



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 14 June 2022

REVISED EDITION

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Tuesday 14 June 2022

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

QUESTIONS

Ashley Youth Detention Centre - Allegations on *60 Minutes*

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.01 a.m.]

On Sunday night some incredibly serious allegations about events at Ashley were aired on *60 Minutes*. Have you seen the program? Are the allegations being investigated? Has it changed your view on the time line for the closure of the Ashley Youth Detention Centre?

Recognition of Visitors

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, while the Premier is coming to the lectern, I welcome to the Gallery the legal studies students from The Friends' School.

Members - Hear, hear.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I am aware of the *60 Minutes* episode that was aired on Sunday night. I have watched the entirety of the episode and found it enormously confronting, as I am sure would all who saw the program or who are aware of the contents of the program. These matters are extremely confronting and disturbing. It is a reminder that we must do all we can to ensure that abuses that have occurred in the past cannot happen again.

The program mentioned decades - the years around 2007 and 2012 and 2019, if my memory serves me correctly. Clearly, we have all expressed the fact that governments for decades have failed our children and our young people, and it is up to us collectively as a parliament, as a government and as a community to accept those failures and act to ensure that we protect our vulnerable young people and children into the future.

We are committed to responding to all allegations of child abuse in our institutions, whether they are related to historical or current-day matters. Anyone who has information relating to the abuse of children and young people in our institutions, and indeed in our community more broadly, must report these matters to police.

I can confirm that all allegations of misconduct that have been identified to date in relation to Ashley Youth Detention Centre and our other government institutions have been taken seriously and have been or are being thoroughly investigated and assessed. This has included taking necessary action to stand down employees while investigations are underway.

When responding to allegations of our Government's processes, to ensure the safety of a child or young person is of course the primary consideration. Support is made available to a complainant who makes a direct disclosure of abuse, affording fair and due process to State Service employees against whom allegations have been made, and notifying police and the Registrar for Working with Vulnerable People.

As members are aware, the Government has also established a commission of inquiry to investigate the responses of Tasmanian government agencies in relation to the management of historical allegations of child sexual abuse. We have already agreed to accept the recommendations of the commission of inquiry.

In summing up, I acknowledge and respect the enormous bravery of individuals who have come forward, naturally under extremely harrowing and difficult circumstances. I do thank those who have come forward and those who come forward in the future, which I encourage. Thank you for shining a light where we have failed you; we will do everything we can. We are not only accepting the commission of inquiry recommendations, we have already taken steps in terms of the ministerial statement that we discussed a few weeks ago where we are, as a government, acting now.

Clarence City Council - Urban Growth Boundaries

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF, referred to MINISTER for PLANNING, Mr FERGUSON

[10.06 a.m.]

Late last week it was announced that your Minister for Planning had effectively vetoed a proposed change to urban growth boundaries in Clarence at Richardsons Road. This shock move came after a year of public consultation by the council. Why is your Government blocking planning changes that would lead to the construction of new housing in the middle of a housing crisis?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question and I will pass to our Minister for Planning.

Mr FERGUSON - Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. The Government has a strong appetite for seeing more residential rezoning across the state, in particular in southern Tasmania. I am grateful for the opportunity to let Ms White and the Opposition and the House be aware of the work we are undertaking right now.

It is true that I received a request to make a special change to the urban growth boundary for southern Tasmania in relation to one development. The advice I received is that it would potentially be a counterproductive action to our greater ambition to get a lot more housing redeveloped for southern Tasmania. I wonder if the Opposition is aware that we are right now giving the public a say on that. Are you aware of that? That is happening right now.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - I sense - again - that maybe they have not done their homework on this, Mr Speaker. The Government, together with the four Greater Hobart mayors, have released a Greater Hobart Plan. The draft version of that is something the Department of State Growth and those councils have worked on closely together. It involves an open question about assertively moving the urban growth boundary outwards to include more land for residential rezoning and ultimately subdivision. I hope the House was aware of that; this side of the House is aware of it.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - It was recently released for consultation - and I think I raised this at the Estimates committee as well. It has a focus on promoting infill development and consolidating the metropolitan areas of the four Greater Hobart councils through encouraging increased housing density and opportunities for greater housing choice. It also openly encourages a conversation and the public to provide their feedback about increasing the size of the urban growth boundary.

This will be the next piece of work that we then integrate with the findings of that Greater Hobart Plan into the southern strategy. It seems to me that if you actually want to get a result, then this is the way to achieve that. It is the case that consultation is open right now. We are giving the people of southern Tasmania a say right now.

Ms White - No you didn't, you just shut it down.

Mr FERGUSON - The date for the close of public submissions is 20 June.

Ms White - The council did a year's consultation and you shut it down.

Mr FERGUSON - We are giving the public a say, six more days, and you could even provide a submission if you have not already done so.

Ms White - My submission would say the Government has failed.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, order.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Speaker, it does surprise me if the Leader of the Opposition is seriously suggesting that we should make a very significant change to the urban growth boundary before listening to the public. They have six more days to do so. In parallel with the draft Greater Hobart Plan, funding has been provided towards a complementary project outside of the metropolitan areas -

Ms White - It's not good enough for you. The council did a year's consultation on this and you vetoed it.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - Thanks, Ms White. The Government is provided funding for a complementary project to undertake an evidence-based assessment of residential demand and land supply outside of the metropolitan zones, in the council areas of Brighton, Sorell, Huon Valley, Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands and also those areas of the metro councils that were not covered by the Greater Hobart Plan. I look forward to the findings of that.

I am, and the Government is, very motivated to move the urban growth boundary. The mayors know it. The public knows it. If you want the best outcome then we need to allow the process to be robust and to stand the test of scrutiny.

I encourage members of the Opposition to support the public in having their say. I look forward to the findings of that. The Government has a strong appetite, not just to encourage more urban infill, but also some more new residential zones coming into the urban growth, which is exactly what the Government intends to do.

Sandy Bay Rowing Club - Alleged Conflict of Interest

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.11 a.m.]

Last year, the Government that you now lead, approved a \$150 000 election request made by your colleague, Madeleine Ogilvie, on behalf of the Sandy Bay Rowing Club. More than a year later, after questioning from the Greens in Estimates last Wednesday, your Minister for Sport and Recreation admitted that Ms Ogilvie's daughter was a member of that club. That is a very clear conflict of interest and one that would never have been known by Tasmanians unless we had asked the question. Your minister justified this dodgy behaviour by saying Ms Ogilvie had advised the Liberal Party of her conflict of interest.

We understand there are other similar examples regarding other Liberal members. Today, we are giving you an opportunity to come clean. Can you please provide a list to the House of the other conflict-of-interest disclosures made through the local communities facilities fund process?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I am advised that the election promise made to the Sandy Bay Rowing Club during the 2021 election was part of a range of small one-off election promises made by local communities around the state. This is not unlike a raft of other promises others make. Just like any other election promise, the promises come to fruition dependent on two things: one, the party being elected to form government and enabled to enact the commitment; and two, the election promise being funded, included in the budget and the budget being agreed to by the parliament.

Ms O'Connor - Are you going to table the other conflict-of-interest disclosures?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Only then was the funding provided to the Sandy Bay Rowing Club. We stand by that commitment. Ms O'Connor, if you have other allegations -

Ms O'Connor - No, we are asking you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - then please raise them.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 45, relevance. We have just asked the Premier to table in the House the other conflict-of-interest disclosures -

Mr SPEAKER - I accept the point of relevance. You do not have to keep repeating the question. The Premier heard that.

Ms O'Connor - Did he?

Mr SPEAKER - I am sure the Premier will make that the point of relevance. He is still answering his question. He has not been answering it for very long at all.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms O'Connor, these are election commitments. As I have publicly said a number of times before, prior to an election every elected member who has worked with their community over the course of the term of the parliament, or candidates, meet with local communities to assess their needs. There are a number of needs that I have seen across the community in my 20 years of parliament. I made commitments in the 2002 election, 2006 election, 2010 election and was not elected. None of the commitments were able to be realised. These are election commitments that the public have a say on, and which are budgeted for.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, standing order, 45 to relevance. We asked one question for one thing, and that was to table a conflict of interest register. One question.

Mr SPEAKER - There was a preamble with it. As you are aware, when members are allowed to go into a preamble then it opens the question up to how ever the Premier wishes to answer it. He has now taken his seat.

If you wish to ask another question you are quite welcome down the track.

I think that is called jumping rather early, member for Franklin, but nevertheless, now that you are on your feet, I call the member for Franklin.

TasNetworks - Proposed Job Losses

Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr BARNETT

[10.16 a.m.]

Over the weekend, the state has been ravaged by wild weather. Our first responders and emergency service workers have been out protecting life and property and assisting in the clean-up. We all, in this House, join together and thank them for their wonderful work.

Teams of TasNetwork's workers were, and are still, working around the clock in the toughest of conditions to restore power to homes and businesses alike. Earlier this year I asked you about TasNetwork's secret plan to axe up to 300 jobs, one quarter of its workforce. On the

day I asked the question you went to ground. The following day you finally fronted the media and confessed that there would be job losses. It has now been 97 days since I asked you that question. Since that time there has been deathly silence by yourself, as minister.

Our state relies on TasNetworks to keep the lights on. They need to ensure they have the staff to do this work. I ask you again: how many jobs are being slashed by TasNetworks and when were you first briefed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question, in two parts of course.

First, with regard to the storm damage over the weekend, on behalf of all of us, I indicate sincere thanks to those who have been working so hard in very difficult conditions. The damage has been substantial, not just to those in the TasNetworks organisation, but those in the SES organisation who support those in need and vulnerable Tasmanians.

It has been a very rough weekend. About 20 000 customers at the height of the storm had lost power. The most significant impact was on the north-west coast, with about 2700 customers still without power early this morning. There is a lot more work being done today. Access and safety, due to trees across roads, continues to be one of the biggest impediments to the restoration of those efforts. Crews across the state have been thrown in to do the work to support our communities in need at this difficult time.

Regarding the second part of the question, I have answered it on a number of occasions, and can confirm again today. The energy landscape across the country is transitioning very quickly. We need to respond to that. We are in many different ways, with big plans for Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation, green hydrogen and moving to a renewable future building on our renewable energy credentials to make a difference, and to deliver jobs, opportunity and a cleaner world.

Mr O'Byrne - Jobs delivered. You are about to sack 300.

Mr BARNETT - The member is butting in. Under his government, when he was in power, electricity prices went up 65 percent for seven long miserable years.

Regarding the specific question about adapting the roles of the staff to the new environment, of course TasNetworks, like other organisations, has to do that. I have made it very clear that any change in those roles and positions should be done through natural attrition wherever possible - and only if required through voluntary redundancies. As I have said before, there will be no forced redundancies.

Budget 2022-23 - Investment in Health Services

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.20 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the Liberal Government's record investment in delivering innovative health services?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for his question and his interest in this matter. We are committed to delivering high-quality health services that promote, protect and maintain the health of our Tasmanian community. Our strong commitment is evident in this year's Budget, which will see our Government deliver a record \$11.2 billion into health funding over the next four years.

Our investment speaks for itself. There is an extra \$500 million for health in this year's Budget, breaking last year's record investment. In fact, about 33 per cent of the state budget is now dedicated to health. We are spending some \$7 million every single day in our health system.

Ms Dow - Not much to show for it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Our waiting lists are coming down, for one, Ms Dow. This 33 per cent is a significant rise in the last eight years since 2014, when we were spending some 28 per cent of the entire budget on health expenditure. We know that demand for services is continuing to increase. That is why we are taking expert advice to introduce innovation to ensure we use our health system capacity as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Our Budget outlines a key upcoming innovation, with \$150 million over four years to commence our 'improving patient outcomes' digital strategy, which will be a real game-changer for our health system. To ensure our emergency response capacity is devoted to emergencies, we have introduced ambulance secondary triage, with paramedics and nurses providing clinical advice to triple 0 calls and connecting them to other services in the community where that is appropriate.

Since early 2021, this new model has successfully diverted over 2000 triple 0 calls that did not need an emergency ambulance response. Similarly, we know too many people end up in our emergency departments when they could receive care in a different setting. To address this, we have invested some \$9 million to incentivise GPs and pharmacies to provide after-hours services to local communities, reducing the need for people to present to an emergency department.

We also know the emergency department is not the best place for people in mental health distress. The most recent data shows that our innovative police, ambulance and clinical early response team - our PACER team - has helped some 75 per cent of people treated to remain in the community, rather than attending an emergency department, which you would all appreciate is not the place for people in serious mental health or distress to be.

We are also embracing innovative approaches to keeping patients out of hospital by offering quality care in the community. This includes our Community Rapid Response Service - or ComRRS, as it is more commonly known - for people with an acute illness, injury or pre-existing condition that has worsened. ComRRS safely provides treatment in the community, at home or at an aged care facility, which could have otherwise required a hospital bed - for example, intravenous antibiotics is a case in point.

This model has been extended through Hospital in the Home, which is a virtual ward that enables adult inpatients to leave hospital when their care needs are identified as suitable to be delivered at home.

We will continue to look at innovation. A key example is our new statewide inter-hospital transfer policy, which sees patients -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is a lot of mumbling going on over there.

Ms White - We have heard this answer a million times.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. That is not an invitation to raise your voices.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not sure that you have heard it a million times. Nonetheless, it sees patients transferred between THS hospitals admitted directly to a destination ward to bypass the emergency department. This will enable ambulances to off-load patients efficiently, to get back on the road more quickly.

When you consider our enormous amount of investment in our health system, now up to some \$11.2 billion, I am excited about our \$1.5 billion infrastructure spend that is in the Budget, and our clear 10-year plan investing in our infrastructure and in our hospitals.

Not only are we investing in our most valuable resource our nurses, doctors and clinicians - we are also coming up with innovative ways to improve our health system to ensure that our patients get cared for in the right place and at the right time.

Housing Shortfall - Commitment for Solution for Mr Jetson

Ms HADDAD question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.26 a.m.]

Your minister for Housing revealed last week that since coming to office, your Government has built only 1200 new social housing properties, or about 150 a year. If you had simply kept pace with the housing construction that occurred between 2010 and 2014, there would be around 3000 fewer families on the wait list today. This massive failure has human consequences.

Steve Jetson has been on the waiting list for over two years and is feeling resigned now to spending his third winter in his car. Your Government has been aware of his situation for the entire time he has been homeless, and has done nothing to act. It is freezing cold, there were blizzard-like conditions over the weekend, and his mental health is deteriorating. Will you commit to finding a solution for Mr Jetson before the end of the month?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Not unlike our health system, when we have people on the waiting lists, often waiting too long, the reason why we are acting on

health, investing in health, why we are acting on housing and investing in housing, is because we want to ensure that every Tasmanian understands that when we talk about numbers, about waiting lists and data, there is a person behind every single number. That is what drives and motivates us as a government. We are aware of the challenges, Ms Haddad.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will come to us addressing those challenges in a moment. If you have some ideas about addressing these challenges, bring them forward.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is alright to laugh over there. I did see Ms Dow almost quoted in the paper today, when she was having a crack at me about health and was asked what alternative plans they have. I am paraphrasing, but Ms Dow could not provide an answer to any plans, and it is similar when it comes to housing as well. You throw around all the challenges and the problems, but you are not prepared to front up with an alternative budget -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - to demonstrate to the Tasmanian community that you have a plan and you have a solution, like we have.

Our Government is committed to reporting clear and timely information that can be accessed publicly, and the housing dashboard is an example of that. When it comes to our build program, the 2022-23 Budget commits some \$204 million to extend the current building program for new public housing in the coming year, rising to a total of \$538 million across the forward Estimates. Our public dashboard shows that we are on track to complete 1500 new homes by June 2023, rising to a total 10 000 new homes by 2032 as part of our 10-year, \$1.5 billion housing package.

We have delivered a total of 2111 additional new homes, lots of land, new places, supported accommodation for homeless services, including 1127 since July 2019, and there are 1438 long-term homes and units of homeless accommodation in the pipeline.

We met our first target of delivering 984 homes and lots by 2019 and we are on track to meet our second target of 1500 more homes by 2023 and our \$1.5 billion investment over the course of the next 10 years. We are investing. I am aware of circumstances that are presented, of course, and we feel those.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Member for Lyons, order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We feel every one of them. We are not blind to the fact that people are distressed because they do not have a roof over their heads.

Ms Butler interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Lyons. That is your last warning. If you do that again you are out.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of course we take this seriously. We are not oblivious to the people who are homeless, sleeping rough, having enormous difficulty in affording their own home, and indeed not in a safe place to sleep at night. That is what motivates us and why we are investing some \$538 million over the forward Estimates to support the challenges we have with the homeless. We feel every single example that you might bring into this place. Of course we will do everything to support individual need in this community. That is demonstrated by our commitment of our huge investment and our restructure and reforms in this area. We are getting on with the job. Every single example you bring into this House, of course we feel it, and we will do every single thing we can to address that need.

Macquarie Point Development - Anchor Tenant

Ms JOHNSTON question to **MINISTER for STATE DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION and HOUSING, Mr BARNETT**

[10.32 a.m.]

In the various versions of the Macquarie Point master plan - and there have been a number - the Antarctic and science precinct has been the anchor tenancy and the primary investment attractor. Given the Macquarie Point Development Corporation's failure to secure any commitment to fund the establishment of this precinct from either political party at the federal election, it would seem this proposal is dead in the water, at least for the next three years. This is surely going to be a massive blow to the marketing and development plans for the site. Does this mean that Tasmanians will see the site sit idle for the next three years, or do you have a backup anchor tenant that will attract the investment the site deserves?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question on an important matter regarding Macquarie Point and for her ongoing interest in Macquarie Point and the future of it. The plans are very substantial. There is a master plan, which is on the public record, and we are continuing to progress our plan which is very significant, with the nine-plus hectares at Macquarie Point. It is a very complex remediation effort that has been undertaken and a lot of work has been progressed in order to prepare that former industrial site and landscape for future development. Removing contaminated soils does not look exciting, but a lot of work has already been progressed and that should be noted.

The second part of your question relates to the Antarctic and science precinct and the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) move from Kingston as a key part of the vision for Macquarie Point; I acknowledge that. The Hobart City Deal supports the development of a business case for an Antarctic and science precinct at Macquarie Point. I am advised that this

business case has now been finalised, enabling the Commonwealth Government to make some key decisions about next steps.

I congratulate the new Labor government on their election and I have already written to my counterparts, including Catherine King, the federal minister, and indicated the importance of progress in this regard for the state of Tasmania and outlined those views in my letter to my counterpart minister. I have not met with her as yet but I have communicated directly with her via correspondence and I have outlined that it is a state-of-the-art Antarctic and science precinct division at Macquarie Point that would attract national and private Antarctic and Southern Ocean institutions, using the combined capacity of Hobart's existing world-class expertise with the potential to support nearly 950 full-time jobs, I am advised.

I am also advised that Kingston would benefit with the Tasmanian Government committed to replace the Australian Antarctic Division with government staff, allowing Tasmanians to live and work closer to home. That is part of the vision. It is talking about the economic footprint, as the Treasurer has indicated, and of course the Greater Hobart Plan when I met with the Hobart mayors just a few weeks ago now. We support the 30-year plan for Hobart and this is again all part of the vision for Greater Hobart, Hobart being the international gateway to the Antarctic. We have a long-term vision for Greater Hobart and for Tasmania as the gateway to the Antarctic.

There is a lot of opportunity. If you are without vision, the people will perish, as the Good Book says. What we know of the other side is that there is no vision, no plan, no policies, not even an alternative budget. You have nothing, zippo. If you have something positive to say, please come forward and make a contribution.

Local Communities Facilities Fund - Election Promises

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for SPORT and RECREATION, Mr STREET

[10.37 a.m.]

You said in our conversation in budget Estimates last week that the full list of projects supported through the local communities facilities fund had been funded and listed in the 2021-22 state budget. You used that claim as the basis for refusing to provide this information to the committee. The projects were not listed in that Budget; your claim is false. In fact, the list of projects funded by Liberal Party election promises are not publicly available anywhere, either deliberately or - and we hope this is the case - you were ignorant when you misled parliament in that Estimates committee. Can you please correct the record on this matter now and also table a complete list of the projects that were supported under this fund?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, members of all political parties often become patrons or vice-patrons of community organisations at the request of that organisation. Those details are typically listed on a member's pecuniary interest register to avoid any perception of a conflict of interest. Being a patron of an organisation does not confer privileges on that organisation but nor should it preclude any organisation from seeking a commitment during an election period or seeking funding, for example, in a budget submission.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Mr Speaker, under standing order 45. I am not talking about patrons or anything to do with that. I simply wanted the minister to correct the mistake he made last week and not mislead parliament.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. I take your point of order as far as relevance. The minister has had less than 30 seconds to answer. I hope members will always allow ministers to make a substantial contribution before they interject and call on relevance.

Mr STREET - Decisions related to election promises are a matter for individual political parties. The Greens may well decide to provide funding to key environmental organisations, for example, and there is nothing wrong with their decision to do that.

That promise, alongside all promises of all political parties are put before the voters during an election. The voters decide which political party will form government. It is then up to the elected government to decide whether to honour and fund that election promise and to include that funding in the budget. All our election commitments were funded in last year's budget that passed through parliament.

Dr Woodruff - They were not detailed. I asked for the list.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr STREET - The local communities facility fund was listed in last year's budget that passed through parliament and every commitment in that fund was publicly announced during the election campaign: they were presented to the people and the people made a choice on who they voted for.

Dr Woodruff - It was not in the Budget.

Mr STREET - They were presented to the people and the people made a choice on who they voted for. We then formed Government and funded those commitments through the Budget, as is done at every election.

Energy Challenges and Cost of Living Pressure

Mr ELLIS question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr BARNETT

[10.40 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the progress of ongoing discussions with state and federal counterparts on the current energy challenges facing the nation, and how the Tasmanian Government is responding to cost of living pressures facing Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there is nothing more important regarding the issues facing Tasmanians currently than the rising cost of living. The current challenges in the national electricity market are putting pressure across the whole nation, affecting all jurisdictions. External factors like

the retirement of coal, the unplanned maintenance, and the disruption by the war in Ukraine have all worked to drive up fuel supply costs and impact on the national electricity market.

For the past two years, Tasmanians have been specific beneficiaries of lower electricity prices through the national electricity market. Last year, residential customers received a 7.11 per cent reduction in their electricity prices. For small businesses it was an 11 per cent reduction. Since we came to Government, in real terms there has been an 18 per cent reduction for residential customers. For small businesses it has been 27 per cent. In nominal terms that is reductions of 5 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

Tasmanians are concerned about how they are going to respond to the increase in prices coming on 1 July. Tasmania's energy regulator is due to consider and announce his final determination shortly. The Government is responding with a multi-pronged package that cushions the impact of our most vulnerable. This package of measures will build on those already in the 2022-23 state Budget to support Tasmanians. This includes \$186 million for eligible concession card holders to help manage their electricity bills, and \$30 million in the Tasmanian Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme to support residential and small businesses including landlords, to install energy efficient appliances. The Government has always said it will continue to monitor and respond swiftly to the cost of living pressures. We will do that.

On Wednesday last week the energy ministers from across the country, together with Mr Bowen, made it very clear that we need to work through these unprecedented challenges. We collectively agreed on the critical importance of a sensible position on the energy sector and to become more resilient, more secure, to underpin a modern, low-carbon economy, including green hydrogen. Projects like Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation, and green hydrogen are very much front and centre on that agenda, forming a key part of our supercharged integrated system plan as Australia moves to net-zero carbon emissions.

I am pleased with the already positive discussions with the federal minister, Mr Bowen, on these projects. In last weekend's *The Australian* Mr Bowen was quoted as describing Marinus Link as a 'key national transmissions project', and one that would be critical to the goals of the federal government's Rewiring the Nation Program.

We continue with the constructive discussions despite the views of state Labor, specifically Mr Winter, Mr Anti-Everything Winter, with no plans and no policies, just anti-everything. It would seem that Mr Winter simply wants to automatically exit the national electricity market, destroying new investments in renewable energy and leaving Tasmanians in the dark ages with no plan and no future. He would put at risk Tasmania's economy and the jobs that would flow from Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation, green hydrogen and the downward pressure on electricity prices that would flow. He would put all that at risk, not to mention energy security, the ability to buy and sell electricity across Bass Strait.

Mr SPEAKER - If the minister could wind up please.

Mr BARNETT - I will wind up by reminding state Labor of its commitment and support for Basslink. All you have to is to look at Mr Winter's Facebook page, where he says of UPC Robbins Island that 'the project would create hundreds of construction jobs in the region and produce clean energy for Tasmania and the rest of the country'. So, Mr Winter, which is it? Are you for or against?

Homelessness - Government Support

Ms HADDAD question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.45 a.m.]

The current extent of homelessness in Tasmania was unimaginable a decade ago. Today there are people sleeping in tents in camps scattered all around the state. In just a very short walk from this building you will find tent camps in St David's Park, on the Domain, and at the bottom of the Southern Outlet, just to name a few. They are all around the state. There are limited outreach programs funded by your Government, but this year is unprecedented with the coldest start to winter in decades and homelessness now at record levels. What additional immediate support is your Government providing to people sleeping rough right now?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for this important question. We are well aware of the circumstances that members of our community find themselves in, which is why we are acting in this very important space. The minister for Housing, and the previous minister for housing, Mr Barnett, met with key stakeholders. We are investing to do the absolute best we can to address a most pressing need, which culminates in winter when people are cold.

In the Budget we have committed to 10 000 new homes by 2032, a \$1.5 billion investment, which is crucial. Our Budget has \$538 million over the course of the forward Estimates. I have mentioned the statistics when it comes to our milestones and key targets in this area.

There is a need to support our most vulnerable in emergency shelter. They need our assistance and they need it now. We are spending more than \$36 million on wrap-around services to ensure those who need help are getting the services that they need. That includes funding on 17 existing specialist homelessness services, including Housing Connect Front Door and support as well as crisis shelters and accommodation.

We have also invested \$16.8 million to extend our three Safe Space services and outreach for homeless Tasmanians to June 2022. This includes continuing health screening and mental health care for vulnerable Tasmanians who are without a home. We are expanding our shelters and supported accommodation and building new ones; new and expanded youth shelters and foyers in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie; new Devonport men's shelter; new Bethlehem House in Hobart; nearly doubling the capacity of Launceston Women's Shelter; expanding Bucaan House for women and children in Hobart. The \$157 million debt to the Commonwealth was waived under this Government. Mr Jaensch was the minister at the time -

Ms Haddad - It was nothing to do with your Government.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are not laughing about it; we are taking this very seriously. If you ask a question and then laugh about the circumstances that people find themselves in, it is not good enough. We do not see the funny side of it.

Ms WHITE - Point of order. I take personal offence to the comments made by the Premier. We are not laughing at the circumstances people find themselves in. We are laughing at the inaction of this Government.

Mr SPEAKER - You should not be laughing at all. It is not a point of order. The Premier has the call. It is one the issues with interjections; the Premier made a response to that. If you listen to the response and do not interject and laugh, then the Premier will not make those comments.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Homelessness and the responses to it are a complex issue. We all recognise that, and it is one that needs all levels of government, which is why I mentioned the housing debt waiver being one where the Commonwealth, state, community and not-for-profit sector can come together and seek solutions. I have mentioned our \$36 million wraparound services, and our \$23.7 million extension to our three Safe Space services and outreach support for homeless Tasmanians.

The longer-term solution to homelessness is to increase the supply of affordable and accessible housing for all Tasmanians, which is what we are doing. I have also outlined some of those pressing short-term actions that we are taking. That is why we are not only looking at the long term with a 10-year \$1.5 billion investment in 10 000 new homes, as important as that is, but supporting our community organisations, our Safe Spaces and addressing that very pressing need now.

We recognise that we need short-term, immediate, medium- and long-term solutions, and you will find that in our policies -

Mr SPEAKER - Wind up, please, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - and investments we are making in this Budget.

Building Industry - Assistance from the Government

Ms BUTLER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.52 a.m.]

It is no secret that many in the building industry are under significant pressure right now. In addition to a series of recent high-profile collapses, we have heard numerous reports of builders offering cash payments of tens of thousands of dollars to break contracts with clients. The last thing Tasmania needs right now is trouble in the building sector, but it seems many are struggling under the weight of unexpected increases in the cost of materials.

