have been so open-hearted and so gracious and so broad in our support of refugees for so long. I hope we can do more.

I will wrap up by saying the opportunities for women at a professional level to work in other countries is really open. I have had that opportunity and I hope that our daughters will too. The new AUKUS Treaty allows more travel and work. Post-pandemic we hope to do that. The Consulate General from the USA was at the breakfast this morning. What a magnificent sight it was to see the US Coastguard boat steaming up the River Derwent this morning.

Time expired.

South Burnie Bowls Club

[6.47 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise to speak about a great club and a wonderful group of people in my electorate of Braddon, the South Burnie Bowls Club. More specifically, I would like to draw attention to their development proposal from October of last year, which outlines their needs on behalf of their broader community.

The South Burnie Bowls Club was founded 70 years ago, in 1952, and has left an indelible legacy in the Burnie community since that time. The club's main meeting room was built in 1977 and has facilitated camaraderie and community for Burnie residents ever since, not just through bowls but through myriad community activities for locals young and old.

The club's local importance and quite literally central place within the Burnie community is undeniable and very much admirable. Its influence is felt especially among Burnie senior residents. The club has supported and accommodated many a fellow community group over the past few decades, from the Burnie Senior Citizens Club to the Women of the World. It boasts a strong membership of approximately 300 weekly participants in games, bingo and other recreational activities.

The club's reach, respect within the community and unparalleled recreational services to our constituents are important and valued within the Burnie area. Such a strong local outlet for community growth and community solidarity is of high value. It deserves to be upheld and preserved.

The club is in desperate need of upgrade. The club rooms at the rear of the site were first built over 45 years ago. It includes a bathroom, secretary's office, locker room, shower and storage area and they are in dire need of replacement due to age and as a result of many years service to the community.

The club is also requesting replacements for outdated and weathered equipment, such as a new rink and a new green, as well as a shed to properly cover the aforementioned installations. All of this is necessary for the club to uphold its standard of service to Burnie residents, be able to host more community activities and continue on with its wonderful legacy to the community.

The South Burnie Bowls Club is the only Tasmanian club with four grass greens. The club organises and runs five pennant teams, with a mix of around 300 men and women who participate weekly, along with a social bowls program on Wednesdays and two corporate bowls rosters in spring and summer. Additionally, bingo games are run every Friday with approximately 70 people in attendance each week. The club has endeavoured to support disabled participants and to honour its legacy in recent times, with a new disabled bathroom building being opened in 2017. They have also developed a beautiful memorial garden and they have undertaken a number of upgrades to the outdoor seating area and the existing greens.

The South Burnie Bowls Club clearly cares for its members. Its impressive historical legacy and the service that it provides to the residents in the local community. It can only

provide so much with its current conditions and it deserves the much-needed funding that I know that it has requested through the state Government's budget request process.

Therefore, I call on the Government to deeply consider the South Burnie Bowls Club proposal for their upgrade to their facilities and support them through the budgeting process and allocate the funding that they have requested to upgrade their facilities at the South Burnie Bowls Club. By enabling them to get access to this funding, the state Government can continue to support a wonderful community club and support the fine number of activities that this club provides to our local community each and every year.

Amanda Beams - Tribute Tasmanian Theatre Awards

[6.51 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Mr Speaker, on this International Women's Day, I rise to celebrate a local in the northern Tasmanian community, a kind person who contributes so much in the Tamar Valley, in and around the communities of Exeter. This week we have, fresh from competition in South Australia, a new world record set and Australian champion in Amanda Beams.

I do not know how many people have followed the career of Amanda Beams. She is a fantastic competitor across a number of events. In South Australia just this week, there was a Stihl Timber Sports Australian Women's Championships. She had what she describes as the most successful competition since it started in 2017.

The reason I rise to mention it, is that it is International Women's Day, and it is great in this week that we have someone right here from Tassie, right from the Tamar Valley, who is an incredible Australian champion who this week set a world record. It is notable because on the occasions that I have had a chance to meet with Amanda, meet with her family and get to see her community, her tribe, around her, she is such a beautiful person, and she is so well respected, but she gives so much back.