Is there any action your Government is taking to help builders who find themselves holding onerous contracts, and have you sought any advice on the scale of the problem?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Our Government is committed to one part of your question, and that is strengthening consumer protections within our building regulatory framework through reintroducing home warranty insurance. Members would be aware that the home warranty insurance consultation paper was released for industry, stakeholder and public consultation on 6 May this year with submissions closing on 6 June this year.

It would be remiss of me not to remind the House that it was the Labor government in and around 2008 that abolished home warranty assurance.

Members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I missed that mumble.

Ms White - You voted for it.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for raising the concerns of builders and contractors. I appreciate that. Some of these concerns are not new to me. Supplies and materials are a logistical challenge. It was put to me the other day that it is not necessarily a demand problem but a supply problem that is creating a lot of these issues. I recognise that even in some of the projects that I am responsible for in infrastructure and health there have been some delays, simply because access to steel, for example, has been a challenge.

Our minister for state development and housing, and our Attorney-General, are always willing to sit down with the Master Builders Association, the Housing Industry Association (HIA) and other key stakeholders, which I am informed happens regularly. All our ministers regularly meet with key people, businesses and stakeholders within the community, to try to address and at the very least listen to the concerns and, where possible, alleviate some of their really challenging circumstances through sitting down and working cooperatively and collaboratively and understanding the issues - notwithstanding the fact that the challenges of the supply chain logistics are a problem broader than Tasmania.

We are open to finding, if possible, some solutions to the challenges that have been presented to you.

Building and Construction Industry - Shortfall of Workers for Proposed Stadium

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.56 a.m.]

Approximately how many building and construction workers will be required to build a new floating stadium in Hobart by 2026, with labour shortages currently adding to the difficulty of increasing housing supply? Is it really sensible in the middle of a housing crisis to have these workers building a floating stadium rather than housing? What is more important to you, Premier: building housing, or building a floating stadium?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I might expect a better question, quite frankly, but I recognise that after two weeks of parliament and a week of Estimates we get a question like that, because clearly you have run out of questions.

This is a Government that does have its priorities right when it comes to health, housing, and education. They are the key areas that are the most important. That goes without saying. That does not mean we cannot have a vision for the future and to support and build enabling

infrastructure to benefit our community. I am not going to get into a debate with the member around infrastructure projects moving forward, except to say we have invested \$1.25 million in a feasibility study on a stadium. My view is it could be an iconic arts, cultural, entertainment and sporting precinct that Tasmania can be very proud of. That is my vision.

We have invested \$1.5 billion over the next 10 years into housing, and \$1.5 billion over the next 10 years into crucial health infrastructure - particularly almost \$500 million in improving our digital health infrastructure, which is so critically important - plus the investment that minister Jaensch and the Government is making in our school provision as well - which I might say is still needed, even though we have been investing in our schools enormously over the last eight years.

I cannot believe any government allowing schools and school infrastructure to frankly fall apart after your 16 years of government. We are still playing catch-up when it comes to schools, but we will get there. We will get there.

We have invested hundreds of millions of dollars already, and we will build and invest hundreds of millions of dollars across the forward Estimates as well.

This is a Government that has its priorities right: health, education, and housing. We are aware of labour and work supply challenges. That is why our minister for Skills is often sitting down with key stakeholders across infrastructure, tourism, and hospitality. We are aware of these issues and it is not uncommon across the nation or, in fact, the world.

Back to the supply issue; there have been some key disrupters we are experiencing, namely the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, but with every challenge that we confront, this is a government that will deal with it and deal with it sensibly, by listening to Tasmanians and focusing on those key areas that we know are Tasmanians' priorities. They are government priorities because they are Tasmanians' priorities and they are health, education, housing and public safety.

Budget 2022-23 - Government Support for the Legal Assistance Sector

Mr WOOD question to ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Ms ARCHER

[11.00 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Tasmanian Government is providing more support to the legal assistance sector?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Bass for his question and his ongoing interest in the Tasmanian legal assistance sector. I acknowledge the exceptional work of our legal assistance sector in Tasmania. They provide free or low-cost legal services so that vulnerable Tasmanians facing a disadvantage can access our justice system. To ensure that Tasmanians who need extra help can access free or low-cost services, the 2021-22 state budget committed an additional \$2.2 million per year over four years. As members would be aware, there was a small surplus following the distribution of these funds across the sector. I then announced an

expressions of interest process for additional state and commonwealth legal assistance sector funding.

I am pleased to inform the House that the successful recipients of the expressions of interest process for additional state legal assistance sector funding are the Prisoner's Legal Service Tasmania, with \$80 000 for a preventative lawyering initiative working with prison inmates to develop strategies to prevent conflict and resolve outstanding legal issues; the Tasmanian Refugee Legal Service, with \$77 000 for the Safe Haven Enterprise Visa pathways program; and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service, with \$202 750 for a community legal education program.

In addition, I can announce the successful recipients of additional Commonwealth funding included the allocations of \$520 000 over four years to the Hobart Community Legal Service to support people with mental health conditions to access justice and for frontline support to address workplace sexual harassment; \$1.41 million dollars to Tasmania Legal Aid over four years to support people with mental health conditions to access justice; and \$388 000 over four years to the Women's Legal Service of Tasmania for frontline support to address workplace sexual harassment.

This new funding will help more Tasmanians navigate the justice system and ensure that Tasmanians who need extra help can access free or low-cost services. This funding has been committed to Tasmania's vital legal assistance sector in addition to funding they already receive and which has been already delivered by our Government and under the National Legal Assistance Partnership. A further expression of interest process for innovative projects to improve Tasmanians access to justice will be conducted later this year.

I will continue to do all I can as Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to support Tasmanians accessing legal assistance as we progress and deliver our plan to secure Tasmania's future and deliver an effective and efficient criminal and civil justice system.

Huntingfield - Proposed Housing Subdivision

Ms DOW question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.04 a.m.]

Last week marked the third anniversary of the commencement of the housing land supply order to fast-track new housing at Huntingfield. It has been three long years and not a single sod has been turned. Like Macquarie Point and your failure to deliver the infrastructure you have promised, Huntingfield is now synonymous with your Government's abysmal track record on housing. When will the first homes be completed?

A member - What's your position today, Mr Winter?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, these masks can be very handy when you get questions like that, can't they?

The Huntingfield release is a key initiative in combating housing affordability. The Huntingfield subdivision will be the first of its kind in Tasmania, with innovative planning, and has been undertaken to deliver a broad mix of housing options and tenures for the Tasmanian community. Kingborough has experienced strong growth in recent years, and this project will help improve access to affordable housing now, and into the future. Our recent \$60 million funding announcement to upgrade traffic infrastructure in the area will accommodate any additional load that will be created by the proposed Huntingfield development. The works will deliver a grade-separated interchange at the Algona Road roundabout and duplicate the Kingston Bypass from Algona Road to the Huon Highway, and will include the provision of lower-cost smaller blocks of land which will increase housing affordability.

The development application for stage 1 of the initial land release of 218 lots plus one commercial site was submitted to the Kingborough Council on 17 December 2020, I am advised. The council considered the subdivision at its meeting on 25 October and unanimously agreed to support it. I thank the council for being so proactive, despite the mistruths that have been told about the possible overdevelopment of the site and its bushfire risk.

We will now push on to realise this opportunity to open up more land to the market. We will continue to listen to the community, a fact that was acknowledged by the mayor in her media release after the approval of the subdivision when she said that the masterplan outlines a vision of a development that includes high-quality open spaces, retail spaces and integration with the public transport network and will also connect seamlessly with the existing community, ensuring that standard of living for surrounding residents will improve.

I thank the member for her question. This question time has been a great opportunity for our Government, thanks to the questions of the Opposition, to show that this is a government that gets on with the job.

Ms DOW - Point of order, Mr Speaker, under standing order 45, relevance. The Premier clearly has not answered the question, and I call on you to ask him to do so.

Mr SPEAKER - I take your point of order but as far as relevance is concerned, the Premier has been talking about the housing shortage and supply issues and that particular subdivision.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the member for her question. I will never make light of the challenges that too many Tasmanians are confronting when it comes to homelessness and housing affordability, but today has been an opportunity for the Government to put on record not only our strong record but also going forward our very key investments in the short, medium and long term when it comes to housing and housing affordability.

Events Strategy

Mrs ALEXANDER question to MINISTER for HOSPITALITY and EVENTS, Mr STREET

Can you provide the House with an update on the Government's plan for a new whole-of-government events strategy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her genuine interest in the events sector. When the Tasmanian Liberals came to government in 2014 we developed and published the state's first-ever whole-of-government events strategy. This strategy set up the subsequent five years from 2015 to 2020 and aligned our investment into events of all types and sizes so we were clear on our funding rationale.

Prior to this, our events investment was sporadic and lacked any great vision. We knew this was unsustainable so we put a strategy in place. That strategy included all areas of state event funding, including business events, leisure events, arts events, sports events and community events. It acknowledged their intrinsic value to their participants in the state, from the impact on the visitor economy through to being celebrations of excellence in the arts, sport, and culture.

Our strategy set a very solid foundation for the support we have provided since. It is important to note that the five years covered by this strategy concluded in 2020 and that conclusion would normally trigger the review process and begin the work to renew and revise. However, COVID-19 changed the immediate needs of the sector, and we have spent the last two years working hard to ensure that Tasmanian events stayed afloat.

Events are quite unique in that they generally only have one relatively narrow shot at making their income for any given year. They can have the best plans and have invested their money wisely in the lead-up, but if something stops the event at the last minute it can become a perfect storm. We saw this with Unconformity last year - the timing of the snap three-day lockdown in southern Tasmania could not have been worse for them.

Much like with other similar situations, we have continued to support Unconformity and west coast businesses impacted by the lockdown, but this is a good example of why the time has not been right to devise a new strategy for our future investment. We have been busy ensuring that these iconic events are able to continue, and we have been busy making the most of the opportunities that have presented themselves, like the NBL blitz last year, or the historic fifth Ashes test earlier this year.

In the absence of a dedicated strategy, we have maintained alignment with the T21 Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy. I am confident that we now are at the right place where planning for the next half-decade feels right.

I was pleased to announce during the Budget Estimates hearings last week that I have tasked Events Tasmania with reviewing and establishing a new whole-of-government events strategy. This will lead the five-year strategy development in conjunction with other event funding bodies within government, and with Business Events Tasmania.

The work will include a body of research and consultation with the tourism, cultural and hospitality sectors, local councils, and talking with our existing iconic events. They will also work closely with our four regional tourism organisation partners to ensure there is strong focus on creating even more reasons for people to travel outside of the major cities.

Our strategy will continue to focus on the visitor economy and supporting our communities through a variety of channels across government. Importantly, too, it will ensure

that we have a strong return on the investment we make into all events, which might be financial or the positive impact on the relevant community, and that we are aligned to broader Government priorities.

There is so much to be proud of when looking at our existing events portfolio, and I am pleased to be working towards a future that continues to foster that pride.

Time expired.

PETITION

Greyhound Industry - End Taxpayer Subsidy

[11.12 a.m.]

Ms O'Connor presented a petition from approximately 13 519 citizens of Tasmania, requesting that the House call on the Government to end the taxpayer subsidy of the inherently cruel greyhound racing industry.

Petition received.

TABLED PAPER

Subordinate Legislation Committee - Report

Mr Tucker presented a report of the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation in relation to an inquiry in the Crown Lands Regulations 2021. I move that the report be received.

Report recieved.

SENTENCING AMENDMENT (MANDATORY SENTENCING) BILL 2022 (No. 32)

First Reading

Bill presented by Ms Archer and read the first time.

SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER

Local Community Facility Fund - Election Promises

[11.16 a.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin - Minister for Sport and Recreation) - Mr Speaker, on indulgence, I want to foreshadow that I understand that misleading the House is the most serious charge that can be made against anybody in this place. There was an accusation or suggestion that I misled the House last week in answering questions in Estimates.

I will be tabling additional information this afternoon, Dr Woodruff, in relation to the local community facility fund and the questions that you were asking about the detail of those commitments.

Dr Woodruff - Good. It was a question, not an accusation.

SITTING TIMES

[11.17 a.m.]

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

That for the day's sitting the House shall not stand adjourned at 6 o'clock and that the House continue to sit past 6 o'clock.

I have been in contact with the two Independent members, and Mr Winter, I think late last week and again this morning.

The intention of the Government is to get through four ministers' reporting procedures this afternoon and tonight and so we will need to sit past 6 o'clock to do that. We will adjourn at the conclusion of the fourth minister. I will foreshadow that tomorrow we are going to try to get through another four ministers so that we have only one left on Thursday, so we can take care of a couple of matters of Government business that I have let the four members know about this morning as well.

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Similar to last sitting week, Mr Speaker, our thanks to the leader of government business for the heads-up. We appreciate that and agree with the proposed plan this week.

Motion agreed to.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, before we move on, I welcome legal studies students from Guilford Young College. Welcome to the gallery.

Members - Hear, hear.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Health Workforce Retention

[11.18 a.m.]

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

That the House take note of the following matter: health workforce retention.

It is fair to say this is a systemic issue right across government services, but in today's debate I want to make particular reference to our healthcare workforce. Almost a decade ago, this Government came to power promising to fix Tasmania's health system, and it is pretty clear they have not been able to do that.

One of the most significant risks that this Government now has before it is the ability to have a health workforce to provide services right across Tasmania. Things are at a dire point and there needs to be action from this Government.

I have before read into *Hansard* comments from a registered nurse who was interviewed on the ABC radio a number of weeks ago, and I want to share some more of that interview to set the scene today. She says:

I leave my shift heartbroken because I don't feel that I've had job satisfaction, because when I am running from task to task in preference to actually being able to care for my patients the way I know I should. It is heartbreaking. You add fatigue on top of that, you add face masks on top of that where they make you breathless. You feel you can't, in an emergency, even in any situation, just being busy, you are breathless.

It is difficult to catch your breath because of those face masks and to hear a member of the public say it is not about the money. We are not asking for a pay rise because we think we are underpaid. We are asking for a pay rise because that is the only way we may get people from the mainland to come here and help. The situation is that I think, regardless of who is in power from a government point of view, this problem cannot be fixed because there are not enough nurses. I make the point only from a nursing perspective.

She is in desperate need.

Of the nurses that we do have, they are not necessarily going to leave the mainland and come to a state that they get less money for and work in such a stressful situation.

I work in an area that is one-on-one, or previously had been one-on-one, patient to nurse care. That can't happen anymore because we are so short staffed. I can be looking after two patients or three sometimes, at the same time and I literally run from one emergency to another.

You have nurses and midwives taking industrial action across the state. Following Estimates last week, in a media release that was put out by the ANMF secretary, Emily Shepherd, they talk about their concerns about the Government's response to questions asked in Estimates about vacancies across the health system. There was no answer provided to that point. They are concerned about the cost of agency staff, which was \$17.6 million. This is concerning when those staff have been brought in to fill the gaps in staffing, right across the health system.

Unlike the RN I spoke about before in my contribution, who has given up, who has no hope, we think that the Government should be doing more and that there is an opportunity for things to be done differently in Tasmania to retain our health staff. We have to look after our

health staff. They are the ones who provide care to us in our time of need. Right now in Tasmania we are not doing that.

In the Budget there were no new initiatives around staff recruitment. We see other states offering payments to their healthcare workers in recognition of the hard work and dedication that they undertake every day to provide care to their fellow citizens. This Government is not doing that. We have seen a feeble attempt at the COVID-19 allowance that has been called upon from this Government by healthcare workers for a long time. That offer was only accepted as a last resort by the health unions. It is simply not good enough.

We learned last week in Estimates that those staff in the north-west who were at the coalface of the first outbreak in Tasmania at the North West Regional Hospital will not be eligible for that COVID-19 allowance. That is a disgrace. What is this Government doing to support our hardworking health professionals right now? Our paramedics are in a dire state. Their mental health and wellbeing is being severely impacted by their workloads and there was very little in the Budget to address this.

The Government has had 10 years to plan for workforce development across Tasmania. We have an ageing healthcare workforce in Tasmania. We have increases in transition to practice nurses but there are not the more experienced, highly skilled nurses in the system required to support them in that transition: critical in them continuing in their career as a nurse, midwife or healthcare professional in our health system is being well supported in their role when they first come into practice and having those clinical educators on the ground to support them, help them develop and to help carry that load.

It is a huge shock when you take your first step onto a ward after becoming a graduate nurse. You need every bit of support you can get. That will be critical in ensuring that our healthcare workers want to stay and be part of the health system and continue to work. They are doing it tough. They are worn out and they get no recognition from this Government, no level of thanks or increased remuneration.

The wages policy in the Budget was 2.5 per cent. What a smack in the face for those healthcare workers who have been working tirelessly over the past two years. We are right in the midst of winter, the cusp of a perfect storm. We have an ageing population, we have increasing cases of COVID-19, and high cases of flu in our community. Our healthcare workforce is burnt out. We have staff shortages and we have them working overtime. We have demand on our system that is currently not being met. We have services that are not being provided. An example of that is at the Launceston General Hospital with people being turned away from the emergency department. It is also happening in our mental health inpatient services across the state.

What is the plan, minister? How are you going to ensure that our health workers feel valued by your Government, are remunerated appropriately and are supported as they provide care to Tasmanians. Right now that is one of the biggest risks that you face in providing a fully functioning health system across Tasmania.

Time expired.

[11.26 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Health) - Mr Speaker, I thank the member for bringing forward the matter of public importance today. I have said many times that our greatest asset in our health system is our people. We want to ensure that our health system is a work of choice, where everyone is respected, everyone feels valued, our staff are recognised and individuals feel empowered to make positive changes and are given opportunities for growth. That is about ensuring there is a very good culture within our workforce.

Regarding retention, this financial year we are tracking on or slightly below the average annual health staff turnover rate for the Tasmanian Department of Health for the past five years. I have also outlined on many occasions the increase in staff since July 2020 across our health system, an increase of 1200 FTE since that time.

Regarding the workforce, it is important to look ahead. That is why we have released Health Workforce 2040. We are investing to ensure our workforce is fit for purpose. We are investing \$15.7 million over four years to implement the Department of Health's Workforce 2040 strategy which was released in September last year.

Health Workforce 2040 is about the long-term strategy to shape the health workforce that meets the needs of Tasmanians now and into the future. It is the first detailed health workforce strategy and includes both the public and private sectors. It aims to shape a health workforce that meets the needs of Tasmanians now and into the future and to look after those who dedicate their careers to looking after others and provide opportunities to support our health professionals to follow their career ambitions. This is available for viewing on the Department of Health website and has been developed through extensive consultation with clinicians, key stakeholders, education providers and consumers. It aims to improve our workforce through strategies to develop staff, targeted recruitment and building a positive workplace.

The greatest asset in our health workforce is our people. Tasmania's health professional workforce is broadly comparable in size per capita to other states and territories; however, ongoing challenges exist in ensuring regional and rural areas have a sustainable workforce. The pandemic has magnified workforce difficulties and highlighted the need to build and maintain workforce flexibility. I have mentioned the \$15.7 million commitment in the 2021-22 budget over four years. The implementation of the strategy's action items has already begun, led by our Health Workforce Planning Unit. These actions include shaping the workforce, education and training, fostering innovation, of which I have spoken about a number of times in this place and elsewhere, enhancing culture and wellbeing, optimising recruitment and working arrangements, and planning to build capability and capacity, which is so crucially important.

I acknowledge the incredible effort of our entire health workforce over the course of, well, forever, but I know it has been particularly difficult since the pandemic hit our shores and the extra burden it has placed on our staff. Their commitment to helping Tasmanians is very much appreciated but also clearly evident as well.

Following the north-west outbreak, thankfully Tasmanian hospitals did not experience severe COVID-19 impacts, hospitalisation and death rates seen in larger-scale outbreaks in Victoria and New South Wales during 2020 and 2021, which has given us time to repair our workforce to transition to caring for patients with COVID-19 in the Tasmanian community. Since July 2021 we have recruited over 200 additional nursing FTEs to ease the impact of

COVID-19 and continue to actively recruit more staff in line with increased demands on our health system and our COVID-19 emergency response.

To one of the member's points concerning the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, branch secretary Ms Emily Shepherd wrote to me on 10 June in relation to the one-off payment announced for frontline health workers in New South Wales and Victoria. I will be responding to that correspondence and request for a meeting to discuss. That is very important to me. Our nurses and midwives are integral. They are part of Tasmania's healthcare team and the largest health workforce in the Tasmanian State Service.

I am advised that from 30 June 2018 to 31 March 2022, there has been an increase of approximately 640 FTE nursing staff across the department. That is a 15.9 percent increase of the total nursing workforce, and I have mentioned the July 2021 figure of that extra recruitment of 206 nurses.

An agreement has been reached with our unions to pay health employees after 30 consecutive days at their health facility experiencing pandemic escalation level 3 or above, so we are listening and we are acting.

Time expired.

[11.33 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, the Greens asked a lot of questions of the Health minister during Estimates last week, and I will go into the detail of that during my Estimates reply speech. Fundamentally, what healthcare workers were expecting, and understanding has to be delivered by the Liberal Government, was some indication that there is the extent of resourcing required to first of all provide some short-term, near-term relief for particularly ambulance paramedics, nurses and midwives, who are working in intolerable situations without enough people in the pool, and to prevent them from having to work double-shifts and longer shifts than they want to otherwise work.

However, there was not any money in the Budget for the actual real increase in paramedics that are needed to reduce the load on people and to allow our regional ambulance centres to be open every single night. There was no money in the Budget to support the ongoing calls that have been in place for years by the ANMF to increase the number of nurses in the nurse pool so there can be the breadth of people available to fill shifts when required. We are going into winter. Nurses, midwives, doctors, ward clerks, cleaners, people at every level of support in our hospitals, paramedics, people in call centres, have all been working for years under extreme pressure. Many of them are feeling very burnt out because of the pressures of COVID-19 in their workplace and the broader social pressures of the changes to our living conditions and the way society functions that we are all collectively experiencing.

Those people got nothing in this Budget. The Victorian and New South Wales governments have both shown a tiny but very important and symbolic gesture of appreciation for people who have been doing the hardest of work and continue to do that work for us. They are the people who are there when we need them the most, when we are most vulnerable and need to be cared for when we are suffering and at risk of dying. These are the people who the Victorian and New South Wales governments recognised need to have an incentive to continue to do that work. We cannot keep treating people as though they will turn up for work every single day without showing them appreciation. It has to be both a financial appreciation in

terms of a real salary increase but there also has to be expansive additional resourcing into the total number of staff who are employed, because people cannot keep working under the intolerable pressures they are working under.

The Victorian strategy that was announced was for a \$3000 winter payment, they have called it, to retain staff. The recognition is there in Victoria and New South Wales that staff are walking and it is not that they are going to other states. They are walking out of their profession forever, they are leaving, they are sick of it. They cannot do it any longer. They are in a system which, year on year, they have been holding on throughout the pandemic giving it everything they can, expecting every budget that more resourcing would be provided for additional numbers of staff and they have not been met with that.

It is symbolic, it is a token gesture, but at the very least it is recognition for staff. Victoria is providing staff with paid meals to encourage people to work overnight shifts. People do not have the energy to continue to do that. We have models sitting there on the table that their Premier should match. He should be providing the sorts of support that the Victorian and New South governments are providing. It is a bare minimum.

Fundamentally, what he has not done and what we desperately need to have a way forward out of this terribly broken system, is to put funding into recruitment and retention of staff and that means money in the budget for the support for clinical educators and clinical coaches. We can do that. The Greens funded this in our fully costed alternative budget. We put in 25 clinical educators and 50 clinical coaches. This is what ANMF Tasmania has been asking for, for years. It can be done if the Government prioritised people who do the hardest work and for us when we are in need so that we have the quality care and we are able to get the care we need in a timely manner.

At the moment, the way the Government is mismanaging the hospital system means that the waiting time for people being treated in emergency departments and in getting elective surgeries is blowing out all the national standards. We are behind the national benchmarks in almost all the standards: for elective surgeries in timely fashion, for being treated, and getting a bed in a hospital in emergency departments. These are things that can change, but the Government refuses to make the investments that people in Tasmania really want.

[11.40 a.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I rise on this matter of public importance to talk about retention of health staff in Tasmania. The recruitment of health professionals to regional and rural areas remains difficult in Tasmania. Retention is a major issue. It does not matter how many people you recruit: if you cannot retain your skilled specialist workforce your health system will fail. That is the situation in Tasmania at the moment. It is a critical issue.

The best examples I can give about the impact of limited GP services in Tasmania at the moment would be in Ouse, where more than 1000 patients have been plunged into uncertainty without access to GP services. The Derwent Valley Medical Centre has had to close its door to new clients and people who live in Hamilton, Ellendale, Bronte and Ouse have to travel.

Some of those people need to see a doctor on a weekly basis. There is limited public transport to that area, they have an aged population and some of those people are not able to access the Derwent Valley Medical Centre, nor are they able to access Brighton or Greenpoint. Some have to travel all the way into Hobart from those areas. That is if they have transport

options. That is one area in which the GP shortage has not been resolved. The strategy to encourage GPs to stay in rural areas in Tasmania has not happened. The issue has been raised many times over the past decade.

There is also an issue in St Helens. The only GP services have to change the way they are billing on 1 July, so there will be barely any bulk-billing facilities through the only doctors in St Helens. That is a large remote community which has had great difficulty attracting GPs. Retention of health staff is having major impacts in our rural communities.

I have a letter written by members of the St Helens District Hospital auxiliary to the Premier, Mr Rockliff, on 16 May, before the 1 July cut-off. It says:

I am writing to you in relation to a meeting St Helens District Hospital auxiliary had last week, on 11 May, with a doctor from Ochre Health who addressed the auxiliary and outlined changes that Ochre were implementing from 1 June, 2022, which will have a huge impact on our district hospital.

As from 1 June, Ochre Health will be charging all patients, except DVA patients, a flat fee of \$72, upfront for pensioners, who will receive a \$32.99 rebate from Medicare for general consultation, or \$144 for longer consultations. As you would be aware, this is a very low socio-economic municipality and the majority of persons visiting Ochre Health will not have \$72 left at the end of their pension cycle for food or medical supplies, let alone enough to visit a doctor.

The hospital auxiliary acknowledges that bulk-billing and Medicare gaps are a federal Government policy, but the state Government will bear the brunt of this change due to inpatients presenting at the A and E section of our district hospital and causing extra workload and pressure on the doctors and nursing staff here because they cannot afford \$72 to see a doctor at Ochre Health and require a non-urgent medical consultation or a prescription filled.

They have asked to have a meeting with the Minister for Health in relation to that. I have a response from Ochre Health outlining the difficulties it is having at the moment meeting the costs as GPs. It says:

As of 1 June 2022, doctors Fox, Frawley, Landon, Soohan, and Storck will be charging a gap for all patients except DVA for time-based consultations. They will be providing a discount to local residents, under 18 healthcare card holders, and pensioners. The charges are outlined below. This fee will enable those doctors to extend their appointment times to 20 minutes, the long consultations, instead of 15 minutes, and assessments will continue to be bulk-billed. A lot of their usual appointments will be able to be done under this bulk-billing. To help mitigate health costs we have developed several strategies outlined below.

Many consultations can be done under Medicare items, such as GP management plans, health assessments, and diabetes care plans. We will be bulk-billing these appointments. Mental healthcare plans will be bulk-billed.

We have instituted our own safety net. That is for eligible patients, children, healthcare card holders, and pensioners.

They also talk about the Medicare rebate. The reason why they have problems is that the Medicare rebates do not cover the full cost of providing community quality medical care:

This is because the rate at which successive governments have indexed the Medicare scheme fee has been substantially lower than increases in the consumer price index. The Medicare rebate has increased \$3.50 in the last 10 years.

The federal government and state Government have been Liberal and they have not resolved the situation.

Time expired.

[11.47 a.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I am pleased to talk on this matter of public importance. I also acknowledge and thank the hard-working staff we have across our health system.

Our Government is focused on delivering what matters most to the Tasmanian community. Tasmanians have made it clear their priority is health. The facts are simple. When Labor was last in government they cut health funding by \$500 million, and they sacked a nurse a day for nine months. They did not lay one brick in the Royal Hobart Hospital. Now they offer no alternatives. Crickets, Mr Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition failed to deliver an alternative budget, offering only negativity, as Ms Dow has done today. In contrast, our Government is backing our health system and the dedicated professionals working every day across the state. A key component of this is recruiting and retraining health staff across our state to ensure our hospitals and health facilities are well equipped to deliver quality health services to our community.