I have been watching the commentary over the last few days since they have journeyed in towards this competition she has been setting up with her fellow competitors. Since the results have been announced she has done nothing over the last two or three days on social media but acknowledge everyone who contributes to make it possible for her, for the people she works with, the people in her community, the people who prepare all her equipment, the people who do the important things, like clean up after the event. She has spent days celebrating everybody else. I think that speaks to a really special quality in a human being. So today on International Women's Day, with a world record and Australian champion, I want to recognise Amanda Beams. The results of her most successful in this Stihl Timber Sports Australian Women's Championships were as follows.

She was first in the underhand at 31 seconds. That was the world record. She earned six points. She was first in the stock saw, 15.33 seconds, also six points, and second for the first time. I think she has always come in third, and she had borrowed someone else's equipment. Second in the single buck, 33.71 seconds, scoring 5 points, a total of 17, which made her the Australian champion. People who compete in their sports do all the prep and they prepare themselves mentally and physically, in terms of the technique to be able to compete, but when

you are a sports person, or whatever you are doing in the community, and you do it with grace, determination and grit and you do it in a really kind way that supports those people around you, I think that is really special. This evening I rise to celebrate you, Amanda. Well done.

This evening I want to recognise one of the most beautiful elements of the Launceston and northern Tasmanian community, and that is our creative and cultural community. Over recent weeks and months Launceston has been recognised for so many things: we got the Aussie Town of the Year; we have got our designation for a City of Gastronomy. Over the last few years it has been really tough for live performers, for live music, for theatre and for events. The Princess Theatre was dark for so long, but dark no longer.

The Minister for the Arts has already spoken about the Tasmanian Theatre Awards but I want to recognise the incredible people that we have in our community who give us so much.

The Launceston Players were successful in a number of categories and the Encore Theatre Company, who in submitting to the theatre awards, had 13 nominations across 11 categories and ended up being successful with nine awards. I congratulate and acknowledge we have this really incredible thing going on in our community where really little kids get involved in the ensemble. They get involved in supporting, maybe back of house, and seeing how a whole production works together, right through until beautiful and graceful older members of our community, who have given a lifetime, both professionally and in community, to theatre. We are really lucky that people choose to call Launie home. We have some really great people who invest their time and their energy and expertise in these productions.

The Encore Theatre company were awarded the Outstanding Production Musical Theatre for *Mamma Mia!* It was a fantastic event, led by - and I know that it always takes a team but there often is one standout - by my former colleague at the City of Launceston, the incredible deputy mayor Danny Gibson. He was awarded the Outstanding Direction Musical Theatre Award. To you Danny, you give so much. It is so lovely for you to be recognised in this really special way. Outstanding Musical Direction, Musical Theatre, Denise Sam and Michael Stock; Outstanding Choreography Musical Theatre, Michelle Withington.

This one is the one that I made a comment about. A whole range of people have chosen to move into the northern Tasmanian community but we have some incredible people who have had international careers, Outstanding, Original, Costume Design and Musical Theatre Anthony Phillips. Outstanding Lighting or Video Film Design Musical Theatre, Jason Bovaird. Outstanding Sound Design Musical Theatre, Marcello Lo Ricco.

Male Supporting Performance Musical Theatre, Matt Gower. Whenever a performance hits the stage, you go, 'We do this so well and it is going to be so amazing we are going to have the best night ever.' Wow, how could it better and better all the time, but the leads, the ensembles, the talent that we have in both men and women is just incredible. They could all be professionals on the stage and have in other parts been professional and semi-professional. Congratulations Matt.

And Outstanding Ensemble Musical Theatre, the cast of *Mamma Mia!* To everyone who has played a role in what was a really heartbreaking time, they delivered an exceptional performance. I think it was about two years ago that this performance was about to hit the stage, only days before it was due to open, and the theatre went dark because of COVID-19 but they continued and they have delivered.

To all in our creative communities, I say thank you and congratulations.

The House adjourned at 6.58 p.m.