The Department of Health has had a considerable increase in paid full-time equivalents since the beginning of the pandemic. A considerable proportion of the full-time equivalent growth is in direct frontline patient care nurses, doctors, paramedics and allied health professionals. Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, we saw an increase of 655 paid full-time equivalents across the department. We have increased full-time equivalents overall by 696 this financial year. This means more than 1200 new health full-time equivalents from 1 July 2020 to date. That works out to be nearly two additional people being recruited every day in our health system for the past two years. Nurses and midwives are an integral part of Tasmania's healthcare team, and the largest health workforce in the Tasmanian public health service, employing in excess of 4600 full-time equivalents.

Over the past three financial years we have worked hard to build up our nursing workforce which has increased by over 600 full-time equivalents. Since July 2021 we have recruited over 200 additional nursing full-time equivalents to ease the impact of COVID-19 and we continue to actively recruit more staff in line with the increased demands of our health system and our COVID-19 emergency response.

While the additional staffing is having an impact right now, our Government is also firmly focused on planning for the future. We have a plan that forecasts an investment of more than \$1.5 billion over 10 years into critical health infrastructure. This includes our 10-year \$580 million redevelopment of the Launceston General Hospital, which will see some exciting new developments that will deliver significant benefits to the community and support the delivery of contemporary care. The 2022-23 Budget includes \$38 million to complete stage 1 projects and \$50 million over the forward Estimates to commence stage 2 of this major redevelopment of the LGH.

In the south, we are delivering expansion of stage 2 of the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment. This represents over \$200 million in new and upgraded facilities, including an additional 90 inpatient beds, a fit-for-purpose older persons unit, an expanded ICU, expanded emergency department and new neurology, stroke and medical subspecialties wards.

We recognise modern and fully integrated digital health infrastructure is just as important as the physical hospital environment in terms of delivering quality and timely patient care. That is why the 2022-23 state Budget commits \$150 million over the next four years to upgrade our digital health infrastructure and transform the way we deliver patient care across Tasmania. This is a down-payment on our anticipated investment of \$475 million over the next 10 years as we further scope and develop the Digital Health Strategy to achieve a digitally connected network that will transform patient experience, improve patient care and ensure greater equity in health outcomes across Tasmania's dispersed population.

There are some exciting innovative developments happening in our health system in Tasmania. The Premier spoke earlier about making the Department of Health a workplace of choice and these exciting new developments will only enhance this. Our Government has a plan for our health system and our dedicated staff, unlike those opposite, who only want to talk down this state.

Labor has no credibility when it comes to Health. The facts are simple. When Labor was last in government they cut health funding by \$500 million. They sacked a nurse a day for nine months and they did not lay one brick in the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment. Now they offer no alternatives - crickets. In contrast, our Government is backing in our health system. The dedicated professionals working every day across our state need our support and I ask Labor and Mr Winter to support them.

Ms Dow - They have our full support. Do they have yours?

Mr TUCKER - Thank you, Ms Dow. I like your continued negativity. I hope you will support our plan and start to support the staff and what they are doing in Tasmania, instead of talking down everything we put forward. Things are going forward in this state with the health system and I am pleased to support this Health minister in what he is doing and achieving.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

TABLED PAPERS

Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2022 (No. 23) and Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2022 (No. 24)

Reports of Estimates Committees

Mr Tucker presented the reports of Estimates Committee A on the Estimates of the Premier, Minister for Tourism, Minister for Trade, Minister for Health and Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing; Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Minister for Planning; Minister for Community Services and Development, Minister for Sport and recreation, Minister for Hospitality and Events and Minister for Local Government; Minister for Women, Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Primary Industries and Water; and Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and Minister for Parks; together with the minutes of proceedings, transcripts of evidence and additional information presented to the committee.

Mr Ellis presented the reports of Estimates Committee B on the Estimates of Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation, Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs and Minister for the Arts; Minister for Energy and Renewables, Minister for Resources, Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing and Minister for Veterans' Affairs; Minister for Education, Children and Youth, Minister for Environment and Climate Change; Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth; and Minister for Racing, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Science and Technology and Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries; together with the minutes of proceedings, transcripts of evidence and additional information presented to the committee.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2022 (No. 23)

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2022 (No. 24)

Reports of Estimates Committee

In Committee

DIVISIONS 1, 6, 8, 11, 12 and 13

Premier, Minister for Tourism, Minister for Trade, Minister for Health and Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

[11.57 a.m.]

Ms WHITE - Mr Chair, I am very frustrated, I have to say at the outset, that we have not got our answers back to the questions that were put to the Premier and minister throughout the examination which occurred on Monday last week, so more than a week ago.

I note that Mr Street, who is in the Chamber, was the first to provide answers to the questions that were put and he was the last one to be examined. My understanding of the purpose of this week when we do reports back was for us to have had those questions answered so we could examine the Estimates in full. It is the reason we spend a week talking about Estimates in parliament when we have just spent a week in Estimates, to deal with any matters

that had not been resolved at the table. Now we are spending two hours scrutinsing something for which we do not have the information.

This Government is treating the parliament again with complete contempt. So much for being a transparent government leading with integrity. They cannot even be bothered to provide the answers to the committee in time for us to have them to debate in the Chamber today. It is pretty low standards by this Government; in fact, there have only been a couple of ministers who have provided any answers whatsoever to the questions that have been put.

In the first instance, I would like the Premier to answer the questions that were put to him over the course of that day, across a number of different areas. It is very frustrating that we do not have that information before us because we are going over the same old conversations we had last week with no new information. That is not the point of this exercise, or certainly not what I am led to believe reports from the Estimates committees are supposed to be about.

I will talk about some of the matters we discussed last week and I am going to start with the main issue confronting many Tasmanians right now. That is the rising cost of living: the cost pressures that are facing Tasmanians day in, day out, whether it is their grocery bill, their fuel bill, their rent bill, the lack of growth in wages to help them keep up with their cost-of-living pressures and the lack of strategies from this Government to help ease some of those cost-of-living pressures.

In fact, we have had acknowledgement by this Government that there is a reduction in concessions compared to last year, because they are not providing a winter energy supplement. It has been the coldest start to winter in a very long time, but there is not an election this year, is there, so of course there is no winter energy supplement because those things just happen to coincide with election years. No wonder people are cynical about politics.

There is no question that people are struggling right now with the rising cost of living and their energy bills and heating their homes and staying warm. People are choosing between heating and eating. You would think the time the Government would come to their assistance and provide a winter energy supplement would be now - but they have not, which shows there is actually a decrease in concession support in this Budget compared to the last one. It is a pretty heartless act by this Government to make it harder for pensioners to make ends meet in the middle of winter.

We talked about the cost of living. We talked about food relief. I thank all of those food relief organisations and all those services and all the volunteers who, day in and day out, support the most vulnerable in our community by helping them access food. In particular, I recognise the work of our Neighbourhood Houses and the volunteers who support them in their efforts, and of our major food relief charities, which are really struggling at the moment to do what they need to do. On the west coast, for instance, the support offered there was previously weekly; it has now been reduced to fortnightly. That is because the cost of fuel is impacting on their ability to run that food down the coast - but also the cost of groceries and of the food itself is hampering their ability to deliver food services.

We spoke in Estimates about the cost of some of the main items that are involved in anyone's grocery shop every week on King Island compared to mainland Tasmania. The cost of a litre of milk is almost triple what it would be if you were buying it in Burnie - let alone the cost of other essentials like bread and vegetables. We have heard - and I am sure the

Government has too - from food relief organisations how concerned they are that they cannot provide the level of support to these communities that they used to just a year ago, and that they know is needed right now because of the additional pressure that families and households are facing. It is they who have told us that people are choosing between heating and eating.

I asked the Premier about the lack of additional support for food relief organisations in the Budget. The Premier pointed to a \$300 000 provision in the Department of Communities Tasmania to support the rolling out of the action plan, but when we interrogated the minister for Community Services, Mr Street, about what that \$300 000 would be for, he could not detail how it would be used. The action plan that was spoken about does not yet exist. A strategy was developed last year, but the action plan is not publicly available. It is not available through the website. There was no information shared about how that \$300 000 would be allocated, and whether it would be able to be used for direct support for families right now to help purchase food.

These are the types of questions that we are getting, and I am sure the Government is getting, from food relief organisations that are anxious to access just a couple more dollars so they can help people deal with the cost of living. They are not getting answers from this Government and we certainly could not extract those answers from ministers during Estimates this year.

I reiterate our concern that the rising cost of living is having a significant and detrimental impact on households across Tasmania. There are no new initiatives outlined in this Budget to support people. Concessions have been cut, and we know that rent and the pressures facing people trying to find housing have become catastrophic.

The Premier was asked today about homelessness, and the rising number of homeless people we see setting up tents on the sides of our highways, just within a short walk of this place, and what additional services the Government will provide to make sure those people could either have brokered accommodation so they can get out of the cold this winter, or any other support that could be made available to them so they can have a roof over their heads.

There is nothing in this Budget for that. There is nothing to recognise the additional demand those services are facing, the additional pressures that households are feeling, or homeless individuals are enduring.

When we had blizzard-like conditions over the weekend, I cannot imagine living in my car right now, and how cold that must be. There are families with children living in cars in Tasmania at the moment. That has to be our priority when we are thinking about how we allocate scarce taxpayer money - keeping children safe with their families in a warm environment. It worries me very much that we are not doing enough. There was no strategy outlined by the Government in either the Budget or the statements made by the Premier that they have a clear grasp of this situation.

If I can just reflect on a different time, when this Government came to office in 2014 there was a social inclusion commissioner, Professor David Adams, who developed a cost of living strategy for our state. That strategy still stands as a document this Government could draw on to tackle some of the structural problems we have across our society. I implore them to do that, because there were good initiatives in that. Had they been adopted rather than

discarded by this Government, perhaps we would not be facing the same problems we see today.

We also spoke about the lack of support for real growth in wages, and the impact this is going to have on the delivery of state services if we do not properly pay our workforce. If we are not able to keep them in Tasmania, they will be poached by other states. In New South Wales they have a recruitment strategy to get 10 000 more nurses in the next couple of years. Victoria and New South Wales are offering large incentives for their health workforce in recognition of what they have been through over the last couple of years, but also in acknowledgment of the fact they need more to get by day to day.

Tasmania is doing none of that. We are at risk of losing the workers we have to other jurisdictions where they are better remunerated. The wages policy of this Government at 2.5 per cent is woefully inadequate for us to retain - let alone recruit - the workforce we need to deliver the services Tasmanians rely upon. We can talk about wait lists and the Government's intention to reduce wait lists, but if you do not have the people to deliver the services, nothing is going to change.

We talked about the National Rental Affordability Scheme. I acknowledge that the Premier outlined he would do what he could to support people who are facing eviction as a result of the cessation of some of those particular initiatives. He said, and I quote:

I acknowledge the distress and concern this matter has given to a number of residents involved. I assure them that, of course, we will do everything we can to ensure they are assisted and not forced into homelessness.

That is very good news for those residents, but they are hollow words if there are not actions taken to support people who are already finding themselves in that precarious position. We have seen the stories through the media, not just Redwood Village, but the residents in Perth, some of whom are in their cars. There are others who will face similar circumstances over the course of this year and the years ahead. Rather than being reactive, the Government needs to be proactive, and I urge the Government to make sure they are working closely with those individuals to ensure they are not facing homelessness.

I see the Premier nodding, and I hope that means that they are. We do not want to see more of these stories. We do not want to bring more of those stories to this parliament.

On that, I want to briefly talk about the state of the Budget itself. In Estimates, I asked the Premier if he could give further details to the statement made by the Treasurer in his Budget speech, where he said:

I have also tasked Treasury to provide advice to me on strategies to ensure our debt levels remain within manageable limits into the future, so we can then use our balance sheet to shield Tasmanian jobs and families should external shocks to our economy occur in the future.

There was no more detail in the Budget speech about what that meant. I asked the Premier for his understanding of that. He provided no further details. He only said, 'Well, just as the Treasurer has outlined, Ms White', to which I said, 'Well, that is what he said, there was no more detail'. That seems to be the extent of it: that the entire strategy for this Government

around how it manages the debt, which is at a record level and a great legacy for our children to inherit, is a sentence in a Budget speech from the Treasurer. No further detail provided. That is it. What on Earth is going on here? We have record debt and deficit, debt forecast as far as the eye can see with no plan in place to bring it to manageable levels. Nothing to show for it: health waiting lists, housing waiting lists all blowing out of control.

Where has the money gone? What has it been spent on? How has it improved Tasmanians' lives? What is this Government's plan to bring debt under control? One sentence in the Budget speech, no more detail. The Premier could not speak about any detail. He told us there will be a Budget subcommittee of Cabinet established and that he will provide details of who is on that when it is convened. I will read into *Hansard* what was shared there.

I asked: Is there a Budget subcommittee, and do you sit on it?

Mr Rockliff, the Premier, replied:

There is a Budget committee, and I have sat on it. The Budget subcommittee will be working very hard over the course of the next 12 months in developing our budget.

I asked: Who else sits on that committee?

Mr Rockliff replied:

We are about to add members and constitute that committee. We are going to renew the membership of the committee.

I asked: Did that committee meet before the Budget was delivered?

The Premier replied: We met as Cabinet before the Budget was signed off by the Cabinet.

I asked: Who will be on the subcommittee?

The Premier replied:

I am unable to inform the committee at this stage, but I am happy to let you know when the new members are on there.

We will be holding the Premier to that, to make sure you provide an update. Perhaps you can do that today, Premier? Can you let us know whether you have convened that new committee and who sits on it? They have a big job ahead of them. Not only do you have to decipher what that one sentence in the Treasurer's Budget speech actually means, you have to set out a plan for how you deliver on the commitments you have made to the people of Tasmania. We want to know who will be tasked with that job.

In the time I have left, there are two matters that I want to touch on. One is on the exchange that we had about the size of parliament. This is relevant as it concerns our democracy in our state. The community deserves to understand what the Premier's thinking is regarding what the next steps look like, given he is committed to bring in legislation to this House to restore the numbers to 35. I asked the Premier whether he was considering an existing

five electorates of seven members or creating seven electorates of five. The Premier indicated that he had an open mind, but further that he had written to the Electoral Commissioner, Mr Hawkey. The Premier indicated he had written to Mr Hawkey seeking advice about how the 35 would be achieved, and also boundaries.

In providing a response to those questions to me, the Premier said:

I understand that Mr Hawkey has acknowledged my letter and will come back with advice for the Department of Premier and Cabinet later this week. The Department of Premier and Cabinet has organised to meet with Mr Hawkey later on this week, and I look forward to receipt of his advice.

That was last week. Last week, it is my understanding that the Department of Premier and Cabinet sat down with Mr Hawkey to discuss some of the contents of the letter exchanged between Mr Rockliff and himself, and that the Premier was awaiting advice. Premier, are you able to give any more information to this committee about what advice you have received from the Electoral Commissioner, Mr Hawkey, in response to the letter you provided, what next steps will be taken by the Government, and what consultation will occur to make sure the parliament is kept abreast of the changes that have been proposed?

The final matter I would like to speak about is the Premier's responsibilities for Health. Ms Dow, the shadow minister for health, will speak about this in more detail, but I want to talk about the concerns that have been raised with us about Ambulance Tasmania, and the pressure placed on our paramedics and volunteer ambulance officers. I acknowledge and thank again Dakota and Tahnee Wolf. Dakota rode his beautiful horse, Coda, collecting letters from paramedics as he rode the Tasmanian Trail. He turned up at Parliament House with those letters for the Premier. He wrote to members of parliament on Tuesday 7 June with information based on that travel. He said:

It was apparent during our Saddle Up for Life campaign that our paramedics are fatigued, disillusioned and frightened to raise concerns to their employer for fear of reprisal now and in the future.

Although we only delivered six letters to the Premier, 18 other paramedics reached out and talked of being extremely fatigued due to work, of emotional and distressing experiences, ill-treatment within and by Ambulance Tasmania whilst performing their job, and soul-destroying experiences when navigating the return to work and/or workers compensation process.

Mental illness is an issue that is front and centre for our first responders. The way in which this topic is approached has significant long-term implications for both employees and the business, if not managed appropriately. Failing to proactively support employees and all their families during these times erodes trust and promotes a stigma around mental health, the very same stigma we are all trying to change.

There is further analysis by Dakota and Tahnee in their correspondence, but I want to stop there to again express our concern that the resilience scan that was undertaken last year by the Government demonstrated serious flaws in Ambulance Tasmania for how support is provided to paramedics and volunteer ambulance officers who are dealing in the most

extraordinary conditions in their work. We still have not seen any tangible action taken by this Government to improve their work conditions.

That scan, by all accounts from what we have seen publicly shared, was pretty damning. People opened up about their experiences, thinking that it would lead to changes and improvements. What has been shared with us since then is it was a waste of time.

I hope that is not the case. The intent behind it was good, but it needs to be actioned. There needs to be resources put in place to support our paramedics so they can do their job, which is looking after all of us, and those who are most vulnerable, in our community.

I have run out of time, which is a shame. I remind the Premier there is no time like the present to provide answers to those questions.

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier, I hope you have survived that solid beating with a bit of wet lettuce from Ms White.

Seriously, not one mention of the Government's woeful COVID-19 response, passing mention of the commission of inquiry. A terrible disappointment. If we had an Opposition that was doing their job in this place, we would have a better COVID-19 response. We would have more action on the commission of inquiry. We might even get some real action on climate change.

The Greens started off our Estimates session with the Premier talking about the commission of inquiry, and the Government's response to evidence that has come before the commission of inquiry. We had a much less combative, and more, at face value, honest Premier sitting across the table from us than we have had in previous years. We asked a straightforward question, 'How many state servants have stood down as a result of historic or contemporary allegations of the abuse of children?' We got something approaching a straight answer. We were told that 31 state servants have been stood down.

We were offered information on the departments which we put on notice. We went into Mr Jaensch's Estimates the next day and he refused to detail how many state servants had been stood down out of the Department of Education, or from Ashley Detention Centre, or from Child Safety Services. The memo about transparency and accountability clearly had not been passed on to Mr Jaensch.

We heard that as a result of evidence that has come before the commission of inquiry, there will be accelerated work, as I interpreted it, on delivering a child-safe organisational framework for Tasmania, and legislation to go with it.

The commission of inquiry heard from the secretary of Communities Tasmania, that this work could take three more years. This is the result of a royal commission recommendation from four years ago. It certainly needs to be accelerated. We also heard that work is likely to be accelerated on a reportable conduct scheme.

I asked the Premier about his response to testimony from two journalists, Camille Bianchi and Emily Baker, which pointed to a cultural transparency issue inside government, where when journalists go to government and ask for information that is in the public interest, they are fobbed off or told that it is 5.00 p.m., it is too late. As the commission of inquiry evidence

shows, when Camille Bianchi sought information on the notorious paedophile nurse at the LGH, she was fobbed off through right to information by the Department of Health, and she finally received the information 22 months later, after a story went to air on Seven News.

I was glad to hear the new Premier say that was not good enough. Sorry if I am paraphrasing you, and correct me if I am wrong, but you did say 22 months was not good enough and that you wanted to have a government that was transparent and accountable. That means dealing with cultural and structural issues which for decades have led to the cover-up and therefore the enablement of the abuse of children in state care or state institutions.

We were pleased to hear those answers, and also a commitment on the Premier's part to make sure that the Right to Information Act is adhered to by government. When I put it to him that active disclosure is surely the best default position, which is what the act was designed for, the Premier was inclined to agree.

Dr Woodruff and I also asked a number of questions relating to the Government's pathetic and dangerous response to SARS-CoV-2. This year so far there have been 7000 deaths nationwide. Today, another death was reported in Tasmania - 81 deaths in Tasmania since the start of the pandemic. We know 50 000 children and young people under the age of 18 have been infected with the novel coronavirus, yet we still have this minimising from our Public Health officials which enables politicians to downplay the seriousness of this virus and its long-term health impacts.

Scientists in Israel have made the link between COVID-19 infection and the cases of severe hepatitis that are now being identified in children. In Japan, scientists have warned that there is a rise in the number of children with acute encephalopathy - which is a swollen brain due to bacterial or viral infection.

We now have 658 new reported cases overnight, and more than 173 000 Tasmanians have been infected with a virus which has known long-term consequences.

We read out the excerpt from *Scientific American* magazine for the Premier to reinforce the information. The *Scientific American* released a study of 13 million people which found that vaccination lowers the risk of long-COVID-19 by only 15 per cent, which points to a flawed policy on the part of governments to rely on vaccinations only. I reminded the Premier that he did not answer my earlier question, which was:

What is the plan here? Is the plan for rolling waves of repeat infection of the Tasmanian population with a novel coronavirus?

I did not get a straight answer out of that. I do hope the Premier and health minister is now having a good conversation with Public Health about the fact that we are seeing new subvariants of Omicron BA4 and BA5 increasing in places like the UK, the US, Canada and in Portugal, where hospitalisations and deaths are starting to spike again.

The status quo is simply not good enough, but we could not get an answer out of the Government about what the plan is. It seems to us that the plan is only to make people sick over and over again. No matter how hard we tried, we could not get the Premier - or the Director of Public Health from my reading of it - to acknowledge that these protections are

important and the Government could be doing a lot more to better inform Tasmanians about how serious this virus is, and the things they can do to protect themselves.

If you go to the Public Health website and look at the information for people with disabilities, for example, there is almost nothing in there about how to prevent infection. What people with disabilities have assistance with is what to do if, and when, they get infected. This is a terrible disservice to our people.

I asked the Premier about life living with COVID-19 for people who are immunocompromised or living with a disability. Again, a vague acknowledgement of the fact that a lot of people are now living a half-life, or afraid to go outside, but nothing from this Premier and health minister about how we might reset COVID policy to better protect vulnerable people, but better protect Tasmanians at a population level, given that we are approaching one in three Tasmanians who have been infected.

It has been two and a half years now. We now have hundreds of peer-reviewed studies in journals confirming that SARS-COV-2 can cause those who are infected - whether they are vaccinated or not - permanent brain, organ, tissue, vascular and neural damage. It is not even debated any more by anyone serious and independent in the field, there are just so many studies. It is just what this virus does. We are letting our children, young people and Tasmanians more broadly down if we do not reset our COVID policy.

In closing, I acknowledge that the Premier answered a question about restoration of the House, and that he has asked the Tasmanian Electoral Commission for advice. I hope he has asked the Electoral Commission for advice on both models for restoring to 35, because if it is his intention to reset electoral boundaries - seven seats with five members - we will name up publicly what we believe is to again be an attempt to shut out the Greens and independent voices, to cost the Tasmanian Electoral Commission a lot of time and money, and to rewrite the boundaries of seats without any good reason.

We also remind the Premier that we have a bill on the table which is a straight fix to undo the damage that was done in 1998. We are in all likelihood going to bring that on for debate.

Time expired.

Dr WOODRUFF - Chair, on behalf of the Greens I spent a large amount of time in the Health Estimates section speaking to the Minister for Health and Mental Health and Wellbeing about funding for critical workforce issue gaps. I want to note that the Greens were really the only voice in Estimates talking about COVID-19 this year.

Across all of our health services is the reality that we are in a global pandemic. What I found on behalf of Tasmanians who are concerned about where the Government's mismanagement is leading us as a community, were desperately concerning responses from the minister and from the Director of Public Health. I was truly shocked at the lack of interest from the Minister for Health and the Director of Public Health about the long-term complications of the coronavirus, of SARS-CoV-2.

It is abundantly clear from Dr Veitch's comments that he has completely washed his hands of any responsibility, as our Director of Public Health, of taking either a precautionary approach to making sure that people do not get infected in the first place, or of investigating

the burden of disease - which is coming like a train for us as a state, as a result of the extremely high number of people who are infected. It is very clear from Dr Veitch's comments that he has decided to retreat into a burrow and he is no longer the person who was responsible for putting Tasmanians' health first and foremost over the first two years of the pandemic.

What has happened in Tasmania is that we have decided our Director of Public Health can go back underground and sit in an office somewhere and give zero advice to this Government about how we should be dealing with reducing the incredibly high number of people who every single day are becoming infected with what can potentially be a seriously disabling and deadly virus.

What we heard again and again in response to the questions I asked about what we know about the post-viral complications of long-COVID and the long-term complications that can unfold in months and years after a person is infected, what we know about the risk to the community and how the public health response is being crafted in response to that information, was that the Director of Public Health said, 'We're just listening to AHPPC, we take our orders from AHPPC.' We discovered there is no long-term planning in our response at all to the known seriously disabling complications of being infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

The minister said, 'We've been focusing on the immediate needs of Tasmanians and ensuring that we have the health system and services as prepared as possible', and he said, 'That's worked very well to date.' Chair, that might have worked by the single and only measure the Government is using, which is to keep people out of hospitals, but it has not worked at all to protect people from becoming infected with the virus in the first place. The minister and the Director of Public Health both fail to understand the potentially incredibly serious long-term risks. Eventually I managed to force Dr Veitch really to actually put some of the things on the table. He was very reluctant to admit that there is indeed a huge body of research on the long-term complications of SARS-CoV-2 infection.

He talked about cardiovascular risk, changes to microvasculature and potential neurological impacts on immunological markers that can contribute to ongoing infections and reduced lung function. All of these things are potentially serious, but at a population level, which Dr Veitch is responsible for, these things will come back in the months and years ahead of us in increased numbers of people going to hospital for a whole range of heart diseases. People will be appearing with diabetes. Young children will be more likely to be at risk of diabetes. The neurological conditions, the increases potentially in Alzheimer's disease - if left untreated, these will all ultimately end up in hospitalisations.

The Government is simply looking at a short-term measure of the number of people who are being reported every single day as being cases of COVID-19 and numbers of people in hospital. Thanks to the Government's failed response, 173 000 Tasmanians have been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and it is abundantly clear that Dr Veitch is essentially applying a herd immunity process and has not accounted for the reality that people can be reinfected with the virus. I asked Dr Veitch about the waning efficacy of vaccines in the community, which is a known effect of our vaccinations - they do not last forever; the protection is not high forever. I asked him what the proportion of it was and what he expected it would be by the end of the winter and he said:

The honest answer is I don't think I know. I don't think that's currently knowable and it's best not to speculate.

Wrong. It is actually known. At a general population level, we have information about different brands of vaccine and they wear off after a certain amount of time. It is simple maths to work out when the majority of people in the over 50-year-old age group had their booster and look at how that is going to be dropping off over time. That is the job of the department. It is the job of the Director of Public Health to make sure that research is being done. We need to know the risk of reinfection and when different population groups are at risk of reinfection because it is clear that people can be reinfected sometimes within a month of having previously been infected with COVID-19. There is no care at all by this Government to protect people from being infected in the first place. This is an appalling lack of care for the community.

The minister refuses to admit that there is no attention being put into wearing masks for protection. He said, 'We're not discouraging people'. How pathetic is that? What sort of a Public Health response is that? In the middle of a pandemic with 173 000 people infected, the Minister for Health says, 'We're not discouraging people from wearing masks.' How weak and how dangerous, when we have new variants that are appearing, we have a government that has decided to stop taking any form of Public Health community-wide protections. Essentially, there is nothing, so we are wandering around at risk of reinfected ourselves, with the only strategy being to have vaccinations.

The minister was clear, when I asked, that a huge proportion of the population is not even properly vaccinated. Nearly 50 per cent of 5 to 11-year-olds are unprotected; nearly 17 per cent of 12 to 15-year-olds are not protected; 30 per cent of over 50-year-olds and 30 per cent of 16 to 50-year-olds. That is a terrible approach to looking after Tasmanians.

Time expired.

Ms DOW - Chair, I begin my contribution on the first hearing that I attended which was with the Premier. One point I want to make about that is in relation to the Burnie Court. When I asked the Premier about whether he would rule out the Mooreville Road site, he was not clear about whether he would or not, and made reference to the fact that I was passionate about this particular project because it is in my patch. It is actually in your patch too, Premier. The people and the business community of Burnie want some answers on what your Government's next steps are on this very important community project.

I put on notice again the need for there to be an update to the community about the progress made by the Government around the expressions of interest process. The Premier did undertake for that to be made available towards the end of June/July. I am calling on him to make that known sooner so people can have a good understanding of what the Government's next steps are and whether in fact they will rule out moving the Burnie Court complex to Mooreville Road.

The other point I want to make on this matter is in relation to the petition which was tabled here with almost 1200 signatures on it opposing that move by the Government to move the court complex. We still do not have a response from the Government to that petition and that is overdue so I want to put the Government on notice about that as well.

I will now move to the Health portfolio and make the comment again that we had the time allocated reduced this year across the Health Estimates process. That was disappointing because the level of concern and the issues across the Health portfolio and the Mental Health and Wellbeing portfolio have not diminished in the last 12 months: they have in fact increased.

It is not our problem that the Premier undertakes responsibility for the Health portfolio as well as being the Premier of Tasmania. That is a responsibility that he has chosen to take on himself. There should have been additional time allocated to the Health portfolio Estimates process, and we did see a reduction in hours.

In my contribution today, I will not get to nearly all of the issues that were covered off because they were enormous. I also make the point to the Greens that I asked and continue to raise a number of questions about the Government's response to COVID-19.

The first point I want to make is about the cuts to funding in the Budget for Health next financial year, and the response provided by the Premier in the House during question time and also during Estimates about that being funded through the Treasurer's reserve, which actually has less monies allocated this year.

I directly asked the Premier whether he felt that would be an adequate amount of money for the state's response to COVID-19. I also went directly to the Director of Public Health, Dr Mark Veitch, who was unable to answer that question at the time, or directed not to be able to answer that question at the time. That is disappointing, because I would have liked to have heard first-hand from him what he thinks about that allocation of resources, and if that will be enough for our vaccination program, our testing clinics and the whole-of-government response to COVID-19. Arguably, we are having to respond to much more in our community than what we have in the past. It would have been good to understand whether or not that is an adequate amount of funding. Hopefully the Premier will provide some more information about that during his contribution.

We talked a lot about the state of Ambulance Tasmania. There was a bit of robust interaction about the cost of ambulance ramping and the cost of bed block to our hospital system. I questioned the Premier about a monthly report that was provided by Ambulance Tasmania. He did not seem to be aware of the important information that was detailed in that report. As things progressed, it became apparent that there are over 14 000 Tasmanians ramped for over 20 000 hours at a cost of \$3 million per annum to Ambulance Tasmania. The financial consequence of that is incredibly significant - but what is the human consequence of that?

The Premier was not very forthcoming in Estimates in talking about that. He was not able to provide a figure for bed block and the cost of bed block, which is an operational cost, as was explained on the day by Professor Tony Lawler. The Government should have some idea about what bed block costs the Health system each year. It was disappointing that the Premier was not able to provide that answer.

That leads me to our health workforce, which there has been a lot of discussion about in the House this morning. We want action now, not in 2040. I acknowledge that a workforce strategy is being developed by the Government, but we need action now. It is one of the most serious risks to our health system, and right across our public sector - retaining our workforce, valuing our workforce. You speak quite proudly about the increased numbers of staff who have been employed across the Health service, but you do not talk about those who have left the service, or the vacancies that exist across the service. We did not get any answers about that.

We also heard that you will not set up a crisis taskforce on the health workforce. That is disappointing as well. We talked about your commitment to increased bed numbers across the

state. To date you have only delivered 131 of the 250 that are promised at the Royal Hobart Hospital. We also heard about the unfilled shifts and fatigue alerts at Ambulance Tasmania, and that there was nothing new in the Budget to support the mental health and wellbeing of our paramedics and volunteers across Tasmania.

We had questions about delays to infrastructure upgrades at the Launceston General Hospital and the Royal Hobart Hospital. There is only \$50 million in the Budget for the Launceston General Hospital master plan - your signature policy at the last state election. There should \$580 million there. Where is the rest of the money? When can people expect improved services at the Launceston General Hospital, Premier? The Burnie ambulance station and the Glenorchy ambulance station have blown out in time frames.

With mental health and wellbeing, we talked a couple of times about the changes to accessing inpatient mental health services in the north and the north-west, and the significant change that that was, and the way information about that change was provided to the community, which was terrible - by memo to start, not a public announcement.

We also talked about Caramore House. I was very pleased to hear their funding has been extended to June 2023. That issue was raised with me by members of our electorate, Premier, who are concerned about the residents of Caramore House having a place to live as of June. It is good to hear that uncertainty has been resolved.

We talked about access to mental health beds across the state, particularly for our young people, and the fact that there are not any in the north-west. You were unable to provide any certainty about when there will be dedicated mental health beds available for young people on the north-west coast.

You talked about the Spencer redevelopment, which is a long way away. We know there are pressures on Spencer Clinic right now, as there are across all mental health services across the state. Something that was startling to me - particularly as the new bilateral agreement comes into play and there are additional services to be provided - is that across the public service and community-based services, there is an estimated shortfall of 350 staff mental health workers across the state. Where are we going to get those staff from, Premier? You were not able to provide an answer to that in Estimates either.

We also talked about the fact that there is no certainty about stage three of the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, and the increased bed capacity that will bring, and improving the hospital's services to the people of southern Tasmania. There does not appear to be any commitment from you to uphold the previous federal Liberal government's commitment on aged-care beds for the west coast. Five or six beds were promised to the west coast community, and they have not been delivered by you, even though the federal Liberal government had auspiced that responsibility to your Government. You were not able to provide any update on when they will in fact be delivered for the west coast.

We also talked about the wages policy, and the fact there are no incentives in this Budget to keep our healthcare workers wanting to stay and work and not leave our healthcare setting as they face increasing pressure. That 2.5 per cent is not enough when we look at the fact that our healthcare workers are the worst paid in the country.

Time expired.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Chair, I thank all members for their contributions today. I will start by thanking all my staff in the Premier's Office and across ministerial services, department heads and the supports across my various responsibilities for their work leading up to and during Estimates. I had 19 hours of scrutiny over two days, which I welcome, as it is very important that government is scrutinised in terms of transparency and accountability.

I was very pleased during the 19 hours of that scrutiny to detail a number of actions that the Government is proceeding with across the Department of Premier and Cabinet, trade, tourism and, importantly, health and mental health and wellbeing, of which I was able to speak during the course of Estimates. We have a clear vision for Tasmania. That is that every Tasmanian needs to be valued, included, encouraged and supported to be the best they can be.

Tasmania's economy has gone from strength to strength under our Government. Global forces and situations outside our control such as the pandemic and the war in Ukraine are placing cost of living pressures on jurisdictions right across the world and around the country. Tasmania is not immune. Cost of living is a subject for discussion. This was a focus for members during Estimates, as it is for our Government.

The Government remains ready to assess further concessions and support that may be needed in relation to energy prices and cost of living pressures. It is what we have always done and it is what we will continue to do. We are already providing a significant amount of support. Our \$305 million over four years in concession support for vulnerable Tasmanians includes \$39 million for water and sewerage concessions, \$185 million for electricity concessions and \$79.3 million for council rate remissions.

We have delivered among the lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation. We were accustomed to price hikes under the previous government, some 65 per cent. We capped prices for four years and last year delivered a \$125 winter energy supplement for 93 000 Tasmanians. We stand ready to do more, when and should we need to. We froze water prices for two years and capped them.

During COVID-19, we waived school levies at a cost of some \$14 million to relieve families. We also waived all school debts for 2019 and prior.

This year's Budget continues the Government's expanded Student Assistance Scheme which waives the cost of school levies. Now one in two students are no longer paying school levies. We are providing free sanitary items in all Tasmanian government schools. This year's Budget continues our \$1.4 million investment into expanding the school lunch pilot to an additional 30 schools so that all students have access to nutritious food.

We increased funding over several years for emergency food relief, another topic of discussion. This year's Budget provides \$300 000 to support additional place-based food relief initiatives. We are continuing our \$5 million program for additional laptops and iPads, supporting education costs and reducing the digital divide. We are providing ongoing support to NILS Tasmania to help Tasmanians access financial support. We have provided funding through the Family Assistance Program to provide direct relief to families suffering financial hardship and we have continued support to people with families impacted by the pandemic.

We have introduced the FuelCheck app to increase fuel price transparency and lobbied successfully for halving of the fuel excise. We have doubled the value of the Ticket to Play

sports vouchers. We are delivering the lowest third-party car insurance premiums in the nation and introduced quarterly payments to help manage the household budget, which has been taken up by Tasmanians in droves. On 20 May I was advised there have been over 189 000 quarterly registration transactions processed, equating to around 35 per cent of all registration transactions. We are delivering \$220 million in land tax relief.

Throughout this pandemic, we have delivered the largest social and economic support package per capita in the country. When it comes to wage negotiations, another subject of discussion, we will negotiate with unions in good faith ensuring that all wage negotiation outcomes are fiscally sustainable and within the capacity of the Budget and the forward Estimates.

The work of the commission of inquiry was the subject for discussion and it is incredibly important. Understandably this was raised during Estimates as the commission's work expands governments across years: governments of all persuasions and colours. We want safe and inclusive communities in Tasmania, where children and young people are kept safe. This is one of my personal priorities and a priority of every person in this chamber.

We have not waited for the commission of inquiry's recommendations to act. We have already announced a range of measures that are funded in the state Budget, as well as a number of additional actions we will take before the commission hands down its report. During Estimates, I announced that the Department of Premier and Cabinet will lead the implementation and reporting of a suite of measures which include building shared capability for serious investigations across the State Service that will put a focus on trauma-informed practice, improving the Right To Information process across the State Service so that the victims/survivors who are going through the RTI process will have a more transparent and supportive experience that causes no further distress to them, and consideration of legislative solutions and other initiatives that will make it easier to share information about risks to children, including looking at whether issues of concern, practice, and culture are creating unnecessary barriers.

Putting all our major child-related services and skills into one department will go a long way, practically and culturally, to break down these barriers and break down the silos that we spoke of in Estimates with the establishment of the new Department of Education, Children, and Young People.

The priorities of our Government are Tasmania's priorities: health, housing, education, and building safe, vibrant, and thriving communities. Over the past six months Tasmania has commenced its transition to living with COVID-19. I acknowledge the sustained efforts since 2020 of our hard-working state servants, those in our department, but also across the state sector, as well as our health services, borders, teachers, education service providers, and our first responders. I have to take issue with the member for Franklin, Dr Woodruff, in her criticism of the Director of Public Health. I utterly disagree with you.

Dr Veitch has been an outstanding member of the public service, from the start of the pandemic, through the pandemic, through the transition through COVID-19 and our recovery. He remains steadfast in providing the very best advice through consultation with the national body through the AHPPC and others, to the state Government. That advice has been well thought through, spot on -

Dr Woodruff - He is not providing any advice on long-COVID-19 complications and he admitted that. He is not providing anything.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIR - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - and continues to be.

Dr Woodruff - Why are you not asking about that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will defend Dr Veitch to the utmost of my ability. When you ask Tasmanians what their view of the way that Public Health, not just Dr Veitch but a large team, has managed the pandemic, they will support the work that has been done by our state servants.

Today I acknowledge all Tasmanians who were recognised in the Queen's birthday awards across the community. My focus in this contribution, given the subject, will be to the people who contributed to Tasmania's response at government level to the pandemic. I congratulate the Department of Premier and Cabinet secretary, Jenny Gale; our Health secretary and state Health commander, Kathrine Morgan-Wicks; Public Health director, Dr Mark Veitch; and state commissioner Darren Hine; and Rob Blackwood. They are outstanding examples of public servants who went above and beyond the call of duty.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1)2022 (No. 23)

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2022 (No. 24)

Reports of Estimates Committee

In Committee

Resumed from above.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Chair, when it comes to the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians there is no bigger priority than health, which is why I retained the Health portfolio when I became Premier. During Estimates we outlined initiatives being undertaken to ensure Tasmanians can access the health care they need where and when they need it, underpinned by record investment and resources, including more doctors, nurses, paramedics and allied health professionals. I also announced that a new Tasmanian Health Senate will be launched to bring together health expertise to provide advice on issues of statewide and strategic importance to the health system. The Tasmanian Health Senate will provide clinical leadership and advice on system-wide planning and delivery of health services to the Tasmanian community, bringing together clinicians, carers, consumers and the community to discuss and debate health matters statewide and system-wide which will inform quality healthcare planning and delivery for all Tasmanians.

I also spoke in Estimates about a commitment to the establishment of a wellbeing framework. Wellbeing touches our whole community, across the economy, health, education, climate, social inclusion and connection, identity and belonging, good governance and access to services. Having a set of wellbeing indicators will help prioritise where we need to invest

more of our time, energy and creativity to make a real difference to Tasmanians who currently are not sharing the benefits of our prosperity in the way they deserve and indeed should.

The past years have been unlike any we have experienced for generations so I can appreciate why mental health was also a focus during Estimates, and as Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing it is a very important focus of mine. We are building upon our long-term vision to transform our mental health system. We have done an enormous amount of work and made considerable inroads and investments, but there is more to be done, particularly when it comes to that focus on strong community support systems. Following the early success of our pilot emergency co-response model in southern Tasmania, PACER, we are locking in our support of this initiative with an additional \$9 million over three years. Further to this, the department will commence work on a north-west pilot to operate from 2023 as we progress our vision for a statewide model. We have allocated \$6.5 million for the ongoing Mental Health Reform Program which will allow for the rollout of adult acute care and continuing care models in the north and north-west, providing alternative services for people to avoid acute hospitalisation where it is not necessary.

Further, we will deliver \$1.5 million over three years to continue the implementation and valuation of Tasmania's overarching mental health plan, Rethink 2020, including \$200 000 for the initial implementation of a new Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy in 2022-23; \$50 000 to upgrade the consumer experience of service system; \$375 000 for Connecting with People suicide prevention training; \$375 000 for the employment of LGBTIQ+ peer worker navigators; and \$500 000 to improve access by increasing community awareness of mental health services and supports. We are also continuing to roll out our \$45.2 million investment for our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, or CAMHS reforms and service, which is so crucial. This year will see the first stages of new services established, including a youth forensics service and a specialist service for children in out-of-home care.

As we continue implementing the recommendations of the Roy Fagan review report, the Budget provides some \$20.5 million over the next four years to further improve patient care and outcomes through our Older Persons Mental Health Service. This funding will enable our Government to significantly improve the overall level of care and treatment provided to older Tasmanians with a specific focus on mental illness, including increased community-based services statewide.

Funding is also provided to expand the capacity of the grief support services of New Mornings in Ulverstone and funding is allocated to deliver the new mental health precinct at the LGH, and adjacent to the North West Regional Hospital, as well as the completion of the Peacock Centre, which had a huge setback on Christmas Eve last year with the fire, which was devastating. The St Johns Park redevelopment will provide 27 new mental health beds and integration hubs for the co-location of Community Services, as well as an eating disorders treatment centre at the St Johns Park site.

Our investments prioritise a best-practice approach to building a contemporary and integrated model of mental health care across our entire state so that people can get the right care and support at the right place and at the right time.

Our Government's plan to deliver improved housing services and increase supply of social and affordable housing also took another significant step forward last week. Earlier this year we announced the creation of a new statutory authority, the cornerstone of our 10-year

\$1.5 billion housing package that will deliver 10 000 new homes by 2032 and create the most cohesive housing and homelessness service in the country.

As part of this process, our Government announced during Estimates that it was committed to providing opportunities for community involvement in the development and ongoing review of government policy and legislation. Written submissions are now invited on the consultation drafts of the Housing Tasmania Bill 2022 and the Housing Tasmania Consequential Amendments Bill 2022.

The consultation drafts make a number of changes, including establishing a skills-based board for the housing authority and providing it with powers and the functions needed to meet the housing commitments made by government. Homelessness services will be a core function of the authority to ensure we meet the needs of vulnerable Tasmanians. The housing authority will consolidate those efforts across government to increase housing supply, deliver more affordable homes and units and deliver the stock of houses and services required by Tasmanians in need. It will also have powers and responsibilities to allow to effectively acquire, develop and manage housing and urban renewal projects.

As part of our Government's vision for Tasmania we want to ensure we invest in safe, vibrant, thriving and inclusive communities. To do this means investing in our strengths to create more opportunities, particularly across our regions. As a government, we know that by investing in opportunities that create jobs and strengthen our economy, we have a greater ability to invest in areas that matter to Tasmanians such as health, housing and education, to name a few.

I am conscious of the fact that I am coming to the end of my 20 minutes but I will pick up on an earlier comment by the Leader of the Opposition regarding Estimates and questions on notice to be returned in a timely matter. My information is that on Friday 10 June at around 5.41 p.m., attached responses to questions on notice from the Premier were sent to the Leader of the Opposition and others in parliament. I stand corrected if that is not the case. I hope everyone received those answers in a timely manner. I wanted to ensure that I raised that issue.

Time expired.

Mr WINTER - I am sure we will review the emails, Premier, to check that the answers to those questions on notice have been received. Chair, I hope it is right that the Premier has provided answers back to the committee, but that will only be the Premier's; we are still waiting on answers from a number of ministers to questions that were put on notice. We are hoping we could have them before those portfolios are scrutinised through this process. As the Leader of the Opposition said, it is important that we have the information if we are going to scrutinise it.

Chair, I was not lucky enough to sit in the committee whilst the Premier was being scrutinised, but I have read the transcript of *Hansard* and also the topics that were covered.

The first one I want go through is the COVID-19 response and a few things that link back to the Budget. We were told in this place at the end of last year that Tasmania was ready for reopening. We were repeatedly told that Tasmania was ready - that we had systems and processes in place ready for the border reopening. What we found - and this is not a matter of contention, because Tasmanians lived through it - was that we were not ready at all.

In fact, Tasmanians were the ones who sat in incredibly long queues waiting for a PCR test. Tasmanians were the ones who did not have access to Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs). Tasmanians were the ones who lost all confidence to go out in public. One of the best events I have ever been to in Tasmania was the Taste of Summer festival in December last year, which was fantastic, but sadly there were not many Tasmanians there to experience and enjoy it. It was the pinnacle of Tasmanian produce, hospitality, weather, and it was a fantastic experience - but you could tell Tasmanians had lost confidence that the Government was ready, that there were the right controls in place. That led to a shadow lockdown that took hold just after Christmas and through January.

Unfortunately, the result of that was not just for the organiser of that fantastically well-organised event, but for businesses right across the state. They were the ones feeling the effects of a government that had not been properly prepared, that did not have the right systems in place when it came to PCR testing. It had not ordered enough RATs. That also went to the former prime minister Scott Morrison, but that was the experience -

Ms O'Connor - Say that again; it sounded great.

Mr WINTER - Former prime minister Scott Morrison, Ms O'Connor.

That was the reality they were living through at the time.

We also had the commitment here from the former premier, Mr Gutwein, talking about schools being reopened before or after children were vaccinated. We went ahead and went back to school, and we know that has been a significant part of the transmission. Part of the plan was about windows that opened appropriately or as intended. We have all been cold in this Chamber today as the heating has not worked, but as I sit in this place I also thought about our students in our schools who are operating with windows that open as intended on a day in June that is particularly cold, and did so all last week as well. With ventilation systems and windows that open, we know a lot of that work is yet to be completed - and schools, therefore, were not ready as well.

I also note from reading *Hansard* that the topic of Tasmania's AFL entry and the floating stadium in Hobart was covered. The situation that we are now in - and this has been well covered across Tasmania, particularly in the northern papers in the last couple of days - is that this floating stadium appears to have been announced too early. We know from the RTIs that Labor received that the announcement of the floating stadium was done basically on the back of an envelope - that the Government had not done its homework when it came to understanding what the costs were. We still do not know what the costs were. We know now that about \$1.3 million will go into actually doing the work to find out whether this is feasible; whether it is affordable.

We also have speculation that there might be some private investment into this floating stadium. I am thinking about this from an economic point of view and wondering what sort of pitch this is going to be for private investment into a stadium. Private investment within public stadiums across Australia is rare; it is not commonly done. When you are promising to play five or six games in southern Tasmania - if that is what the promise is - and the rest is still in York Park, you are going to have very limited content.

When I hear of the prospect of concerts in Hobart, I wonder exactly how many there could be, and how that is going to turn at least \$750 million - but more likely over \$1 billion - worth of investment into something that has a return on investment for a private investor. It is a very difficult pitch and a very difficult case to be made, but we continue to be reassured that it will not be Tasmanians that pay the entire bill.

I wonder about that. How much of this stadium, if it gets built, will Tasmanians be asked to pay for? I wonder why Tasmanians are expected to pay \$750 million, up to \$1 billion for a stadium, when western Sydney did not have to, and the Gold Coast did not have to. Why is it that Tasmania's dedication and love for AFL football continues to be something that is held against us when it comes to these negotiations? Why is it that Tasmanians have to pay? Why have we been waiting so long, because we love it so much? In what other circumstance in life does it happen that because you want something so much, it gets more difficult to get?

We have gone from having the former premier, Mr Gutwein, with his chest-beating style, going to Melbourne to talk to the CEO of the AFL, Gill McLachlan, to having the new Premier, Mr Rockliff, standing meekly beside the CEO of the AFL and seemingly agreeing that if we are going to have an AFL team, we need to build a \$1 billion stadium here in Hobart. That is what it looked like, Premier. That is what it looked like on TV - that there was now an acceptance from the Government that the AFL bid, despite you having said within Estimates that it does not include a stadium, that now apparently it does!

Here we are in Tasmania, the only state that is required to build a \$1 billion stadium to get an AFL team - the first one in history that has been required to do that - after states like Queensland and New South Wales, which do not love AFL football like we do, get one handed to them: not just handed to them; they also get a bunch of cash to accept an AFL team.

In response, we offer \$150 million over 10 years, which we supported - but then there is the add-on of at least \$750 million, potentially over \$1 billion, for a floating stadium in Hobart for an AFL team, thanks to at least in part, and potentially in full, Tasmanian taxpayers. I do not understand how that is at all fair or equitable to Tasmanian football lovers, just because we love the game, and just because we have been desperate for this team for such a long time.

The other topic I want to cover is ministerial accountability. During Estimates, the Leader of the Opposition asked about the potential conflict of interest held by the former minister Jane Howlett while she was minister for sport. Ms White asked, 'Premier, do you believe that Jane Howlett had a significant undisclosed potential conflict of interest when she was the minister for sport?' The Premier said, 'No, I have not seen, nor am I aware of any evidence to support that.' The line of questioning went on: 'Have you directly asked Jane Howlett about these allegations?' and the Premier said, 'No, I have not.' Chair, I put on the record the comparison between this Premier not being willing to investigate and premier Hodgman, who did investigate Adam Brooks, who did investigate Sarah Courtney, and on both occasions found there was a case to be heard.

Time expired.

Mr O'BYRNE - Chair, I will not take my full allocation of time - well, once I get going, I might.

It is always a privilege to have the opportunity in Estimates to cross-examine, as best you can, within the forms of the committee and within the rules of debate, the document that the premier of the day puts their name to for their vision across the forward Estimates and the priorities that the Government allocates.

It is an imperfect process, and I have been quite critical of the Estimates structure. I believe we do need to think of a better way to do it. It gets narrowed down. I had that view when in government.

The amount of work that goes into preparing for those hearings from the department, the amount of time and resources it takes - and they do a wonderful job - but it gets narrowed down to a couple of key moments and a couple of key questions. Everyone says you cannot get political in politics, yet everything we do is political, every issue we raise is important. Whether there is an element of sensationalism, that is the way it is at times. Unfortunately a lot of work potentially goes to waste.

Having that one moment, that two hours or that half hour every 12 months to prosecute the state Budget and to ask questions of departments around expenditure and about priority, and comparing that to what they predicted they will spend and what they actually spend and cross-examining the priorities of the ministers in those portfolios, there should be a better way to do it.

The federal Senate has worked out a way with standing committees where referrals can be made and where it is not only the one-off in a year where everything is concertinaed and pressured into that moment. There is a better way of doing that. This House should consider some of those questions. Unfortunately, there were so many areas of the Budget that people would have liked to have had good conversations about. It is in the public interest that those conversations are had in a more transparent and open way, with people from the department explaining levels of expenditure and reasons why things have or have not taken place. There is always an element of politics about it. That should not be used in a pejorative way. The people of Tasmania could get a lot more out of these hearings if they were structured in a different way and not so concertinaed into the structure we have at the moment.

Two things I will refer to are in relation to the Premier's contribution, where there was significant to and fro across the table around the cost of living. This is a crucial issue for Tasmanians and there is no doubt that there are a number of concessions and programs that the Government and previous governments have put in place which make a difference.

One of the issues I raised was some of the cynical approach to these concessions. I asked the Premier about the two winter energy supplements coinciding with election years. It would have been nice to have the Premier acknowledge that they were political initiatives. He confirmed that they were two payments made only in election years since 2014, being 2018 and 2021. It is remarkable. The Energy minister this morning in question time said in the year they put in a winter energy supplement there was a seven or 11 per cent decrease in household prices.

If there was an 11 per cent increase last year, the justification, or the defence, for a winter energy supplement when dealing with prices does not stack up at all. In dealing with that question, the Premier could not avoid the obvious. He confirmed that the only two times in the life of the Hodgman-Gutwein-Rockliff governments, they have initiated a winter energy supplement with all of the nice words about wanting to look after concession card holders and

people who are doing it tough. He acknowledged in that answer that it only matters to them in election years.

That takes the shine off everything, Premier. You have to own that, as the Leader of this Government, that you make political decisions yet couch them in this hand-wringing, bleeding-heart approach, that this is the year we care about people, but not last year, not the year before and definitely not next year. I facetiously made the comment that the only way people would get a winter energy supplement would be when you call an election.

That was one of the key outtakes for me from the Premier's contribution. That was the most disappointing. He knew what it was all about but he could not bring himself to acknowledge that they were political initiatives, not genuine heartfelt initiatives to try to help people doing it tough.

The other issue of note was the public sector wages policy and the unravelling of the state Budget. They say the state budget is only current the moment you announce it and from then on it changes. Nothing could be truer in terms of the state Government wages policy. You know you have massive challenges. You have some of the lowest paid fireies in the country, some of the lowest paid nurses, some of the lowest paid teachers. The cost of living is going through the roof. People are really struggling. There has been wage austerity for way too long at a time when the Premier was saying we are in the golden years. The Premier did not deal with some of the structural issues facing our public sector workforce and the fact that wage parity has and always will be an issue for Tasmanian public sector workers.

It was an issue that was addressed in 2004 by the Bacon-Lennon government, where the hard work was done in the first five or six years of that government to pay off the debt of Tony Rundle and Ray Groom. In that one year, when the economy was good, when the budget had a strong bottom line, there was a commitment to our public sector workers for their wage austerity over the years and acknowledgement that wage parity had to be dealt with. Some classifications in the public sector had close to a 25 per cent wage increase. That only got them from being the lowest paid to the midrange across the country in terms of wage parity for the skills and professions that they undertook.

This is the party of the market. The market is clear on the mainland. We are way behind it and we are losing good people. We will potentially lose more good people. It restricts our ability to attract and retain staff. We know other jurisdictions are already offering \$3000 and \$5000 bonuses to key staff in the health sector across different states. Victoria is the latest state government offering bonuses.

People will not come to Tasmania to work in these professions unless the wage is comparable. Do not tell them the cost of living is cheaper down here. It is a beautiful place, it is attractive, it is a great community but the cost is the same, if not more, than in many other places. The Premier tried to have it both ways: that the 2.5 per cent in the Budget was the wages policy but it was not the wages policy.

We do not know what the state Government wages policy is for our public sector workers apart from the glib statement that we will negotiate in good faith but we have to be able to afford it. The golden years that the previous Premier said we were facing refused to address some of the structural challenges facing our workforce, where you will not have a functioning health, education and emergency service delivery unless you deal with these structural

problems of wages and conditions. We need to show respect to those workers who do that work.

The Government has unravelled its own Budget within days of it being delivered. It has no answer. It was clear in the answer that it will force nurses, firies, teachers and other public sector workers to take industrial action to get a fair outcome. That is not good enough. I said I was not going to take 10 minutes and I am just under by two seconds.

Time expired.

Estimates of the Premier, Minister for Tourism, Minister for Trade, Minister for Health and Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing agreed to.

DIVISIONS 5, 7, 11, 12, 14

Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Minister for Planning.

[3.00 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER - I am amazed, Chair. I thought they would have been jumping to get up.

First, I congratulate our Treasurer on bringing on such a wonderful first budget and for how he has responded to questions in Estimates hearings. The Treasurer is clearly across the Treasury portfolio and budget issues, unlike some. As the Treasurer said, he has delivered a comprehensive budget and a responsible budget. It is a budget focusing on strengthening Tasmania's future by delivering for all Tasmanians and supporting the Tasmanian community. Our strong budget management will allow us to invest in essential services including health, education and housing and assist vulnerable Tasmanians with the cost of living.

Reflecting the Tasmanian Government's priorities, Health and Education account for almost 60 per cent of budget expenditure over the next four years. The 2022-23 Budget and forward Estimates will invest a record \$11.2 billion into our health system and into the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians. The Budget includes more than \$8.5 billion for Education to ensure our children and young people are getting the right start in life. It also supports the most vulnerable Tasmanians, with more than \$305 million provided in concessions for those who need help meeting the cost-of-living pressures.

The 2022-23 Budget invests \$5.6 billion in next-generational infrastructure for Tasmania, which builds better communities, provides better services, opens more opportunities and creates more jobs. This Budget continues our investment into social and affordable housing in homelessness initiatives. Through this Budget and over the forward Estimates the Government will invest up to \$538 million into social and affordable housing and homelessness initiatives, with \$204 million in 2022-23 alone. This investment is part of a massive 10-year \$1.5 billion housing package which will build 10 000 new homes by 2032; no mean feat. The infrastructure investment also includes \$731 million for the new Bridgewater bridge, the biggest transport infrastructure project in Tasmanian history which will also improve safety, reduce travel times and support local jobs in Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is committed to the sustainable and responsible management of the state's economy and budget. As promised in last year's budget, the Budget will return a net operating surplus over the forward Estimates and is forecast to return to a net

operating balance surplus of \$19.1 million in 2023-24, increasing to \$32.2 million in 2024-25 and \$30.5 million in 2025-26.

Given the uncertainty of COVID-19, the Budget also continues to provide the flexibility to ensure we can respond to the impact of the pandemic, with \$300 million included in the Treasurer's Reserve in the 2022-23 Budget and across the forward Estimates. In Tasmania we will continue to have the lowest level of net debt in the nation, the second-lowest on a per capita basis and among the lowest share of our economy. As the Treasurer said in the budget speech, it is a budget that shows we can lead with both our hearts and our minds to secure a future that delivers for all Tasmanians. Because of our responsible management, the Government is getting the budget back on track.

I was particularly interested to hear details of the investment in this year's Budget into road safety. I know that as a government we are doing all we can to help reduce fatalities and serious injuries on our roads and it was encouraging to hear the next steps in the ongoing road safety campaign. The Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport updated the committee on the government's delivery of a new fleet of automated traffic enforcement cameras. Eight mobile speed cameras will complement the existing 10 fixed-speed cameras currently operating around Tasmania. According to independent research, the program can be expected to reduce Tasmania's fatal and serious injuries by up to 10 per cent. The Treasurer, Mr Ferguson, outlined how this Budget invests a further \$9.3 million over the next three years into this technology, in addition to the ongoing investment into road safety. This extra funding will expand the number of cameras to 16 and introduce extra reinforcement measures such as detection of illegal mobile phone use and the lack of seat belts. The implementation of an enhanced automotive enforcement program is deliverable under the Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy.

The second action plan under the strategy, the Towards Zero Action Plan 2020-24, invests more than \$75 million in road safety over five years and outlines 42 specific actions. One of these actions and a vitally important one is the delivery of a package of enhancements to the Graduated Licensing System, or GLS. I was pleased to hear the minister describe these measures to improve safety outcomes for young and novice drivers, who are over-represented in our crash statistics. The enhancements strengthen safety measures in the licensing system but removes the red tape aspects. Some of these improvements include supervised log book hours increased from 50 to 80, including 15 hours of night driving; a complete ban on mobile phone interaction during the learner and P1 licence period to remove any distractions; and peer passenger restrictions have been introduced for P1 licence holders under the age of 25, again to limit the distractions to new solo drivers, a very good initiative.

A more streamlined process has been introduced which is particularly helpful for those in regional areas, reducing the number of visits to Service Tasmania, and reducing fees. A key focus of the GLS enhancements is the introduction of the Plates Plus platform, providing an online learning environment that includes interactive road rules, a new driver knowledge test and hazard perception test. Road trauma is the second leading cause of death for Tasmanians aged 17 to 25, so any improvements in road safety education and training are most welcome.

The investment in road and bridge infrastructure in the Budget and forward Estimates was described by the Treasurer and minister responsible as a step-change. I would describe it as a game-changer and I would like to comment on some of the investments that will particularly benefit my constituents in the electorate of Lyons.

Regarding the South East Traffic Solution, anyone who has travelled to Sorell would see the grand improvements, especially the new airport roundabout situation. This will make huge improvements to the lives of commuters from the growing areas of Sorell and the southern beaches in terms of travel time, safety and amenity. The Sorell area, including the southern beaches communities at Dodges Ferry, Carlton, Lewisham and Primrose Sands, has one of the highest population growth rates in Tasmania. Nearly \$250 million is budgeted to complete the series of projects that make up the South East Traffic Solution over the Budget and forward Estimates.

Anyone who has driven from Hobart and along the Arthur Highway cannot have helped but notice the transformation already underway. Two of the projects underway, the Sorell southern bypass and the Midway Point interchange, will be completed mid-year, while the airport interchange will be completed later this year. The Tasman Highway duplication between the Hobart Airport interchange and the Midway Point Causeway is currently going through the approval process. Environmental investigations and designs are progressing on the Midway and Sorell causeway duplications.

There are many more projects funded in the Budget that will transform our state road and bridge network, including \$786 million for the new Bridgewater bridge. Yes, we are going to deliver it. There is the continuation of the \$565 million Midland Highway Action Plan; \$131 million for the Great Eastern Drive, something that is in desperate need of happening; \$100 million for upgrades to Illawarra Road; and \$50 million for upgrades to the Arthur Highway.

These projects are inter-generational infrastructure investments. I again congratulate the Treasurer on the 2022-23 Budget and his performance at the Estimates hearings.

Time expired.

Mr WINTER - Chair, I rise to make my contribution on the output from the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance and minister for a few other things; I do not have the list in front of me.

My friend and colleague, Dr Broad, would love to be here and he sends his apologies.

It is always a good opportunity for the shadow treasurer - the shadow finance minister in my case - to sit across the table from not just the Treasurer but also the Treasury officials and ask some really legitimate questions regarding how this Budget has been planned, what the plans are going forward, and, in particular, how sustainable the Budget is.

I will start with Treasury, because everything else falls from that portfolio.

The concern we have is that every year the Budget seems to get worse in terms of all of the indicators - the underlying result, the operating result, cash result. In last year's budget speech, we heard the then treasurer, Mr Gutwein, talking about cash surpluses being on the horizon. Well, the cash deficits - I do not have the numbers in front of me - have been buried, as are most of the indicators across the Budget.

You cannot hide the debt. That is really what the concern is: the continuation of the same approach to budgeting from this Government, which is continuing to grow the debt. We know they have taken \$200 million in net cash and reserves that they inherited from Labor in

2014. They have now turned this into a trajectory that is heading towards \$30 billion of debt, if you accept the Treasury forecast within their long-term planning.

Dr Broad asked about this during Estimates, and about how we were tracking compared with Treasury's work on its long-term planning up to 2035. We were told that none of the scenarios that were planned, that were tracked by Treasury or attempted to be modelled by Treasury, mapped exactly where we are now. When I was reading back through *Hansard* I thought about that and wondered exactly what that meant.

There is no attempt within this Budget for any repair of the budget. The stoic continuation of the plan by this Treasurer seems to be at odds with the reality that the budget is not sustainable the way it is. We are running the four-largest deficits in Tasmanian history year after year after year - and they are going up. Every year the deficit is getting higher than the year before. Dr Broad in particular was asking how are you really going to turn this around next financial year? How are we going to go from this escalating deficit position where the deficits go up and up, to all of a sudden, a surplus appears?

If you look at the numbers, the only way that can happen is through some fiscal restraint that appears to defy the record of this Government.

We do have a new Treasurer, so perhaps things will be different - but this financial year the increase in expenditure is about 15 per cent more than the year before, and over a longer period it is almost 8 per cent in terms of average expenditure growth. The Treasurer is now making the prediction and setting a standard for himself that he actually wants to pull that right back. In some cases, if you look at the health budget in particular, there will be less money spent on health next financial year than there is this year.

If you have been following health expenditure in Tasmania or across Australia or the world, you know that is highly unlikely to happen, and could be dangerous if it did; so, you have a natural increase in health spending, but you also now have that on top of a highly inflationary environment that is worldwide and is changing. We are in a very different position to where we have been in over 20 years, with interest rates continuing to climb; with inflation numbers, and CPI increases in Hobart being at 5.8 per cent.

You have a high inflationary environment, or are heading towards one, and you have a Budget that says they will actually cut spending for the first time and so, during a low inflationary environment, the Government has been continuing to escalate its spending, and as we get to a higher inflationary environment, they are going to drop the spending. The proof will be what happens over the next 12 months. I can say whatever I like, but it will really be up to what the Government decides to do.

Will it stick with what it has budgeted and keep its expenditure growth to near record-low levels, as predicted in this year's Budget, or will it stick with what it has been doing, which is high rate-of-expenditure growth? We are about to see what sort of treasurer this Treasurer is in comparison to the previous one. He has called himself an economic rationalist in this place, so we will see for ourselves what that actually means. Irrespective though, even if he does stick with the plan that is in this Budget, we have escalating debt and deficit. If he does not stick with the plan, and does spend faster and more quickly as his predecessor did, then the debt will only be greater.

The only way that this debt will be any lower is probably if, with his infrastructure hat on, he manages to not spend what is in his infrastructure budget, which has been the case in previous budget scenarios where the debt has not actually been as high as we thought because they have not got the infrastructure spend out the door. We do not know what sort of Treasurer we have yet but we are about to find out.

We asked a number of questions about the state of the Budget, how it was tracking, and the fiscal strategies in particular. This is the first time in quite a while, certainly in the life of this Government, that it is now predicting that it will be outside of its own fiscal strategy, and that is to do with superannuation liability and with its debt repayments. A fiscal strategy has been put in place for good reason, and for the first time, the Budget papers actually admit that the Government is not likely to stick with its own fiscal strategy.

This is the fiscal strategy that actually deals with the Government's ability to make its repayments on its debt, and also to keep up with its liability on superannuation. That is a pretty serious issue. In fact, it goes to the heart of the fiscal sustainability of this Budget. Is the Budget sustainable or not? According to that fiscal strategy, the Budget is becoming unsustainable because the interest rate payments and the superannuation liability continue to go up, and will get above 6 per cent of expenditure or revenue, I cannot remember which it is.

These are issues that the Government is going to have to deal with. It is an issue that is very serious. It is an issue that Treasury has been calling out for a while now, through two consecutive fiscal sustainability reports - the last one in 2021 being even worse, or making even more dire predictions than the one before. We have that as our explainer of the situation that we have gotten into. That is just the reality of the situation we are in when it comes to the Tasmanian Budget.

On infrastructure, there was an interesting exchange to read back through. We have a number of projects that have been promised by the Government for a very long time that seem to be getting more and more unlikely to be delivered as time goes by. We have the infamous four-lane Midland Highway promise that was made many elections ago, and Tasmanians are still waiting to see when that will eventually come to pass. We have park-and-ride facilities that are now well and truly behind schedule, particularly in my electorate, near my home town, down at Huntingfield.

Major infrastructure promises have been made to Tasmanians, and it feels like, if you want to see your project, you do not just have to vote for this Government once, you have vote for them at least twice, and sometimes three times.

The underground bus mall and the fifth lane on the Southern Outlet are two that the Government promised a long time ago and has not gotten anywhere near delivering. We still do not know where the underground bus mall is going to go. The position on this is so ridiculous that it is barely worth asking about. This underground bus mall will never be built. It seems to have morphed into something that may be above ground, but there is no determination after more than four years on where this project will go. There is no funding in the Budget for it and there is no agreement through the City Deal or any of the processes about where it would go. It does not seem to reconcile with the rest of the vision on Hobart's traffic solutions that the Government has been trying to move towards.

We have an underground bus mall which has been rumoured to be going under Franklin Square or somewhere near City Hall but we are not exactly sure. At one point it was going to link up to the northern suburbs light rail. That is not happening now either. The northern suburbs light rail was a long time promise not happening. We still do not have a decision on what mode, if any, is going on the northern suburbs transport corridor. The local council and people in the northern suburbs want to see transport solutions out there. If you sat on the Brooker Highway in the morning or in the afternoon, you would know that this is a major issue for a large population.

We have a great opportunity with that site but we have only seen four years of delay with consultant reports after consultant reports, all to get us to the point where the Government is not going to build the northern suburbs light rail. We do not know what transport mode it will pick.

It was interesting to hear the infrastructure answers around Huntingfield. Huntingfield is a housing proposal of this Government. When I re-read *Hansard* from last year's Estimates and this year's Estimates the Treasurer did almost the same speech about whether I supported Huntingfield or not. Unfortunately for people who are waiting for good, quality infrastructure in the Channel, or for people who are waiting on a home, it is not only the minister's rhetoric that has not changed. The situation on the site has not changed either. There are no answers about when the homes are going to be built. There seems no answer on when the structure is going to be built.

The Government, when it proposes developments like this, should propose to build the infrastructure to support the housing, not build the housing and then decide to stick the infrastructure in later.

The Budget papers show the Algonia Road roundabout not being completed until 2027. If the houses are going to be built well before then, we are looking at significant congestion issues. That will make those local residents unhappy. It would be fantastic if we saw the Government get to work as quickly as possible on those projects for those people.

There is a new roundabout, an upgraded roundabout and duplication of the highway at the bypass that needs to be done, but there is a delay in rolling out the infrastructure, a delay around the new roundabout, the discussions and negotiations with the council which boggle the mind. The minister is at pains to say that it was his idea to do the slip-lane. The council put in a condition for a slip-lane to be built when the roundabout is built. Now he has appealed against what he says was his own idea. I am not sure what is going to happen with the timing of the delivery.

The Government cannot build the homes until they build the roundabout. They need to get cracking to build the roundabout so they can build the homes and get more Tasmanians out of tents, out of cars during winter and into homes. That is what it should be all about and what we expect and hope to see.

We also talked in the Estimates about infrastructure for Bruny Island ferries. I asked the question of the department about the amount of noise emanating from the new ferries. The department did not seem to know a lot about it. They received a few queries about it. My discussions with local people of Kettering is that this is quite an issue. It has become an issue that needs to be dealt with, not just by SeaLink.

The Infrastructure minister needs to talk to these people about engineering solutions. The new ferries are welcomed by locals, but they do not want interruption to their lifestyle. Kettering is one of the most fantastic places in Tasmania and this has become an issue that needs to be dealt with. The expectation is that something more would have been done by now.

We talked briefly about the GST and also about the Mersey Community Hospital funding. We are heading towards a situation by 2027 where on both counts our budget is going to be a lot worse off unless these issues are resolved.

For the Mersey Community Hospital, we are going to need to find \$50 million to \$55 million a year, probably a little bit more once the federal government funding deal ends to keep that hospital going. From answers during Estimates we know that the deal will end a little bit earlier than we thought. The last year of that funding agreement will not be a full funding amount. The Government will need to find funding in that year.

That is happening at the same time as the GST no-worse-off agreement comes to an end. That is the deal cut by former Premier Peter Gutwein, that he and the Government publicly supported. Western Australia is a massive beneficiary of that deal while Tasmania is reliant on a no-worse-off guarantee that ends in a few years. We did not support this deal. The Government did. There might not be a signature on the paper, but there was political cover from this Government for Scott Morrison's dirty deal with the GST. It is one of, if not the, worst deal that any Tasmanian government has ever signed up to. It was only allowed because this Government gave in, because this Government gave the political cover to the coalition government to do a deal that will make Tasmania worse off for a long time unless an arrangement is put in place before the end of it.

Ms O'Connor - Why are we not getting some chest-beating about it now though?

Mr WINTER - That is where the chest-beating might come. It is like a lot of things, Ms O'Connor. It appears as though the Government is starting to advocate for Tasmania on the national scene since the election result. The GST should have been above party political politics. The Government should have stood up for us back when that dirty deal was cut. We did not. I hope Tasmanians do not have to live with the consequences. This deal is not one that can continue as it is.

Time expired.

Ms O'CONNOR - I have to agree with Mr Winter, the member for Franklin, on the GST issue. I was somewhat surprised having heard crickets from the former treasurer and the current Treasurer on the issue of basically the end of horizontal fiscal equalisation from 2026-27 and then to see a story on 6 June in the newspaper of Mr Ferguson chest-beating over the GST. Now that we have a new government in Canberra, we have our new Treasurer urging the new federal government to guarantee Tasmania will not be left worse off under looming changes to the distribution of GST revenue to the states.

In this article by journalist Rob Inglis, the obvious is pointed out, that:

Tasmania is extremely reliant on GST payments, which make up about 40 per cent of the state Budget.

There was a deal done that ripped Tasmania off. We had silence from our former premier and treasurer, Mr Gutwein, and we had silence from the new Premier and Treasurer, then we had a new federal government and, lo and behold, suddenly the chest-beating starts. I wish the Treasurer all the very best because that is a looming financial disaster for Tasmania.

Mr Deputy Chair, in relation to the Budget, to be fair to the Liberals - and I do try to be fair - they are dealing with a set of circumstances that are not entirely of their own making. In terms of the superannuation liability, Mr Winter, it was former premier Jim Bacon and then premier Paul Lennon along with treasurers Aird and Crean who, to my memory, raided the super fund and created a problem for future governments. It is an issue for this Government but it was created by a Labor government.

On the level of debt that the state is in, we were party to briefings with Treasury last year where there was a discussion about the state needing to borrow money in order to get through COVID-19 but also a discussion about how cheap money was to borrow then and how borrowings could be invested in intergenerational infrastructure. It was on that basis that we were quite comfortable, so long as it was carefully managed, with the state borrowing some money, but it is about how the borrowings are spent.

Mr Ferguson, the Treasurer, will always see roads and bridges as intergenerational infrastructure and a number of them are, but when you are in the grip of a housing crisis, when people are leaving the island because they cannot find an affordable home, I think it is on the Government of the day to recalibrate its priorities.

You have a budget that has 54 per cent of the infrastructure spend going into roads and bridges and maybe 10 per cent going into the delivery of new social and affordable housing. What we gleaned from the conversation with the minister for Housing, Mr Barnett, is that it is pretty clear to us that the majority of the money that is now retained by the state through the forgiving of the Commonwealth-state Housing debt will not be going to Housing Tasmania to build more social and affordable housing that the state owns in perpetuity, but a very substantial amount of it will be directed towards community housing providers, who we agree do a fantastic job and have helped to lift supply, but there is a looming issue, 30 or 40 years down the track, when the ownership of those homes and whether they are in fact ultimately available for affordable rentals will come into question.

The state has a revenue problem and a looming revenue problem and then we go and cut land tax rates two years running. We asked the Treasurer in his first Estimates as Treasurer what his response was to the very well-regarded economist, Saul Eslake, who said the following in response to yet another cut to land tax to the property class:

It is a myth propagated by the property industry that land taxes affect rents.
They don't. Rents are determined by the interaction of demand and supply
in a land market in the rental housing market.

This has been a well-understood reality of economists for a very long time and yet we had two pieces of land tax legislation go through this place and in each instance the Treasurer said the effect of this would be to put downward pressure on rents. If that was a fact, after the first piece went through last year we would not have seen rents increase to the extent they have, and they are not just jumping up incrementally in \$10 a week increases. We are hearing from

constituents who are being told their rent is going up by \$80, \$100 and \$150 a week, so tight is the housing market.

The first cut to land tax did not do anything to put downward pressure on rents. They kept going up and now we have another land tax cut that is very unlikely to put any downward pressure on rents. I did note with interest in the weekend *Age* there was a discussion about treasurers coming together around potential tax reform. I am interested to know the Treasurer's position on this one, which is a conversation that has been had amongst the tax policy wonks for a long time about the removal of stamp duty and application of a broad-based land tax which you would grandfather in as a more sustainable tax structure. *The Age* newspaper reports that the treasurers will be meeting to discuss this with the new federal Treasurer.

If the Treasurer wants to give us an update on that issue that would be very interesting because he did say, in response to our questions on the fact that Tasmania has very low royalty and licence fees, that he is open to ideas. 'I am a new treasurer', he said, 'I have been there for all of eight weeks and I have not asked for that advice' - and that was when I asked him whether or not he had sought advice on how we might rejig the royalty and licence fees for Tasmania to deliver a better return to the Tasmanian people and a better foundation in the budget. He said he does not intend to soon, 'but I am open to proposals that sustain and grow the economy and jobs and reduce the tax burden on taxpayers wherever possible'.

There will be a bit of an issue come crunch time on the GST if the state is basically cutting state-based taxes and state sources of revenue and then we go to the Commonwealth and say please can we have a little more. I do not know that those two scenarios are going to be tenable to the new federal Treasurer.

Finally, in what became a slightly terse exchange between the Treasurer and me - and I certainly did not mean for it to be terse - I asked him his view on Tasmanian author, James Boyce, who believes the Treasurer misrepresented the casino pokies tax rate and what it meant to Federal Group when he went on radio the day after the state Budget was delivered and said that Federal Group took a \$20 million hit. James Boyce said:

The Tasmanian Treasurer just lied on ABC Hobart about his casino tax cuts. Federal Group is not taking a \$20 million hit, they are not livid. The tax arrangements were first set out by them.

I understand why the Treasurer would take offence at that accusation. He tried to explain his feelings about that and maintain that the Federal Group did take a \$20 million hit, but we are talking here about a corporation which for decades, because it had an exclusive monopoly deal, was raking in millions and indeed in the vicinity of \$1 billion or more out of the pockets of some of our poorest people.

Parliament should remind itself that the casino pokies tax rate, which was negotiated in secret with the Federal Group, is exactly the tax rate that Mulawa Holdings or the Federal Group proposed to the Tasmanian Government before the expiry of the monopoly deed. The Treasurer, like his predecessor, misrepresents the expiry of that monopoly deed. He tries to tell us that it would have just kept going, when in fact it would have taken a letter from the treasurer of the day to inform the Federal Group that the deed was coming to an end and that the rolling extension period was given effect. We do not buy that rubbish and we encourage the Treasurer to be a little more straight up and down about dealings with the Federal Group.

Time expired.

Dr WOODRUFF - Chair, I want to raise the minister for Transport and the Treasurer's comments in relation to some questions I asked on behalf of the Greens for constituents. One was in relation to transport planning for the massive eastern shore development proposed at Droughty Point. This is the largest housing subdivision on the books in Tasmania by a long shot at the moment. The number of dwellings that may be constructed range somewhere between 1700 and 2700. There is a huge impact on the movement of people. Some estimates done by the local community group that has developed to look into this proposal - 5000 vehicle movements a day. That is by any stretch a big addition in Tasmania.

We have Ocean Grove Road which is very much a single arterial road, which funnels people from that Droughty Point end of Tranmere through towards Bellerive and over the bridge, ultimately. That is a suburban road with a number of small places that go onto that road. One of those places is proposed to be an access point for development on what is currently, I believe, conservation environmental living land on the top of the Droughty Point hill. There are so many problems with the transport movements being proposed for this development, which is in the Clarence City Council.

I asked the minister what the involvement of his department had been in this area and we found out that there has been no formal engagement by State Growth around this development. It has been through the Greater Hobart City Council Group and to the Clarence City Council but not to the developers themselves. I appreciate that but it is incredibly important that we have a Hobart-wide coordinated transport plan for such a massive development, especially when the main part of the developers' transport solution is to have a ferry terminal that the minister had not heard about.

It is concerning that a developer will put in their development plan notional ideas for ferry travel, which are great to talk about in theory but when you are resting a 2400-lot development on the basis of moving people to and from work, recreation, hospitals, et cetera, on the basis of having a ferry service and there has been no conversation with the state Government about that, I find that concerning.

I find it concerning because it sounds as though it is spinning a story to Clarence city councillors that the transport plan has been solved. Clearly, there is an enormous amount of work to be done and I would expect that the minister will be taking a more directive-engaged role with the project. I encourage him, on behalf of residents on the eastern shore to do that because it affects traffic movements over the Tasman Bridge, traffic movements into an already very congested Davey Street. We need to understand where these vehicles are going to be moving, particularly if there are talks about a marina.

I understand there is a conversation for a ferry marina in the Ralphs Bay conservation area. What a joke. It could not possibly be that we want to start that fight again. We could not possibly want to consider a conversation on putting ferry infrastructure in that Ralphs Bay conservation area, home to the handfish, home to a vast number of shorebirds and other wildlife, which has been fought for and protected in the past by the Ralphs Bay Conservation Area Group. We expect the Government to look very carefully and closely at what is being proposed by this development, make sure it is possible and make sure it is being done with the environmental assessments and community consultations that need to occur.

I want to talk about electric cars because what I found out through my questions to the minister and the targets presented in the Budget is that there is a fair degree of spin and heroic assumptions underpinning the Government's aim of getting to 100 per cent electric vehicles in the government fleet by 2030. The numbers that have been delivered so far are tiny. We are talking handfuls of electric vehicles in the government fleet. It is important to distinguish and separate entirely hybrid vehicles, which do not fit the definition of an electric vehicle.

Staff raised the problems that have occurred with the supply of electric cars over the last couple of years, during COVID-19. There is no doubt that is true. There has been a problem world-wide with the supply of electric cars. That is why we need the Government to supercharge the investment they are putting into this area over the next couple of years. The Government is not meeting its target, by the estimates the Greens have done. Its target is really for only a 2 per cent to 3 per cent increase over the next couple of years in the electric vehicle fleet. There is no way we will be able to replace the almost entirely fossil fuel-driven cars, which are the great majority of our fleet at the moment, with fully electric by 2030, unless we make some really big investments early on. It seems as though the Government's intention is to talk big about this but not to put the money in in the near term. Unless we are doing that, we will not get there.

I make the point that the Treasurer does not seem to understand that there is an urgency about this. He said: 'No one is saying it should happen rapidly or suddenly, although you might be'. Yes, Treasurer, I am saying it is rapid and urgent because I am listening to the scientists and they are very clear it is rapid and urgent. We cannot get to a situation where it is 2027 and we have 90 per cent of the government fleet to replace. We cannot do that in that period of time. That means we have to bite off large chunks of it year on year. We would be looking, just by straight maths, to be replacing the fleet at a rate of at least 13.5 per cent a year. That means a whole lot more money than the Government has put in at the moment.

Finally, I want to talk about the climate risks and conversation we had in relation to insurance. This is in planning, in relation to those parts of Tasmania that may, in the short or medium term, communities may find areas to no longer be covered by the insurance industry if their properties are damaged or destroyed through natural disasters. This is not something we can leave to the market. We have to have an intervention. We have to have much more responsibility from the Government to coordinate with local councils what the planning will be and which areas may need to be vacated if houses are lost during extreme events and where they are going to be put. Councils cannot make these decisions alone in isolation. We need a government that is helping to do this planning for us all, for the future.

Time expired.

Ms WHITE - Chair, first today I will speak about the discussion we had around the Midland Highway, and in particular property, because it is something the minister and I have corresponded about, and just note my appreciation for the response that came as an answer to a question put on notice, where the minister has outlined that:

The Department of State Growth is considering options for the design of the Scotts' access at Myrtlewood to address their concerns while meeting the safety objectives identified in the Midland Highway Action Plan. The department will continue to communicate with the Scotts until a final decision is made on the design.

This has been an ongoing matter for some time that I have corresponded with the minister about. It was pleasing to see a response like this, which I take to mean that the matter is not yet concluded and there is still scope for negotiations with the Scotts. I reiterate my invitation to the minister to meet with the Scotts at their property at that access point to understand exactly why they have raised concerns about this, and note that in the response to a question in an exchange we had, minister, you indicated you had met with them previously. The Scotts cannot recall that except for one occasion at a Northern Midlands Business Association event where I was also present. If that was the occasion you meant, that certainly was not a conversation in any detail about their concerns for their property's access point. However, I was pleased to see that response to a question put on notice.

There was much discussion with the minister about different infrastructure projects. I will not talk about the Treasury component of the portfolio because I was not present at the committee for those discussions, but we did talk extensively about the BusTech contract and the cessation of that contract for the delivery of vehicles to Metro after just a handful had been provided. I note there has been further commentary in the media outlining that there are legal matters afoot. I am sure the minister will not be able to go into any details about that, but it is of concern that a local manufacturing business that was engaged and has successfully provided 100 buses to the Tasmanian Metro fleet, will no longer be contracted to deliver the rest of those vehicles, for whatever reason, because it is always nice to be able to support local manufacturing and particularly advanced manufacturing businesses like that one on the north-west coast that have done an exemplary job.

I hope that in Metro's continued negotiations to find a replacement provider for that contract that they can procure a local solution, not only because it helps to build the capacity in Tasmania for our advanced manufacturing sector but it also creates jobs here, which we all support, and it also means that the maintenance of ongoing engagement around that contract can be done locally too, which is a lesser cost to Metro and the taxpayer.

I will also talk more broadly about public transport. We did not have much opportunity to go into detail with the minister, but I want to talk about the provision of bus services. We talked a little bit about Metro bus services and it is a shame that Metro services or more services are not provided for our urban fringe areas. With the common ticketing project, which we did speak about and heard some of the costs that have already been outlaid on that particular project, there is hope that there will be an opportunity for people in the southern beaches area in future to be able to use the one ticket to travel all the way into the city and to use the ferry, and integrate that service in such a way that the timetable, the ticketing, and hopefully the price can be equally convenient.

I take the opportunity to draw to the minister's attention the continuing frustration with our services in the south-east. It is probably not something you are aware of, minister, because it has only been brought to my attention today. In the south-east, the bus service from Dodges Ferry to Hobart, specifically the 9.40 a.m. bus, very rarely runs on time. Today it got to Lewisham at 10.20 a.m. which was over 30 minutes late. Last week, they were similar time frames, leaving Dodges Ferry/Lewisham anywhere between 10.00 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. and the previous weeks, I am informed, have not been much better.

There are many people trying to access that bus for university and others for work. I know Redline is contracted to provide that service but I take this opportunity to bring that to your attention because it has been an ongoing frustration for the residents of the southern

beaches. Some of it is attributed to the roadworks that are underway, but not all of it. Consistently, this particular bus service, the 9.40 a.m., is late. In that exchange that has been brought to my attention, there are members of the community who have been made late for work again today and others who are so frustrated with the unreliability of that service that they will not make appointments to depend on that particular bus service because they cannot count on it turning up.

That underlines confidence in public transport, which is a real shame because we want more people to be using public transport, so we need it to be accessible and affordable but at the moment it is failing people in the southern beaches.

I also want to talk about King Island Shipping. We had an exchange on this. I was a bit disappointed to again see the minister try to suggest that the mayor could meet individually with the representative from TasPorts when it has been brought to the minister's attention that that is not possible because of council policy. The full council would need to meet with that representative of TasPorts and King Island Shipping would also like to meet and I do not believe that opportunity has been extended.

I will be travelling with my colleagues to King Island next month and I invited the minister to join me. That is a standing invitation - please come. You would be welcome to join particularly in that meeting to talk about King Island freight issues with the residents on the island. We need to make sure that no matter where you are in Tasmania you have access to equity of services and King Island is certainly struggling. The cost of supplies and materials, labour, groceries - all of it is impacted because of the shipping and the distance they are from mainland Tasmania.

We also talked about a number of other different infrastructure projects, particularly in my electorate of Lyons. Southern Midlands Council raised some issues around Kempton and the minister's advisers instructed the community it would be receiving further attention in coming weeks so I will be in contact with the council about how that progresses. It is important that we make sure commitments that were offered in the last couple of years are honoured, particularly around the transfer of ownership of sections of road and moneys that would be provided to supply council with the funds they need to upkeep those roads.

We talked about Wielangta Road, a very important connector road on the east coast in my electorate of Lyons. The minister outlined the next stages of work occurring there which I will be following closely because there has been an expectation created in the community by the Government that that section of Wielangta Road will be sealed. I know there are many in that community, whether they are general residents or operators in the tourism and visitor economy, who are keen to see what the time frame for that is so they can make plans to factor that into their business models.

We spoke about the ferries and touched briefly on how they are operating and how the work will need to occur with the Australian Government, given the commitment that was made by federal Labor to fund more of the infrastructure that will support the expansion of the service up and down the river. I asked the minister for some information about that. It is early days but it is exciting to see that important service expanding. I put on the record my hope that it could be expanded up and down the river so that the people of Bridgewater can link in with that ferry service, providing them with another method of transport to access the city and vice versa, using that river network to get people in to work or to study and home again.

Regarding the Rex service, which I note in the answers provided to questions on notice mentioned the concerns around industrial action by the Rex pilots, and whether they would disrupt services into and out of Tasmania. At this stage it does not look like there is anything further to report, but it is one to keep a watch on because it could interrupt access for people who are reliant on that particular airline.

Time expired.

Ms DOW - Chair, I rise to reflect on this part of the Estimates hearing under minister Ferguson. We asked a lot of questions of the new minister, in particular why there has not been a statewide planning scheme delivered, as was committed to by this Government way back in 2014. The former planning minister, Mr Gutwein, who is no longer in this place, promised to complete that planning reform by 2017, and that still has not happened. We asked a lot of questions about that and why this Government has made planning more complex for Tasmanians. In fact, they have created more red tape, rather than cut red tape as they promised to do over many years now, dating back to their 2013 alternative budget as well.

What we learnt the most from Estimates was that this Government has a lot of work to do in the planning space. They have not actually done what they committed to do, it has taken a very long time, and the strategic aspect of the planning scheme has been done back-to-front. That work should have been done in the first instance, to then inform the other reform processes. The Government has not done that, and it is playing catch-up.

We are seeing that with the delay in the review of the regional land use strategies; this government has not funded and resourced that part of the reform, as it should have done. Only at the last state election did they commit to increasing funding for strategic planning and the review of the regional land use strategies.

This time last year at Estimates the then minister, Mr Jaensch, said the local provisions schedules would be all completed and finalised by the end of last year. When we asked the new minister, Mr Ferguson, last week about this, he said we hope to get them done by the end of this year, but would not really make a commitment to that, which is disappointing given that those time frames and commitments have not been delivered on for two consecutive years now.

With the local provisions schedules, we also raised the issue of consultation with local communities about those changes, and how this Government has placed the responsibility on local government to do that consultation and work with local communities, but have not been well supported to do that. It is only in latter years that this Government has provided any sort of collaborative approach or funding assistance to local government to assist with that process - when this Government knows there is a shortage of planners right across Tasmania, and that having access to a pool of planners is one of the biggest workforce issues facing local government.

The Local Government Association of Tasmania has put to the Government different models that could work and provide additional assistance, particularly across regional Tasmania where it is very difficult to attract planners, but to date this Government has done nothing about that. We want to see better communication and support with local communities about changes to local provisions schedules and that process from this government.

A number of constituents across the Sorell community and in the Huon Valley have raised concerns with us about major changes to zoning. We spoke at length during Estimates about those changes. I asked the minister if he would meet those residents to discuss their concerns, and he said that he would not - that he had spoken about that with the council, if I recall correctly. Is that right?

Mr Ferguson - Did you say that I said I would not?

Ms DOW - I thought you said you would not meet with them.

Mr Ferguson - That is not my recollection, Ms Dow. I think I might have offered you the opportunity to even bring some people who may wish to catch up with me, so please be fair.

Ms DOW - I will do that, minister. We will coordinate it.

Mr Ferguson - Let us make sure the record is accurate, or at least let them know my door is open to them.

Ms DOW - I will work with my colleague in the Huon, Mr Winter, to do that. Have you responded to their letter yet?

Mr Ferguson - Yes.

Ms DOW - Good to hear.

Mr Ferguson - I am saying to you that they would be most welcome.

Ms DOW - It is good to hear that the minister is going to meet those residents and discuss their concerns. We are happy to help facilitate that, because they are concerned about what these zoning changes will mean for the value of their property and their investment and their ability to sell their property, and about not having that opportunity to have their say about their own property.

The notification period was also something that they raised. I realise the minister did work with the council on extending the time frame for consultation. That is very good, but there will need to be ongoing work with residents about those proposed changes. I am hopeful that an amicable outcome will come to the fore that does not disadvantage those residents any more than they feel they have been disadvantaged now.

We also spoke about the regional land use strategies, which I have touched on briefly. The fact that this has been a delayed process and this Government has not funded those strategies means that it is holding back housing development. Today during question time, we saw an example of that with changes to boundaries in the Clarence City Council, which this minister has blocked or vetoed in preference to another planning process.

One of the things you said about planning before you came to government was that it was too slow, it was blocking development, and it was not an efficient process. Almost a decade into your Government, you have not really changed planning for the better. If anything, you

have made it more complicated, and you are back to reviewing the SPPs before you have even completed the statewide planning scheme. It just goes on and on and on.

You could not really answer for us, minister, why those delays have occurred, why it has taken your Government so long to deliver on its commitment for a statewide planning scheme across Tasmania, and why you have not adequately resourced the process as well. I think when I asked you about the former premier and planning minister Mr Gutwein's commitment to deliver that by 2017, there was really no answer from you about why that had not occurred.

It would be really good in your contribution today if you could provide some more insight into why it has taken your Government so long to achieve these reforms, which you said were so fundamental to economic reform across Tasmania and to Tasmania's economy and getting the state moving. Removing red tape - we have seen none of that from your Government. It would be good to have an explanation on the record as to why you have not done what you set out to do.

I also want to talk about the changes around the PPU. We had feedback during the committee meeting that this had been positive, which is very good. Hopefully that will give the PPU the opportunity to be better resourced. I understand they do have more members in their team now that they are sitting under the Department of Premier and Cabinet. That is positive because they have been under-resourced. They have done a power of work over the last eight years. We thank them for that and for their perseverance and patience in this process. However, they really could have been better resourced by this Government from the outset. I do not think the Government had that clear idea about the amount and the task ahead of them when they looked at planning reform when they first came to Government. We want to see some action on planning reform from the Government.

I will go now to the issue of what the changes to the contract with Metro might mean for advanced manufacturers on the north-west coast. I will talk about this under another Estimates committee as well, but it is worth mentioning that those advanced manufacturers on the north-west coast are part of that supply chain and have been very successful in delivering those buses for the Tasmanian Government. They need more information about what these changes mean for them. It is not clear what it means for them. They certainly have the capability to deliver this build for the Tasmanian Government, but the contractual arrangements are such that if that changes, then they will not have the design at their fingertips to do that future work either, or the ability to complete it.

The Government needs to be upfront about what the future holds for each of those businesses that are involved in the supply chain, and what the implications will be. There is no doubt that they have a capability to deliver the build. They just need that commitment from the Government that they will see it through with them and offer them the opportunity to continue the good work that they are doing. The minister should speak directly with them. I raised this at the Advanced Manufacturing Estimates committee with Ms Ogilvie: about the importance of good communication with those supply chain businesses and being upfront with them about what the task is ahead.

Time expired.

Mrs ALEXANDER - Chair, I congratulate the Treasurer on bringing forward his first Budget. It has been very interesting and I really enjoyed being part of the process. I have

found the process very useful and I learned a lot. Being an accountant, I wondered why we call it Budget Estimates when the majority of questions did not involve dollars, facts and figures. The Budget is focused on strengthening Tasmania's future by delivering for all Tasmanians and supporting the Tasmanian community. It has demonstrated an excellent understanding of the Treasury and finance issues when responding to some of the questions in the Estimate hearings.

I read through the Budget Papers and observed in the last few weeks and during Estimates week, attempts to undermine confidence in the Tasmanian economy. Through questioning, the Treasurer and people in the public service who assisted the process were able to clearly outline the strength of the Tasmanian economy and address some of the questions that were raised around the confidence and outlook of the Tasmanian economy.

Prior to the pandemic, Tasmania's economy was in a strong position with 3.5 per cent growth in gross state product in 2018-19. That has placed the state in a strong position when faced with the problems of 2020 and the subsequent measures that had to be undertaken to support the Tasmanian economy and those in need in our community. Starting from a solid base has served us really well. Treasury expected the strong position recorded in 2018-19 to continue with the 2019-20 budget forecasting growth at about the long-term trend at 2.75 per cent in the budget year.

COVID-19 forced lockdowns, disrupted supply chains and stalled economic growth here and abroad. It has had a lasting impact. Many of the economies around the world and in Tasmania invested a lot of resources and allocated a lot of their finances towards supporting businesses and the community.

The Government responded to the situation created almost two years ago with swift action, leading the nation in protecting the community. The Government provided business and social supports, bold initiatives to enable the economy to rapidly recover and rebuild. Thanks to the early and decisive action of the Government, jobs and businesses were saved and the Tasmanian economy has since rebounded. One of the consequences of Tasmania's performance has been that so many people moved in 2021. We have seen significant growth in our population from people coming from the mainland, who otherwise would not have come if the state had not been performing and seen as an oasis for families.

The Government's successful management of the pandemic throughout 2020-21 has seen the Tasmanian economy recover strongly from the shock caused by the pandemic in the previous year, growing by 3.8 per cent. This was the second strongest growth in Australia and more than double the growth experienced in the national economy.

The strength of the Tasmanian economy is evident in the state's labour market. The unemployment rate was at a record low of 3.8 per cent, lower than the national unemployment rate of 3.9 per cent and the third lowest of all Australian states. Looking at the April data, full-time employment hit its highest level ever, with 171 100 Tasmanians in full-time jobs. This represents almost 11 100 more full-time jobs than the same time last year, more than half of which were won by women.

Our retail trade and export sectors observed a significant boom. The latest ABS data shows that in April 2022 retail trade hit a new record high of \$679 million and goods exports also hit a new record of \$4.67 billion over the past 12 months. As a consequence for the ninth

consecutive quarter Tasmania's economy leads the nation according to the latest CommSec State of the State report for April 2022. That also signifies that the outlook has remained positive.

The Government's investment of \$5.6 billion in infrastructure over the Budget and forward Estimates will support jobs across the broader Tasmanian economy and stimulate investment. There has been quite significant talk around why we are investing so much in infrastructure. One of the main recommendations of the International Monetary Fund has been that where possible investments in infrastructure should be prioritised, especially that infrastructure that benefits the community at large. Maintenance investments have also been ticked as one of the capacities for recovery post pandemic. We want to create something where the Tasmanian economy is supported and can deliver its goods, have proper traffic and have a situation where we are proud of what we have. Therefore we need to invest in infrastructure.

Treasury forecasts in the Budget that unemployment will continue to remain low while labour force participation is expected to remain above its long-term average, reflecting the confidence within the community, our economy is expected to grow by 3.75 per cent in 2021- 22, well above the long-term average.

In 2022-23 the Tasmanian economy is forecast to grow by a further 2.75 per cent with growth increasing to three per cent expected in 2023-24. As our economy continues to strengthen, population growth is also anticipated to increase, hence we need the infrastructure to support the expected population increase and movement. The population increase is expected to be by about 0.7 per cent in 2022-23 and then 0.9 per cent in 2023-24. The Government is committed to the sustainable and responsible management of the state's economy and budget. The 2022-23 Budget delivers on this commitment.

I will now address a key portfolio responsibility of the minister which is that of Transport and Infrastructure. The investment in transport in this year's Budget is impressive. Public transport is key to reducing traffic congestion. Investing in improvements to our bus and ferry network and associated infrastructure will increase the attractiveness of public transport. We need to get to a point where we encourage the community to hop on public transport. It is something that happens in other parts of the world without much difficulty. This is where it is good to have that investment in this type of infrastructure.

During Estimate hearings, Mr Ferguson detailed a range of improvements that will deliver real-time information on services through the common ticketing solution, more bus shelters to protect travellers from the poor weather, and extra bus services on busy school and commuter routes to alleviate crowding. The Budget provides an equity contribution of \$25.2 million to Metro Tasmania, including \$19.6 million to assist with the implementation of the common ticketing solution for all general access providers. An additional \$5.5 million will be provided to undertake a zero-emissions bus trial, which is very important.

It is all part of looking towards the future and not just looking down to the tips of our shoes but actually having a look forward and asking where we want to land and what we want to do. The Budget provides \$8.3 million towards the bus stop upgrades and \$17.3 million -

Time expired.

Mr FERGUSON - Chair, I thank the colleagues around the Chamber who have addressed my outputs during this section of the debate of the Committee of the House. I would like to acknowledge those who attended the committees through last week. They are long days, particularly for members who have to give answers for six, eight, or in my case, nine hours, as well as those non-ministers, whether they are opposition or committee members who are there all day, every day throughout the week. I must say that is a great effort that is done on behalf of Tasmanians, whatever party we are from. I thank you, Chair, for the work that you performed as well, including making sure that we were all wearing our masks when we were not speaking.

I will respond in my way to the report of Committee A. I will restate my view that this Budget is really about strengthening our state, our future, and making sure that we continue what we have delivered in the past, more delivery of our plan for what Tasmanians require. It is a strong budget and one where we have ensured that Tasmanians' priorities are our priorities. We take action on the cost of living, keeping Tasmanians safe, and investing more into those areas of social policy, where we know the community want to see improved outcomes. I am thinking of health and mental health, education and housing. With our economic credentials secure and recognised across the nation, we as a government are always looking forward to implementing our plan and allowing it to be scrutinised through budget Estimates.

There are 26 000 more people in jobs today than when we first came to office, and that is a singular achievement of the Government and the business sector in our state. Retail trade is up. I am pleased that exports continue to grow, business confidence is up, and the unemployment rate has been halved. When you look around at the economic news that is occurring as we speak in this House, right around the world stock markets are responding.

I think I saw the Australian stock market today has taken a 3.5 per cent fall and has lost about 13 per cent in a year. We are seeing a lot of evolving economic reactions to some of the inflationary effects around the world, to supply chain challenges, to governments which have stimulated the economy through the pandemic, seeing materials and labour shortages and cost-of-living increases, all of which are things that Australian governments, including ours, are going to have to keep a very close focus on and maintain a sense of optimism about, as well as economic and budgetary discipline, while we work through those challenges which are significant. I cannot think of another state in this country I would rather live than this one, and I cannot think of another country in the world I would rather live.

As we proceed through our budget delivery, it includes a landmark \$5.6 billion for infrastructure, including in my space of Infrastructure roads and bridges, \$2.6 billion, with construction to start on the new Bridgewater bridge later this year, which as you know, Chair, I am excited about.

We have also increased Health funding to a third of the Budget, with \$11.2 billion over the next four years. There is also \$538 million over the Budget and forward Estimates as part of our dedication and focus on housing and housing services and more homes. Funding for Education, Skills and Training has grown to a record \$8.5 billion, with a keen eye on keeping our children safe and supported as well. It has to be said that this is self-evidently my first budget as a member of this Government and it has been an incredible time, not just throwing myself to the deeper task of the role of Treasurer compared to my previous role as Minister for Finance and supporting previous Treasurer. I studied for tens of hours in the lead-up to the budget Estimates. It was fascinating to me that most of the study I did did not come up at the

Estimates hearing, but it is entirely a matter for members of the committee to ask the questions they wish to ask, test the Government and our public servants on the construction of the Budget and scrutinise various initiatives.

I say a big thank you to the people who have supported me. I have been greatly supported by my own team and the Premier himself, and the Treasury and Finance department staff as well. Everyone has been marvellous. I make that acknowledgement right up front and no doubt I will be grateful in the days ahead as well.

I will say that it was disappointing that the Opposition ducked and dived in respect of economic and financial policy. On the one hand, we had the Leader of the Opposition in parliament and at different other forums demanding more spending, higher wages on our wages agreements, more houses, more for hospital services and more beds - and there is a place for those things. On the other hand, we had the official shadow treasurer decrying spending. We heard echoes of it as well in Mr Winter's contribution earlier this afternoon, decrying spending growth and saying we are spending and borrowing too much, and even questions at the Estimates hearing asking me about returning and paying down debt. You can see the mixed messages that are very self-evident there. What that points to is confusion in the Opposition about what they even stand for, let alone what they would be demanding from the Government.

I will speak about our Budget. It shows that our strong economic management has allowed us to support Tasmanian businesses and the community through the pandemic. That was a very expensive exercise for those two-and-a-half years and it has been documented in the Budget. I was also very clear in my role in preparing this Budget that we were frank with Tasmanians and identified the risks in a very frank and open way, as we saw them. There is no hiding from them, there is no disguising the reality of those risks, including some that were picked up in Mr Winter's earlier contribution, and by Ms O'Connor as well, and I welcome that. We need to have open eyes to potential threats on the horizon and be preparing for those, and that is what I want to do for whatever length of time I serve as Treasurer. I want to make sure that I perform the role responsibly and openly and be frank with Tasmanians about our great opportunities but also the areas of concern we will need to keep our eye on.

The benefits of this approach are plain to see. We are seeing strong economic growth, including forecasts. We are seeing record low unemployment and we want to continue that strong positive story. Treasury's outlook indicates that this growth will continue, but it will not continue by accident or just because Treasury say so. We have to make it happen and we have to work with the circumstances in which we find ourselves. By the way, the Budget was framed prior to the incredible disruptions happening in the energy sector across the eastern seaboard, and again we will have to continue to work closely across portfolios and between governments in responding to those as responsibly as we can.

We are incurring a responsible level of borrowings. We have done so deliberately. We entered into that approach in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. We make no bones about that, nor apology. It is the lowest in the nation. That is no surprise. We are a small state and therefore it is the second lowest per capita in 2022-23 as we continue to borrow to build. We are leveraging a big pipeline of investment that has really helped to keep the construction and building industry afloat through the worst of the pandemic. It was one of our stand-out industries throughout the COVID-19 pandemic which strongly positioned Tasmania as we reopened our economy.

As to infrastructure, it is a step-change. The size of the current and future commitments to our roads and bridges program can only be appreciated when seen in the context of the past. The Tasmanian and Australian governments' commitment to state roads capital infrastructure for 2022-23 rises to \$700-plus million. That is a big step up from the current anticipated expenditure of \$372 million for 2021-22, even in itself a record year of investment. Naturally, the Bridgewater bridge is a big explainer, for that step up.

If you have a look at this year's Budget and forward Estimates for roads and bridges, that \$2.72 billion is close to four times the figure budgeted prior to the Liberals coming to office eight years ago. It is a remarkable increase. It speaks to that strategy we have engaged in to deal with legacy issues in infrastructure that are decades overdue and also looking forward to make sure we generate the assets - irrigation, rail and port, schools and hospitals, roads and bridges - that our growing state will require in years ahead. They will be assets that will be enjoyed by our community, our business sector and by people who are earning money and income for our state through exports.

It goes back to the good sense to borrow when finances are at very low interest rates. Historically, they are incredibly low, so we make these decisions in full knowledge that the borrowings are responsible.

The expected expenditure I have already referred to in the current financial year, of about \$370 million, in itself is nearly three times what government used to spend prior to us coming to office. Our forward program is continuing to give industry the confidence they have told us they want to create new jobs and invest in training, to grow their workforce and capability.

The civil consultancy and construction sector has responded strongly to the uplift in the capital program over the past two years and is working to meet the challenges of COVID-19 disruption that have occurred.

As I said in my Budget speech, the Budget includes \$731 million for the new \$786 million Bridgewater bridge. I am pleased that has received planning approval, demonstrating the first use of the major projects legislation and removing the final hurdle to construction commencing this year.

There are so many other projects that time will not permit me to detail, but they are all in the Budget and I commend them to members.

While much of the focus has been on our expenditure on new roads and bridges, I acknowledge that when Ms O'Connor asked me directly about the importance of social infrastructure in the Estimates hearings, I endorsed the view that we have to include that in our strong desire to see intergenerational assets being created for Tasmanians. That includes hospital facilities, school upgrades and new schools, as well as the importance of housing, which our Government has a fundamental and demonstrated commitment to doing.

We are seeing a large uplift in our investments here so we anticipate this challenge. We are responding to it head-on. When you look at what is occurring in roads and bridges, we are also needing to respond head-on to our need for maintenance for our roads and bridges program. In addition to all of the unprecedented spend on roads and bridges, we are investing in increased maintenance. This is a step-change. As Mr Tucker said, it is a game-changer.

The ability of our state to look after our roads growing by about 25 per cent is a massive surprise to many people. The RACT asked us to look at doing this and it is exactly what I and the Government have been able to do. We have secured a lot of support for this. What it means is that, including through our partnerships with the Australian Government, we will be investing in the largest pavement renewal program that has ever been carried out in this state. We will be targeting higher priority roads, increasing our road resurfacing program and, for the first time this year, including a separate crumb-rubber program as part of our commitment to waste reduction and fostering a circular economy, using resources that were previously just seen as waste.

We will also enhance our intervention maintenance so that we can anticipate and respond to short-term issues that have an impact on our roads, such as freight movements, changing weather conditions and extreme weather events, which in my own experience have been very challenging at different times.

We will focus as well on next-generation technology so we get the right information to help us make the best decisions about how to spend money on our road and bridge network.

Briefly on transport, which is something I am passionate about, particularly encouraging a state that has not had a lot of pride in public transport in the past, completely turning that around to make the most of our infrastructure investment, to relieve congestion and help people have the independence they want. We are investing significantly. There is \$20 million to deliver extra school and commuter buses on busy routes. There are further funds to upgrade all-access and all-weather bus stops at priority locations.

We have already referred to the park and ride. Yes, it is true somebody has been unhappy that one of them is late. It is late because of Aboriginal heritage; we are just dealing with that as responsibly as we can. It is great that there is interest from members opposite in these initiatives but they are our initiatives and I encourage you to get on board. For many Tasmanians, these are new ideas. They are not new in the world, though. They have been done for many years in other jurisdictions so we are playing catch-up in this space. I am doing so very intentionally.

We also provide further funds in the Budget to develop new park and ride facilities in growing areas. I am particularly pleased that during Estimates I was able to indicate that they will be built at Claremont Link Road at Claremont, Fenton Street at Midway Point and Pass Road at Rokeby.

I look forward to having more to say about our plans around common ticketing. It has been a regularly brought-up subject. Thank you to each member of this House who has raised it. I appreciate that you would like us to move as quickly as possible. We are, through Metro, and I hope to have good news in the near future.

Importantly as well, the ferries are something that has really brought us together, not only around the different parties of this Chamber and independents but also the federal government has got on board with our very successful ferries for the Derwent River. We were accused of setting them up to fail. That was proved wrong. They have actually been set up to succeed. We did not know exactly what the demand would look like but the people of Hobart on the eastern shore have welcomed it. They have jumped right on board. I am grateful that the new federal government, unbeknownst to them, have also allocated funds for expanding the

services. Ms White indicated and I quite agree - we would like to see more locations being able to be part of that service in the future. We look forward to working with them, together with the Hobart City Deal partners, to achieve that as best we can.

Briefly on Planning, the Government, through the Budget, is reaffirming our commitment to planning reform agenda. It is important to us that Tasmania has the most effective, strategically well-informed and efficient land use planning system in the country. The Budget signifies the significant progress that has been made since we were last discussing budget Estimates in August last year: the transition from what, until now, has been a necessary focus on statutory reform and the delivery of our Tasmanian Planning Scheme to the strategic instruments of our land use planning system.

That planning scheme, the TPS, is now in effect in 13 local government areas with Southern Midlands now approved and just waiting for gazettal. We are continuing to work closely with those councils that have not arrived at that point yet. We are working with them and supporting them. Those that have not yet entered into the statutory process appreciate that support, and good on them but we want to see them make progress as well because some councils have been tardier than others. I am taking my role as Minister for Planning to support them all and will them all on. I will not put a date on it because they are statutory processes and I cannot pre-empt them. I am not allowed to, so I will not pre-empt them but thanks for the invitation, Ms Dow.

The Budget is about supporting councils and regional bodies to do their up-to-date residential growth, land availability and settlement planning to allow growth scenarios and settlement strategies to be updated and reflect current supply. It is not just rear-vision thinking but also future demand pressures, and allow us to get advice on interim amendments to the regional land use strategies.

I will just take one quick point raised by Ms Dow about Richardsons Road. That has not been vetoed. That has not been disagreed with -

Mr Winter - What have you done then?

Mr FERGUSON - I have been very clear and members ought to be careful what they say. I have written to the proponents and informed them that I have set aside my decision. I look forward to making a decision on evidence, particularly noting that we have gone to the public for the time being. I think it would surprise members that I was being challenged to approve something when the public are currently -

Mr Winter - It has been through an entire process: it has been through a year's process. You want to defer to a different process.

Mr FERGUSON - having their say. It also surprises me that you would interject on me on this, Mr Winter. I invite you to go for a drive into your own electorate and ask the good people of that community if they would like me to rush a decision while they are still being invited for the next six days at least to have their say on those matters. Mr Winter, you do surprise me.

I will conclude by thanking everybody, whether they are green or blue or red in this place or another shade of another colour, for their contribution. The Budget is hard work for all of

us and the Estimates process is pretty exhausting for all of us in different ways and for different reasons. We have a shared commitment to our state. I am grateful for the questions, whether they were easy or hard to answer, and for the scrutiny that hopefully allows me to do a better job in my portfolios.

Estimates of the Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Minister for Planning, agreed to.

DIVISIONS 2, 11 and 12

Minister for Community Services and Development, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Hospitality and Events and Minister for Local Government

[4.42 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER - Chair, I was pleased to attend this year's Budget Estimates Committee hearings for the portfolios under Mr Nick Street: Community Services and Development, Sport and Recreation, Hospitality and Events and Local Government.

Tasmanians have faced their fair share of challenges and uncertainties brought about by the global COVID-19 pandemic. In each of these areas, the effects of the pandemic have been felt. In this Estimates Committee we have heard plenty of evidence of how families, businesses and communities have been impacted and how the Government provided significant support and has committed even more support in this Budget.

The 2022-23 state Budget is about strengthening Tasmania's future. It is about delivering for all Tasmanians. The pandemic caused economic volatility and the Government has responded with strong actions that secured a more resilient economy. The Tasmanian Liberal Government took swift action, leading the nation in protecting our community, in business, in social supports and in bold initiatives to rapidly recover and rebuild. These challenges are not over. We have heard in evidence during these Estimate Committees that the Liberal Government's vision is for Tasmania to be a place where everyone is encouraged and supported to be the best they can be. To achieve this, we will harness our comparative advantages, create more opportunities for Tasmanians and maintain a robust economy.

This Budget will build business and community confidence through strengthening our economy and by delivering on our commitments. This means we can focus on what matters to Tasmanians: health, education, housing and building safe, inclusive, thriving communities.

During this Budget Estimates we heard how this Budget is providing strong support across these different portfolios to ensure this growth. The Government supports getting more young Tasmanians moving into sport. One of our key priorities is increasing participation at the grassroots and community levels.

We believe that every Tasmanian deserves to lead an active and healthy lifestyle. We will do everything we can to encourage and support them to achieve this. This is why the Government continues to significantly invest into grassroots and community-based sport and recreational initiatives. This recognises the important role sport can play in improving physical and mental health and building community connectedness and social skills.

As part of the 2022-23 Budget, the Government is providing \$75 000 per year over two years to Reclink Tasmania. We heard at the Estimates Committee how this funding will allow

RecLink to continue to provide support for at-risk and disadvantaged Tasmanians to enjoy sporting activities. It will mean the programs and opportunities can be extended to students in north and north west Tasmania.

The Government is strongly committed to increasing female participation in sport. An allocation of \$185 000 per year over four years from 2022 to 2026 has been provided for a strategy which is aligned with the national policy framework for girls and women in sport. The strategy will consider and address all aspects of sporting participation, including coaching, officiating, leadership, administration, player support, and participation. We also want to grow the game of netball in Tasmania and provide a pathway for young players to aspire to. That is why the Budget has committed \$200 000 in 2022-23 to support Netball Tasmania.

We heard how this new funding from the Tasmanian Government will enable significant investment into grassroots participation and netball's elite development programs. It was important to learn that netball holds a unique place in the Tasmanian sporting landscape as the number one team sport for women and girls. To help get more Tasmanians active, \$500 000 has been provided for the construction of the new St Helens bike track to facilitate use by scooters, skateboarders, BMX, and mountain bikers. Already provided was \$100 000 in the 2021-22 budget, and \$400 000 will be allocated in the 2022-23 Budget.

This is a great new initiative in my electorate of Lyons, where there has been an explosion of interest in participating in these sorts of activities all across the region, even in the middle-age male bracket. I am pleased that the previous minister for Health got the St Helens hospital built before we started on the mountain bike tracks. We are seeing so much more participation from people across the age spectrum, especially in mountain bike riding. The Government has been one of the strongest supporters of this activity since 2014.

In acknowledgement of our state's proud football history, the budget has allocated \$250 000 in 2022-23 for the development of a new Australian Rules history and heritage museum to house and preserve Tasmania's football memorabilia. Last year, we doubled funding for our Ticket to Play program, with an additional \$3 million over three years from 2021-24. We are proud to see the continuation of this vital program, which reduces the cost of participating in sport for eligible children by providing them with two \$100 vouchers towards sporting club memberships.

The minister has just announced that an important recreational activity, dance, has now been added to the activity list for the Ticket to Play program. You might want to join in that, Mr Winter.

Mr Winter - I must declare interest in that.

Mr TUCKER - Our Government is also strengthening Tasmania's future by delivering the sporting infrastructure our state deserves. Elite level sport not only provides content for Tasmanians to enjoy, but also provides pathways for men, women and children. It supports the wider effort of our clubs in bringing people together. When the Government talks about delivering elite sporting content and infrastructure for our state, we know the positive impacts that will have at a community and grassroots level.

A total of \$25 million is in the Budget forward Estimates for further developments at the Dial Regional Sports Complex. This vital piece of sporting infrastructure will help support the

community and aspirations of young people in the north west. It will help them to dream big. The complex has been designed to AFL specifications. When we have secured our own men's and women's AFL and A-league teams, and our own VFL teams, we want to have games played on the north west coast as well. This will give Dial Park the status it deserves as an important regional asset. It recognises its role and capacity to be an important feature in a statewide network of sporting infrastructure assets.

Facilities like these are critical to keeping our communities connected. They are not only places of sport and recreation, but the function centre aspect means that this site can become a host location for key events in the central coast and the wider north west region. The further development of this facility shows our commitment to ensuring we have the appropriate stadium infrastructure, not only for sporting clubs of a local, regional, and state level, but also for furthering Tasmania's ability to host and participate in national and international competitions.

Sporting clubs are the lifeblood of our communities around Tasmania. That is why \$300 000 is being provided in the 2022-23 Budget for the sport and recreational grants program, which supports the continued growth of the sector and ongoing provision of safe, fair, and inclusive sport and recreation in the state.

In this year's Estimates committee, it was pleasing to hear the commitment of the new Minister for Local Government to the important work of reforming this sector. As I said in my recent contribution on the local government election legislation, efficient and effective councils are vital to the future of Tasmania. They have played a massive critical role in our state's economic and social recovery effort throughout the pandemic, often being the first responders in helping to roll out Government initiatives in response to COVID-19. This Tasmanian Liberal Government understands that a capable, effective and sustainable local government sector will be vital to drive the future prosperity of the Tasmanian economy and wellbeing in Tasmanian communities.

That is why the Government has committed \$1.64 million in the 2022-23 Budget over two years to continue the important work on the future of local government review. This review has been undertaken by the local government board, chaired by the highly respected Sue Smith AM. The scope of the review includes the full range of council roles, responsibilities and functions, including statutory responsibilities such as land use planning, service delivery including waste management and road maintenance, governance and administration, such as asset management and community place-based roles, such as strategic planning or community advocacy.

The review is engaging directly and transparently with local government communities and the users of local government services and facilities to develop a suite of agreed reforms.

Time expired.

Mr WINTER - Chair, I rise to make my contribution on community services, sport and recreation, hospitality and events, and local government. These go through quite a few different shadow ministers on our side of things. I was there for sport and recreation, hospitality and events and local government, so it made sense that I make this first contribution on our behalf.

On the sport and recreation front, I did not glean anything trying to dissect what had happened with the \$250 000 grant for the Tasmanian JackJumpers, despite being armed with the actual minute to the deputy secretary of the department, and despite spending a lot of time asking the minister to explain how it had happened.

I asked the minister if he was aware that Labor received a right to information request about the interaction with the Tasmania Basketball Pty Ltd, and why did his department treat a \$250 000 grant for the Kingborough Sports Centre as an election commitment? Mr Street said he did not treat it as an election commitment. Being a stubborn person, I thought I would hold up the actual department minute, signed off by the deputy secretary, that said during the 2020-21 state election the Tasmanian Government announced an election commitment of \$250 000 to the JackJumpers towards refurbishment upgrades.

I have the minute in my hand, signed by the deputy secretary who is sitting next to the minister, and I am asking the minister if it was treated as an election commitment. The minister is telling me it was not treated as an election commitment while I am holding a minute that says explicitly it did. I was confused so I thought I would keep going. Again, I said, I do not understand, minister, why your department in a minute to the deputy secretary is convinced that this was a \$250 000 election commitment. If that is not the case, then why was the commitment made?

Minister Street said, 'I have answered the question, Mr Winter. It was not an election commitment'. I am still confused. The minister says it was not an election commitment; the minute says it is. I am trying to get to the bottom of it. I am doing my best to extract what happened, all while the deputy secretary is sitting next to the minister who signed off on the minute trying to figure out what on earth happened with this \$250 000.

The background on this \$250 000 is that it is actually for upgrades at a council facility. The second reading speech of the supplementary appropriation bill listed that the funding was for the Tasmanian basketball association, or the statewide entity responsible for basketball - which we were later told was incorrect, so there was some confusion there. Now there is confusion about whether it was an election commitment, and then there is this confusion about who is actually responsible for the commitment.

As part of the RTI document, we also had a sign-off by the then minister for sport and recreation, Ms Howlett, signing off on the \$250 000 - but again the Government is telling us that she had nothing to do with the funding.

We have a minute that says this is an election commitment, then we have the former premier, Mr Gutwein, saying it is not an election commitment, then we have the new Minister for Sport and Recreation saying it is not an election commitment, and then we have a deputy secretary signing off to say that it was, and we are trying to get to the bottom of how this money actually came about.

What I still do not know from rereading *Hansard* is how the assessment was made - how it was decided that \$250 000 would go to this project. The Government says it was not former minister Howlett; it was before minister Street's time; it was an election commitment, it was not - who would know?

The idea of these scrutiny hearings is that we actually get the answer - but we still do not know. We spent a lot of time on this question without getting to the bottom of it, and that was deeply disappointing.

I said to the minister that the budget last year was late, there was a minute to the deputy secretary which you may not have read dated 23 September. I believe you said this was a commitment made by the former premier, but not an election commitment. Why was the money not simply in the budget, as opposed to going through this process? A fair and reasonable question, I think. The minister's response was, I don't know why the timing was what it was or why it was dealt with in the supplementary appropriation bill.

If the minister does not know, who does? At one point during Estimates, the minister seemed to tell me I should ask the former premier Gutwein. I cannot. Unfortunately for us, minister Street is the closest or best we have in terms of asking these questions about the appropriation of \$250 000 for this project - but the JackJumpers have been a beneficiary of much more public funding than that. During a scrutiny process, it is important that we are able to scrutinise and get accurate answers back to questions that we have.

We asked a lot of questions about this. Further on, I asked, what evidence did your department rely on to ensure that \$250 000 aligned with what you wanted to see for sport and recreation, and if that was a good use of taxpayer money. Minister Street said, 'I would assume that in due proper process with the previous premier in negotiating, he came to the conclusion that it was a proper and fit use of funding.'

That is how funding gets decided, or at least how funding was decided under the former premier Gutwein. You made a request to the former premier and you got assessed by his process, whether he just decided yes or no, whether it was a good project for the Government to support, and the money appeared - and if you went through any other process you were met with much more rigour, which is a great segue onto the Falls Festival funding under the Hospitality and Events portfolio.

We had a quite explicit outline of what happened. The Falls Festival underwent a rigorous departmental assessment, presumably against the events strategy or whatever strategies there were. The department did its work and made recommendations to the minister, who decided that the \$1.5 million they wanted was not a good use of taxpayer money. That is what their decision was. I do not personally like that decision, but there was a rigorous process there.

At the same time, Cricket Australia was looking for a home for its Fifth Test, so instead of going through the rigorous process through the department, the premier decided it was a good use of taxpayer money. You have two events: one goes through a rigorous process and gets nothing; the other one goes through whatever the premier thinks is a good idea at the time and gets over \$5 million in taxpayer funding.

I like both of those events. I went to the Ashes and loved it. I have been a long-time supporter of the Falls Festival when I was a bit younger and I loved it. I know what an institution it has been for Tasmanians, particularly young people, but families as well, older people; lots of people have enjoyed that festival for a very long time. It was a time when events were very hard to manage, very hard to host events, but it was an iconic Tasmanian event at

Marion Bay, 17 years old, and it was dropped for want of \$1.5 million while the Ashes was given about \$5 million.

Both events should have been assessed under the same process. Yes, they are different events but as outlined in the answer given on notice from the department about events funding, visitation was the key metric that they use. Both of those events would have had high visitation and do have high visitation. The statistic from Falls Festival a few years ago showed that half the people there were from interstate. It was a driver for visitation to the state, but it is no more. That is disappointing, especially for young people.

If you are an 18- or 19-year-old at the moment and have been through two or three years of a pandemic, that has been a tough place for a lot of young people who have been isolated from their mates, from their friends, and have not been able to attend school. It has impacted on their learning. Then at the end of this we find out that, because they were assessed under the rigorous process, Falls Festival did not get the money but the Ashes did. The premier of the day was a big fan of cricket. Perhaps he was not as big a fan of the Falls Festival.

I asked the minister about former minister, Ms Courtney's response to the Falls Festival announcing it was about to leave. When it was announced that the Falls Festival would not return after 17 years in Tasmania, the then minister issued a statement that outlined that the Government would find ways to support other summer events. What has been done since putting out the press release?

Mr Street helpfully said he was going through the supported events of 2021-22. He gave me a list of events, presumably that could replace the Falls Festival: the Burnie Athletics Carnival, the Australian Yard Dog Championship, the City of Devonport Squash Open, the Moto Development BMW Safari, the World Amateur Four-Ball Golf Championship Tournament, the Breath of Fresh Air Film Festival - at least we are getting a bit closer to the sort of cohort that might like the Falls Festival - the British Motor Cycle Club Tassie Tour, the Australian Underwater Hockey Championships, the Spoke Motorcycle Festival, the Amos Family Bicentenary. If you were into the Falls Festival you might like to go to the Amos Family Festival reunion -

Ms Haddad - It is very good.

Mr WINTER - I heard it was very good. The Australian Musical Theatre Festival, the Australian Orienteering Championships, National Rowing Championships, International Tenpin Bowling Festival going back as far as 2018. That is what was there to make up for the loss of that festival. Young Tasmanians might agree with me that that list was found wanting when it comes to events to support local artists, events to engage with young Tasmanians and help to enhance and make summer in Tasmania the best it can possibly be.

There is a gaping hole in summer in Tasmania without the Falls Festival, especially for young people. I would like to see it return. Whether it is the Falls Festival or a similar event, it would be great to have a festival like that, able to attract the best international artists, showcasing Tasmania's summer to the rest of the country. It did a great job of doing that. I hope it does again in the future, or at least a festival like that.

A compliment was paid to Mr Street earlier about having answers to questions on notice back quickly compared to his colleagues. I was able to get the list back quickly of sporting

events that have been supported by the Government. This included AFL, basketball, tenpin bowling, cricket, soccer, golf, motor sports, mountain biking, netball, orienteering, running, sailing, tennis, touch football, triathlon and underwater hockey. It is nearly \$18 million in funding, so it is a significant amount. A lot of these happened during COVID-19 lockdowns across the country. At that stage we had no COVID-19 in Tasmania and we were able to host events here that otherwise might not have been able to go ahead.: the fifth cricket test, for example, as Perth could not host it.

Regarding the minister's events strategy, it would be good to assess events like this against a rigorous strategy. He has announced he is doing that. Compliments to the minister. With a lot of these events, if you look at the dollar per visitation, the amount per visitation, there is a huge disparity between the amount of money going into some sports, or not with other sports. There was \$60 000 for tennis, but visitation was 22. There might be some benefits under the Sport and Recreation portfolio, but I am not sure that visitation of 22 is ticking many boxes. I might have misunderstood the numbers. If I have, I am sure the minister will correct me and provide us with some explanation.

We need to see some rigour around this money. The Ashes is a classic example of no rigour. The outcome was a fantastic event, but we need to make sure that with taxpayers' money we are approaching these things in a fair and equitable manner. If I was the Falls Festival organisers looking at the way that the two events were handled, I would certainly be disappointed.

The other output I want to speak on is Local Government. I listened to the new Minister for Local Government. We have had a lot of ministers for Local Government in recent times. We have had a lot of reform. Ms Dow put it well when she said that there was reform fatigue. I agree with that wholeheartedly.

We have had a voluntary amalgamation platform from former Local Government minister, Mr Gutwein, that ended when Tasman voted against amalgamating with Sorell. A new process we are now going through has changed. Devonport City Council seems to be putting up a reform agenda without having consulted with other councils. Launceston wants to do some reform. Neighbouring councils are not happy. We are already seeing the same situation going on where the reform does not happen. That is helpful for the councils. We had reform fatigue. We are not going to get any progress.

The issue of charitable rates came up. I am flabbergasted that this still has not been fixed. Mr Street said this happened when he was still on Kingborough Council. It happened while I was on Kingborough Council. The current situation should have been resolved well before now. It should have been resolved two or three local government ministers ago. We still do not have a resolution to it. There is a very clear decision by the court but it is clear that there are legislative issues to be dealt with. It is up to the minister to try to resolve the issue. About 18 months ago, it came to an LGAT meeting. I am sure there was a resolution that had been agreed to, at least in principle. I am not sure what has happened since then, but this is a fairness and equity issue that needs to be quickly resolved.

The review of the act is a long way away. We understood that the draft was supposed to be finished by the middle of last year. That particular piece of reform has been delayed again, like everything. What do we have for all this attempted reform over different ministers? Mr Gutwein started the Local Government Act review, hand-balled it to Mr Shelton, who hand-

balled it Mr Jaensch, who may have finished it but then it went to Mr Ferguson, who had it for a little while and now it has gone to Mr Street. It is hard to keep track of all the attempted reform. The only thing the Government has done with local government is compulsory voting, which we supported, but all that has happened in all this time, after all the discussion, is compulsory voting.

The most pressing issue for local government for the elected members I speak to is the code of conduct. What has happened since last year? I read into the *Hansard* from the previous year, which was Mr Jaensch talking about what was going to happen with the code of conduct issue. I ask what had happened since then and the answer was really nothing. We still have the same situation where local government does not appear to be a particularly appealing pursuit for the talented, intelligent, bright people who we want to be in local government in Tasmania. The great thing about it is that you do not have to do it full-time. You can still have a job. You can go and represent your community and you should be able to do that safely.

Time expired.

Ms O'CONNOR - Chair, the Estimates Committee A with the new Minister for Sport and Recreation, Local Government, and Hospitality and Events was very revealing. Under the rigorous and tenacious questioning of my colleague, Dr Rosalie Woodruff, we learned that it is a story of winners and losers. The winners during the last state election campaign were those with Liberal Party connections. The losers were everyone else. Sitting members and candidates promised in the vicinity of \$14 million to \$15 million during the campaign to organisations to which they, invariably, had a close connection.

No one in here, certainly not the Greens, begrudges any organisation that received a grant following the last state election but, like the Integrity Commission, we question the process.

We have had a story in the headlines on and off ever since then of the Liberal member for Clark, Ms Ogilvie, who managed to secure a \$150 000 grant for the Sandy Bay Rowing Club, of which her daughter is a member. This raises significant conflict-of-interest questions. There is a picture in the media, and certainly Ms Ogilvie put social media up of her standing in front of the kayaks at the Sandy Bay Rowing Club, letting the people who saw that post know that she delivered new infrastructure for the Sandy Bay Rowing Club. I must say she is looking very jaunty in a nautical navy jacket.

When you analyse the list of projects approved at Liberal Party HQ through a process that had no rigor and no merits base around it, against the register of members' interests, there is the Premier, who is a patron of the Ulverstone Soccer Club, which received a \$185 000 grant for new clubrooms. There are plenty of soccer clubs around the state that would appreciate that level of funding. Education minister, Roger Jaensch, is a member of the Emu Valley Rhododendron Gardens, which received \$61 273 for irrigation. He is also a patron of the Cradle Coast Outrigger Canoe Club, which received \$78 000 for three canoes. I am reading from the ABC report. The Attorney-General, Elise Archer, is a patron of the Glenorchy Cricket Club, which scored \$20 000, and of the Hobart Football Club, which received a grant of \$50 000. Resources minister, Guy Barnett, is a patron of the Deloraine Bowls Club to which the Liberals committed \$25 000. Oh, lucky Bracknell Football Club. The member for Lyons, Mr Shelton, is a life member and his family is closely connected to the Bracknell Football Club, which received \$45 000, although the ABC reports that Mr Shelton's interest disclosure does not list the membership.

Initially, these grants were capped at \$150 000 but one grant was changed to accommodate larger projects. One grant was \$1 million to the Launceston City Football Club.

This has raised questions, for example, from the Centre for Public Integrity's Geoffrey Watson, who said:

Whenever there is a conflict of interest it almost certainly means that the money should not be allocated in that way. The lack of transparency is appalling ... The idea that money could be allocated by people who are associated with a political party is just offensive to the notion of a proper allocation of public funds. It is ridiculous to think that the Tasmanian public could have any confidence in the way this was allocated.

It seems to be money allocated for party political purposes. That is contrary to the public interest. It is opaque to analysis and it is wrong.

We know that the Integrity Commission had a look at the 2018 state election, which was notable for something in the order of 400 small grants being given out to various organisations around the state in a clear example of pork-barrelling or electoral bribery. We hear from the Premier, his predecessor, from the minister, that this is a normal part of campaigning, a normal part of doing business.

I want to know, for example, about the \$85 000 that Ms Ogilvie secured for the excellent Bucaan Neighbourhood House: did other neighbourhood houses also receive \$85 000? What about the fantastic people at West Moonah Neighbourhood House? This is the problem with a scattergun electoral bribery approach to public funds.

The best way to do it, of course, is to have a merits-based approach and to take a responsive and responsible policy approach. That is to say, for example: 'All neighbourhood houses require an extra allocation of funds so they can continue to do their fantastic frontline community work. As a party, should we be re-elected to government, we will give each neighbourhood house an extra \$85 000.'

What you have here, for two state elections in a row now, is a very unfair system, a system where grant applications, requests for assistance, are sent to Liberal Party HQ. Can you imagine if it was found out that a group of faceless men and women at the Greens HQ were telling candidates what we could promise and to whom? When you flip it like that, it sounds as bad as it is. The thing is that Liberal Party HQ knows the numbers, they know the donors, they know where electoral support needs to be shored up so, of course, those decisions were going to be made in Liberal Party headquarters. It is disgusting: it smells. It has been identified as a stink by people like Geoffrey Watson QC, Tasmania's Integrity Commission and out in the community. We have a system here that is smelly and unfair.

You see the consequences of those promises in the Sport and Recreation budget which had a \$14 million drop in it, as revealed by Dr Woodruff, because that was the money that had to be spent on Liberal election promises that were about who you know. Not what your level of need is as an organisation but who your patron is, who you are connected to, which Liberal member comes to your neighbourhood house for a community lunch. It makes it so unfair on the many excellent sporting and community organisations in Tasmania that were not in the know with the Liberal member or candidate, or the Liberal party HQ.

The only reason this has come to light is because the Greens found the documents - Ms Ogilvie's documents, actually, which gave her a template pro forma letter which said something like, 'Congratulations, we are very pleased at Liberal Party headquarters to confirm that we will allocate \$150 000 to the Sandy Bay Rowing Club for the purposes of a new pontoon.' Nowhere in that letter did it say we think Ms Ogilvie's daughter is a terrific rower and we want to support Ms Ogilvie's rowing club. This is all about favours being given: who you know, and who you are connected to.

Chair, the local communities facilities fund is an electoral bribery fund with public money. I am not sitting this on the new minister's head. This was before his time, but he has been around for a little while, as he reminded me at the Estimates table, so I think he knows full well that this is not a merits-based process. It is an opaque process for distributing public funds for the purposes of electoral bribery.

Time expired.

Ms HADDAD - Chair, I attended Committee A during minister Street's output for the first part of the day's hearings, which dealt with Community Services and Development. I started with some questions about the decision to disband the Department of Communities Tasmania. That impacts part of minister Street's portfolios, but other portfolios as well. Through some of the comments that have been made in other committees during the days prior to this hearing, it did definitely seem like there had not been a great deal of pre-planning or policy thought or master-planning into that decision to disband the department of Communities, which was a department still shaping itself after it was carved off from the former Department of Health and Human Services, and parts of DPAC came into Communities.

There was good and bad in the decision to separate health and human services, but not long after being able to wrap their heads around that change, it felt like another big change had been thrust upon that department. That has been really unsettling for staff in that department in particular. Certainly, some of the questions I read onto *Hansard* in that hearing indicated that people working in the department of Communities are feeling very uncertain about their futures and still wondering about some really basic things - which demonstrated there had not been consultation with the department, the sector, the organisations that are supported by that department. There is still a lot of staff feeling very uncertain about what the change will mean for them.

Even down to things like what award will they be employed on. A lot of people in the department of Communities are on the health award, which has different conditions, and in many respects more favourable conditions for staff than the public sector award, so there are still some really basic questions to be answered by not just minister Street, but the other ministers responsible for that department as well. I think nearly all of the Cabinet has a little bit of the department of Communities. There is certainly a lot of crossover.

Today I put on the record again that there is still that uncertainty among staff of the department of Communities. There has been a lack of consultation with them, with their senior leadership and with staff at every level. Equally, some of the sector organisations that are supported by the department of Communities are feeling uncertain about what the changes will mean for them.

One of the areas we talked about was that of food security and food relief. One organisation, Loaves and Fishes, is finding that because of the increasing costs of goods and fuel, they are not able to meet the demand that they were previously able to meet. Loaves and Fishes has had to limit their deliveries to people who really need it. We talked about that for a while. The minister did talk about money that he has secured in the Budget for an action plan to look at food security and food relief.

We are seeing - and have seen throughout the pandemic - the cost of living crisis increasing in Tasmania. People are struggling to pay for the basics, and people in increasing numbers are now seeking support from community support organisations like Loaves and Fishes, or from community houses, or from other social services organisations who support people doing it tough. There are many who are seeking support now for the first time - working families, people who have job insecurity or who are working in multiple jobs, stringing together multiple jobs just to try to get by.

It is worrying that one of those main organisations is now struggling to meet some of that demand. The minister talked about the \$300 000 that will go into working on an action plan and a strategy to increase food relief. That action plan is not yet available for public comment, but the deputy secretary indicated that it will be available online.

A similar line of questioning was about funding for the sector more broadly, for service providing organisations as well as peak bodies. I know the minister has been hearing - not just in his time as minister, but as an adviser prior to coming back into the parliament and to Cabinet - that lack of funding certainty for organisations on 12-month or three-year contracts makes it really difficult for those organisations to attract and retain staff. We talked about that at length in the committee. I know it is something that the minister is listening to, and I respect that.

Without the ability to attract and retain staff, sector organisations suffer - and as a result, the community members who rely on those sector organisations suffer. It is sometimes the case that a government can have very good will to fund those organisations, but fail to recognise that, year on year, if those organisations do not have surety of funding, they will actually have to be making arrangements to pay out redundancies and lose staff if they do not know if their next funding agreement is coming.

We talked about the fact that the minister does have a commitment to increasing the length of those funding agreements, which is very positive. The sector will welcome that very warmly, particularly if the sector can move towards five-year funding contracts, which will give that certainty. As the cost of living continues to rise in Tasmania, it is getting harder across the board for community services, the private sector and the government sector to find people who want to move to and work in Tasmania, because the thing that used to make slightly lower incomes in Tasmania bearable - our lower cost of living - has really evaporated in the last few years. Everybody knows that. The cost of housing, the cost of goods, the cost of fuel - all of those things are rising to a point where Tasmania is no longer a cheap place to live. Low wages and low wage growth contribute to the difficulty sectors across the board have in attracting and retaining staff.

In the few minutes I have remaining, I want to make some really positive comments. In quite a wide-ranging discussion at the table, minister Street, Dr Woodruff and I found we were all in furious agreement when it comes to the treatment of LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians, in particular

the safety of transgender women. I have sent the *Hansard* of the discussions we had at the Estimates table to a number of stakeholders who work very hard representing people in the LGBTIQ+ community.

One of the comments I had back was that it was the most refreshing *Hansard* they have ever read, to hear three members of a committee like that from three different parties all speaking passionately about our support for trans women and our commitment to safety of transgender women. It is something this minister will continue to advocate strongly for, not just within his ministerial portfolio but within his party as well.

We talked about that in respect of the Sport portfolio, but it has a much broader implication than just the involvement of trans women in sport. It is also about the safety of trans women in our community. Part of that is security of funding, like other organisations and other peak bodies. We spoke about Working It Out which has not had a funding increase in more than 20 years other than CPI. It has had project funding, which is a welcome boost to the work of organisations across the year, but it is that surety of core funding that is important. Funding security is really important for the Government's work and the minister's commitment to protecting the rights of LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians, and particularly trans Tasmanians, to be achieved.

Time expired.

Ms DOW - Deputy Chair, I rise this afternoon to speak on Local Government in the Estimates committee hearing. We raised our concerns about the state of local government in Tasmania, and the fact that almost every day when you read the newspaper or see the news you hear of another unfortunate breach of the code of conduct, impaired relations in a council, councillors going through difficult times or media or community scrutiny, or the impact of that on staff.

We wanted to make the point to the minister during Estimates that we are concerned about the state of local government. We hope that, being the fifth local government minister and the third for this year, he works with the sector and improves it for the better. As Mr Winter said, we want intelligent, talented Tasmanians to run for local government, providing real outcomes to the community and delivering for the local community.

Right now, when there is so much uncertainty in the sector, bad news stories, lack of support for the sector, it is concerning that there might be councils where there are not enough people nominating for the positions available.

The minister started off with a spring in his step with his push for compulsory voting. It came from goodness knows where, but he proceeded with it. The sector would appreciate greater consultation from this minister in the future. It was not even a recommendation of the Government's review of the Local Government Act. It was our policy position, so that is interesting. We have always thought that was a good policy position because it would raise the status of local government, encourage more people to be involved in voting in local government and bring better outcomes to local government. We were pleased to support that change.

It is reasonable to say that there is a level of expectation from the sector that this minister will not rush further reforms and consult with them. It is a contrast to the approach the

Government has taken to local government in the past, doing not much at all over the past eight years.

I was involved in a reform process when I was at Burnie City Council under the then Local Government minister, Peter Gutwein. I do not know if there was any intention to implement the recommendations of that review process. As with planning reform, there is a level of fatigue across the local government sector when it comes to this Government's agenda for local government. Regarding the reform directions developed by this Government after thorough consultation, a lot of people made submissions to that process but have not had their thoughts implemented or any further action taken by this Government other than this compulsory voting move.

Some of those things are the general managers role, the one vote one value policy, which is something we are keen to look at to ensure a greater share of democracy across local government. It is important that the Government gets moving on those things.

We moved to the latest iteration of the reform process. I asked the minister and Ms O'Connor asked the minister about his position on amalgamations. He said that 29 was too many but did not take it much further than that. I asked him about local government electoral boundaries, given that the Premier had told us earlier in that week that the Government was looking at electoral boundaries from the point of view of the restoration of the House of Assembly and what that meant for local government boundaries. The minister said there had been no move to do that and would be at the discretion of the chair, Sue Smith.

It seems funny that you would not look at the two because they would inform one another, as well as looking at the boundaries for the Legislative Council. We will learn more about what the Government's intentions are as things progress. It is pleasing to hear that the minister has said that he will bring back an interim report to the Tasmanian community and the Tasmanian Parliament about that reform process. We look forward to receiving that, minister, to understand what is in that before the next steps progress and to make sure that adequate consultation has occurred.

I will talk, as my colleague Mr Winter did, about the independent living units and the charitable rates remissions associated with that. This has been ongoing for such a long time. I spoke at Estimates about how I had met with some constituents in Launceston who want to know what their fate is regarding this. They want to know what the ask will be upon them and what changes are being planned by the Government. There was an announcement made to local government of further consultation about a position this Government had taken. I understand that the former premier wrote to LGAT and others about that position, but that has not progressed. That was revealed during Estimates.

The minister could not give us a definitive policy position on this or a time frame for when people can expect to know the Government's position and when that will be consulted upon. The minister should be able to provide an update to the Tasmanian community about what this position is going to be and how they will go about consulting with the community on it.

Others have talked about the culture across local government and the code of conduct. This is another process that has been delayed under this Government. There has been a review but nothing has been implemented. Things are starting to get to the point in local government

where people are choosing to leave or not put their hand up to be part of local government because of the culture. We have called on the Government to implement a workplace culture review. I understand work is being done with the Local Government Association around that. That should have been done as part of the wider review of the public service.

There is an immediate need to deal with that and better support councils. You only had to look last week at Kingston and the way that meeting was conducted and how some conducted themselves as part of that process. Waratah-Wynyard Council is having a really difficult time as well; I have spoken to members of their council about what a difficult period it has been for them.

There is a need for the state Government to better support the sector and to act on the code of conduct review - immediately, really. There needs to be change. It has gone on for far too long. It is detrimental to the reputation of local government, but also to Tasmanians wanting to put their hand up for local government.

I also mention the process we were involved in earlier this year, late last year, to form a parliamentary committee around local government reform. One of the PESRAC recommendations was for the reforms to be adopted holus-bolus, and for each of the political parties in this place and the Independents to accept those recommendations before we knew what they were. Of course we objected to that, and did not form part of that process, and it has since been abolished. The question still remains whether there will be that expectation for the Government to implement those recommendations holus-bolus once it receives them from the board? Will the Government have discretion about that? Perhaps the minister could address that in his contribution as well.

In summing up, I again put on the record the importance of local government. After eight years, we want to see this Government do something to improve local government and to encourage more Tasmanians to be involved in local government and receive the rewards representing your local community brings. We want to see the review recommendations implemented and actioned, ideally before the reform process, which will go on for some time.

Time expired.

Mrs ALEXANDER - Deputy Chair, I was pleased to attend this year's Budget Estimates committee hearings for the portfolios under the minister, Mr Street, namely Community Services and Development; Sport and Recreation; Hospitality and Events; and Local Government and Planning.

In particular I was very excited to be part of that process, especially to hear a bit more and have more engagement around the community services that are very close to my heart. It was good to hear things talked about that I have actually contributed and participated in when I was sitting on the other side of the consultation process, with some of the strategies that have been initiated and currently funded as well.

Tasmanians have faced their fair share of the challenges and uncertainties brought about by the global COVID-19 pandemic. In each of these areas, the effects of the pandemic have been felt. In this Estimates committee, we heard plenty of evidence of how family businesses and communities have been impacted, and how the Government provided significant support - and has committed even more support through the Budget process.

In particular, I would like to focus on the Community Services and Development portfolio as I do have a very keen interest in these areas of social policy, given my professional background before coming to parliament.

This Government is committed to ensuring Tasmanians across the state can access services they need, when they need them. This includes investing in volunteers. Volunteers are vital to many aspects of our Tasmanian community because they support so many organisations, and are active participants in a number of areas where services and support for the community could not otherwise be delivered. Volunteers are vital to our communities. I know from personal experience that without them, many event services and supports across the state would otherwise not be possible.

This state Budget includes \$440 000 across two years to support Safeguarding Volunteering projects. These projects will help increase the number of people volunteering across Tasmania through engagement with selective councils, using local knowledge to drive solutions to support and build the capacity of volunteers across the island.

This comes on top of the funding for Volunteering Tasmania of more than \$2.3 million over the four years since 2018 to support its peak functions and projects.

It is estimated that as a result of COVID-19, about 140 000 volunteers disengaged in Tasmania. This is why there is such a need to continue to invest in Volunteering Tasmania, to ensure it can provide the leadership and direction needed to rebuild the vital volunteer workforce. From COVID-19 up until now, a huge number of volunteers have not come back, or have come back very sporadically, making it very hard for some community organisations to continue to deliver much-needed services for those in need.

Tasmania's first ever food security strategy has set out the direction for implementing PESRAC's interim and final report recommendations in this vital area. I was actually involved in the gathering of information when the Tasmanian Food Security Strategy 2021-24 was being analysed and discussed. A lot of the emergency service providers received requests from the department to engage in this process and put forward their thoughts on what should sit at the basis of the food security strategy, and seeing it from the other side was an interesting process. While we finalise our action plan from this strategy, \$300 000 will be provided to kickstart the first year of the Food Relief to Food Resilience action plan. This will support food security and upskilling the Tasmanian food sector - an initiative that supports progress towards ensuring all Tasmanians can learn about and access healthy and nutritious food.

I can definitely say that all the community organisations that provide emergency relief - especially in relation to providing food and assistance with critical nutritious food - have all unanimously agreed that it is very important to put forward all the healthy nutritious food possible, and to support those in need to access as much of these valuable items as possible.

While we are building community and individual resilience, we also understand that some people will continue to need direct assistance. Food relief provides a critical opportunity to connect Tasmanians to services that address the circumstances that lead to food insecurity.

On a side note, a number of people in need in our community come to the food banks, they start engaging with the volunteers who offer that service, and from there, quite often, they are being referred to services as they engage in a conversation which otherwise they would not

have had with any of the relief organisations, because there is sometimes a reluctance to actually walk through the front door and directly engage in the issue. Food becomes a way in which those people actually engage with additional much-needed support services. That is why the new action plan funding in this year's Budget is on top of our previously committed Emergency Food Relief Funding of \$3 million over three years, which includes increased base funding for critical food distributors such as Foodbank Tasmania and Loaves and Fishes Tasmania, as well as increased funding for Gran's Van, Loui's Van and Missionbeat, so that they can take the food and support to the people in their communities.

The 2022-23 Budget includes an investment of \$1.245 million to support older Tasmanians to participate and connect within the community. Building on the success of our Strong, Liveable Communities: Tasmania's Active Ageing Plan 2017-22, this funding will help deliver our new comprehensive whole-of-government 2023-29 Tasmanian Active Ageing Strategy. The strategy supports older Tasmanians with community consultation of the review being undertaken by the Council of the Ageing Tasmania (COTA) until July this year. The funding also ensures COTA Tasmania can continue to deliver its annual Seniors Week events, which are so important for our communities all around the state.

It is well known that isolation is a big factor for those aged people who find themselves in their home isolated from their family and unable to have a cup of tea or engage with their neighbours. The isolation that some of them have suffered through the COVID-19 time has been critical for their mental health, and it has been a very difficult time for those people. By promoting healthy and positive ageing and building connections between older Tasmanians and their community, our funding of these events provides an opportunity for older people to have an active and social week, to try new things, and meet new people.

Funding of \$80 000 over two years is also provided in the budget to promote and support workplaces to recruit and retain older the workers, acknowledging their skill base and welcoming a wealth of experience. As Tasmania and Australia's population profile ages, harnessing the skills of older people will be crucial to accessing the skills and labour required to maintain the high-functioning economy.

Our investments represent significant increases in support for Tasmanians in need across our state, totalling well over \$10 million since 2018. It is through maintaining a robust economy that the Tasmanian Liberal government can create more opportunities for Tasmanians in every corner of the state, to build thriving and connected communities.

Very importantly, and close to my heart, is also supporting and enabling our migrants to take up opportunities for economic and social participation, and to respond to what communities tell us about their needs for places to meet, learn, share their faith and celebrate their culture. It is very important because, as I have witnessed quite a number of times, a lot of these people, especially their parents, do not speak English and they rely on their younger children to drive them around, and to translate for them. There is a big risk that the older migrant community may be disengaging and not really participating and understanding the benefit of being part of the vibrant community. I am pleased that the budget includes \$75 000 to support consultations to develop a new whole-of-government Tasmanian multicultural policy enactment plan, developed in consultation with the Multicultural Council of Tasmania.

Time expired.

Mr STREET - Chair, I welcome the opportunity to discuss the Budget Estimates from this year from my portfolios, my first as a minister. First, I thank all the department staff across all of my portfolios for the work that went on behind the scenes to ensure that, as a new minister, I was well-briefed and informed on my portfolios. As the member for Franklin, Mr O'Byrne, said in one of his contributions earlier today, there is a mountain of work that goes into getting ready for Budget Estimates. In addition to my departmental staff, I also thank the team in my office for their support throughout the week.

As the Minister for Community Services and Development, I am committed to continuing this Government's strong relationship with the community services sector. This includes my commitment to ensuring that now, and throughout the transition of the Department of Communities Tasmania, there is no reduction in services for the stakeholders and to make the transition as smooth as possible. That is a commitment I have given to every stakeholder that I have met within this space.

In one of her earlier contributions, the Leader of the Opposition talked about the action plan to back up our food security strategy, and the fact that I could not detail in Estimates what the \$300 000 in the budget was going to be spent on. The reason for that is very simply that the action plan has not been released yet. It is still in the consultation phase with both food relief providers and other community stakeholders, but that \$300 000 will support the first round of actions in that action plan. What we know is that the strategy that was developed has talked about wanting to increase food security in communities whilst acknowledging that there will always be a requirement or a need within the community for emergency food relief as well. What we want to invest in are programs that upskill communities.

Ms Haddad mentioned Loaves and Fishes in her contribution. They have a couple of social enterprise programs that work with disadvantaged youth, in bringing them into their facilities, training them and upskilling them, educating them on what good food is and what goes into the preparation of it. Those, along with projects like community gardens, are the things that we want to use the \$300 000 for in this first year of the action plan.

As I said, while we are building community and individual resilience, this is on top of our commitment in 2021-22 to increase our funding for emergency food relief to \$3 million over three years. This includes increased base funding for critical food distributors, Loaves and Fishes Tasmania and Foodbank Tasmania, as well as increased funding for the essential services that Gran's Van, Loui's Van, and Missionbeat provide.

Very briefly, I do not know whether it was in the House of Assembly Estimates Committee or whether it might have been upstairs, but I talked about the fact that I have written to the new federal Community Services minister about the anomaly that exists with food relief funding at the Commonwealth level, that the organisations need to have a footprint in every state and territory across the country to qualify for that Commonwealth funding. Loaves and Fishes Tasmania has made it clear to me in meetings that I have had with them, that they have been in contact with organisations like themselves on the mainland who are also only in one or two states who have not been able to qualify for that Commonwealth funding. I would very much like to see the Commonwealth Government change the criteria around that Commonwealth Food Relief Funding to provide support to organisations that might only be in one state. Just because they are only in one state, it does not reduce the impact of the work that they do in that particular state. As I said, Loaves and Fishes has made it clear that this is not just a Tasmanian issue, this is a nationwide issue.

I also outlined the \$1.4 million over two years to expand the School Lunch Program on a pilot basis to 30 schools, which will then be independently evaluated to better understand the potential impact of this program. I look forward to meeting with stakeholders very soon to understand the progress of that.

I noted during the Community Service and Development section that there was a commitment made in 2021 for indexation across the peak bodies that sit within my portfolio areas. I am pleased to see that continue. I also made it clear, a couple of people in contributions on Community Services and Development have talked about retaining staff and that is why we work with Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) through the Community Services Industry Plan: \$3.3 million over three years to help the industry meet the projections of an additional 4000 jobs by 2024.

Very briefly, I will touch on the neighbourhood houses and the work that they do. They are an incredible support to the communities they operate in. I thank the Neighbourhood House Network and the staff and volunteers, and the CEO, Michael Bishop, for their ongoing support to their communities. I look forward to continuing to work with the Networks and develop the next Neighbourhood House Strategy. I made the point last week that the strategy, which expires in June 2023, the new strategy will address the eligibility for any new neighbourhood houses in the state, with consultations now underway.

There is important funding in this year's Budget for the Multicultural Council of Tasmania, and the Migrant Resource Centres, both in the south and north.

Finally, in the Community Services and Development space, I want to touch on the conversation that was had around support for LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians. There is \$60 000 for a grants program for organisations that work in that particular sector, and there is also \$10 000 for Working It Out to administer a community grants program in recognition of the important work that individuals and communities undertake at local level. I made it clear that I think that the whole-of-government working group in the LGBTIQ+ space is providing effective and clear views on the issues and support measures that that community requires, but I am always open to more discussions in that space.

In terms of Hospitality and Events, since 2015, we have had a strategic direction for how we invest in our events. Events Tasmania has three key things that they look at: does an event have the capacity to bring people to Tasmania; move people around Tasmania; and get people talking about Tasmania? Through 2021-22, 80 events have been supported through Events Tasmania programs. I am pleased that now we are hopefully on the other side of COVID-19, that we are in a position to be able to develop the next five-year strategy, to guide our investment in events.

In relation to the Falls Festival, which Mr Winter said was mentioned at last week's Estimates, to put on the record that in 2020 Falls Festivals across Australia were cancelled due to the impacts of COVID-19. In September 2021, Falls Festival organisers wrote to the Department of State Growth seeking \$1.5 million in funding support to deliver the Falls Festival at Marion Bay in 2022-23. The uplift in funding requested by organisers included general and increased operating expenses and financial feasibility and viability assurances to be able to deliver the festival in 2022, and beyond. The department contacted organisers to discuss the request, including other options and opportunities for supporting the event, but they were informed that the decision by the organisers was that they were not in a position to deliver

the event in Tasmania, following the impacts of COVID-19 on their businesses. I agree that this is unfortunate. We would love to see an event of its type in Tasmania and we are prepared to have a conversation either through my office but then through Events Tasmania about potentially funding something like that.

Regarding motor sport, there were some questions asked around Targa. I made it clear that as far as Targa goes, the decision that was made mid-race this year was obviously the result of very unfortunate circumstances. I can only pass on my condolences to the family and friends of those individuals who died during this year's Targa. Any decisions on the future of Targa will be made post the investigations that are going on.

In the dot points provided from the committee there was a dot point about Alf. I am going to assume, because we did not talk about that horrific 1980s television program, that the committee meant the AFL. My position, which I made clear last week, was that we were not going to see AFL content played in Tasmania until a Tasmanian team hits the field; that we will talk with Hawthorn Football Club about what options may look like going forward but that we will not be making any commitments until we have a decision from the AFL on our bids for AFL and AFLW teams.

In terms of the hospitality industry and the THA, our partnership with the THA is strong and I am proud of the programs we support and their outcomes for this industry.

The issue of wage theft was raised by Ms O'Connor in that hearing. I am meeting with the THA next week and I have already contacted them to let them know that that will be a topic of discussion that I would like to engage them in.

There was a lot of conversation last week at the Estimates table about local government and the reform process that is going on there. As a Government we have committed \$1.64 million in the 2022-23 Tasmanian Budget over the next two years to continue the important work on the future of local government review. The review formally commenced in January 2022 and will be conducted over an 18-month period in three six-month stages. The board will be presenting an interim report to me at the end of June with the final report being provided to me by 30 June 2023.

I was more than happy to make the commitment to Ms Dow when she was asking questions about it, and I think it was Dr Woodruff in the local government section, that I have already made it clear to the local government division that I want to, not only publish the interim report once I have had a chance to consider it myself and take it to Cabinet, but also to provide briefings to any member of parliament in both Houses once they have had a copy of the interim report provided to them, if they would like to discuss anything that is in that interim report. I understand that with the introduction of compulsory voting that there was a concern in the sector that I might try to bulldoze reforms through. I could not be any clearer that I want every member of parliament to be involved in this discussion. I want every member of parliament to be involved in this discussion.

I want every member of the local government sector who wants to have a voice to go on this journey with us because I genuinely believe that we all want to get to the same place: where we have a local government sector that is healthy, where people have safe work places, where people feel able to put their hand up to run for local government, and when they run for local government and are elected, they feel like they are emboldened to make decisions and

feel like they have been elected by a wide cross section of the community and supported in the decisions that they make.

They are not all easy decisions that are made at local government level. We want to make sure that the elected members across the state feel comfortable and confident, not only in the decisions they make but also in the physical chambers where they sit to make them as well. We also want that for local government staff who have to engage with local councillors.

I understand the concern around reform fatigue that Ms Dow talked about. What I have made clear last week in Estimates, and also during the compulsory voting debate, is that compulsory voting was introduced because of the time sensitivity. I am not interested in cherry picking the easy reforms. I understand the work that has been done and needs to be done in terms of reforms that we bring back to this place.

Regarding the code of conduct, it is not true to say that there is no work being done on that. The local government division is working with OPC as we speak to finalise a draft version of the legislative changes that we will bring to this place to strengthen the code of conduct. I am hopeful that I will be in the position shortly to release a copy of that draft bill so anybody who has an interest in it, whether it is in the sector or in the wider community, can see what we are proposing, make sure we cover all the areas that are of interest or of concern to all stakeholders, to make sure that we end up with a code of conduct that is not only enforceable but gives confidence to local government representatives, local government staff and the people who engage with them, that there is a strong framework around the set of behaviours that we expect and expect to be enforced. That is my commitment around the code of conduct.

Finally, in the Sport and Recreation space, I will outline a couple of things that were in the Sport and Recreation budget that we are incredibly proud of. There is increased funding to Reclink to make sure they can provide their services on the north-west coast and in the north as well. I made it clear at Estimates last week that Reclink started as an organisation in the south of the state. With increased funding, they are now going to be able to deliver their services to disadvantaged communities and individuals across the state. It is important to get people involved who might otherwise be - not shut out, but less likely to engage in sport and recreation.

I am proud of the \$185 000 a year for four years for the national policy framework for girls and women in sport strategy. It will consider and address all aspects of sporting participation including coaching, officiating, leadership, administration, player support and participation. We are providing \$200 000 to Netball Tasmania to strengthen the development pathways for netballers in Tasmania.

There is currently a pathway through to the Collingwood Magpies and the deal that the Government has with the Collingwood Magpies. I see Ms O'Byrne giving a thumbs up.

Ms O'Byrne - Go Pies!

Mr STREET - I found it difficult in attendance at those games to barrack for anybody wearing black and white, Ms O'Byrne.

Ms O'Byrne - I found it the easiest thing to support them as they head into the finals.

Mr STREET - We want to strengthen that pathway. There are still not enough Tasmanians progressing through to the Super Netball League. That \$200 000 is about making sure that there is a framework and a process to get local Tasmanians who show the ability to get them to the level below the Super Netball League so they can show themselves off and potentially then get a contract with one of the eight Super Netball teams.

We are not in a position for Tasmania to enter the Super Netball competition yet but, hopefully, in the future that can occur. While that cannot occur, we want to make sure that there is a pathway for these players in Tasmania to the Super Netball League, not only for the exposure to the top league, but there is actually an ability to turn professional now with the Super Netball League. We want that for Tasmanian netballers who are good enough.

I am happy with the doubling of funding for Ticket to Play, the Government's voucher program. It was terrific to be at the House of Dance on Saturday to announce that we are expanding the eligibility criteria again to allow vouchers to be provided to disadvantaged children to participate in dance.

We have already expanded it once or twice but the last expansion was to include learn to swim programs. This expansion is to increase the number of vouchers that we provide. We have ticked over 14 000 vouchers for the 2021-22 year. We want to see more vouchers being used. I made it clear on Saturday that we are agnostic about what children choose to do regarding participation in sport and recreation. We want them to participate, to get the benefits of participating in sport and the recreation that goes with it that we know about, which is healthier, happier and more balanced and hopefully better socially, better mental health outcomes and better balanced kids.

As important as school is, and it is incredibly important, it is important that there are opportunities for kids to socialise outside the classroom, potentially in a pursuit where they are more confident than they might be in the classroom. I am happy with the Ticket to Play program. I am happy that we are now able to provide \$200 vouchers to eligible kids every year so that they can participate in a summer and a winter sport, or if the sport runs year-round to use two vouchers for the one sport.

Dr Woodruff asked questions about election commitments made by the Liberal Party and its candidates during the 2021 state election. In particular, Dr Woodruff asked about commitments made as part of the Local Communities Facilities Fund. As I made clear last week, the 2021-22 Budget fully funded our 2021 election commitments and that budget was passed by parliament. For the avoidance of doubt I am providing additional information today which is a list of all of the Liberal Party's commitments during the 2021 state election made under the Local Communities Facilities Fund. In seeking leave to table this, this list has been previously provided to media who have asked for it. I encourage other parties in this place to table their lists as well.

Members - Hear, hear.

Dr WOODRUFF - Chair, I am glad that the Government has finally let Tasmanians know how they spent money that went through no proper merit-based, independent, department process from the 2018 election. It is clear from the information that is coming out that conflict of interest was involved with the way taxpayers' money was handed out by the Liberal Party.

We have established through the questions we asked Mr Street in Sport and Recreation, that on 3 April 2021 the Liberal Party established a body called the Local Communities Facilities Fund. It was a pork-barrelling fund. From that, according to the minister, 150 so-called 'funding commitments' were made during the state election. He said there was an assessment process in place during the election campaign.

That assessment process, we now understand, was not done by government employees but by the Liberal Party team, whoever they were, the behind the scenes members of the Liberal Party who decided where taxpayers' money was going to be promised during the election campaign. The minister said in Estimates questions that they were being done against established criteria. The minister could not tell me what the established criteria were. We asked the minister how many grant requests had been made to the local communities facilities fund between 26 March and 1 May and were refused. The minister said:

Projects were assessed by the Liberal Party and commitments made with the intent to deliver on them if elected. Given these assessments were done during caretaker period and by the Liberal Party, there is no information held by the Government to provide.

How convenient that taxpayers' money that was promised, for example, by Ms Ogilvie, to her daughter's rowing club where there was \$150 000 spent on a pontoon. It was promised by a Liberal Party team that made the assessment, not public officials. The assessments were done without criteria except the criteria of which would best benefit the vote for the Liberal Party and their candidates who were standing at the election if communities were promised certain goodies.

The Government cannot provide information about the process because this was not a government process. This was a Liberal Party process about how they would spend taxpayers' money in a non-merit-based process outside of any established transparent processes. The minister made it clear that there was no departmental approval or merit-based assessment that was conducted.

We asked the minister for the list of projects. The minister has just tabled that for us - and about time. When I asked him in Estimates he told me that these had been approved in the 2021-22 budget that went to parliament last year. He was trying to shut down my question and say it was out of order for me to ask that question because it was to do with last year's budget. They were not listed in last year's budget and the minister was misleading the committee when he made that statement. There was no list of the individual projects that were committed to by the Liberal Party during the election period and that were subsequently funded by the Liberal Government after it got re-elected on the back of the pork barrelling it had done.

The minister said all the commitments were publicly announced either through a media release or by social media and were approved through the budget process. I would like the minister to also table the announcements that have been made for each of those commitments that were promised during the election process. There were 150 funded.

The minister told us in Estimates that all of the commitments were publicly announced. He was not very clear about the facts when he tried to shut down our questions about providing a list of the projects that had been funded. I would like to see, on behalf of Tasmanians, the list of announcements made for each one of these projects. Where were they made? Was there

a press release? Were 150 press releases put out by the Liberal Party during the election campaign? We do not remember them. Maybe there were for the big ones promised in the election.

They also could have been put out, according to the Liberal Party, through a media release or by social media. It is a very odd way to announce \$150 000 for Ms Ogilvie's daughter's club through social media. I do not think the Integrity Commission will find that best practice. In fact, the Integrity Commission had quite a lot to say, Ms Ogilvie, about the same process that was used in the 2018 election. The Integrity Commission was very clear that in the 2018 election the Liberal Party had no process, competitive or otherwise, to determine whether funds that had been pledged were really needed or whether they were a good use of public money. They made the point for the 2018 election that the promises did not meet good practice grant management principles. They did not have objectives, they did not have selection criteria, they did not have an application process, they were not publicly advertised or competitive, they did not identify decision makers and they did not involve a public record of how or why recipients were chosen.

Let us see what they learnt from the 2018 election. Let us see whether the Liberals are good learners. If you look at what happened, they repeated the process in 2021. There were no objectives. The Government has not provided what the objectives were. We have not seen any selection criteria. According to Mr Street, there were established criteria that the Liberal Party team used. Can you please table that as well, minister, so that Tasmanians can see what the criteria were for that large amount of taxpayers' money that was handed out? There was no application process. The application process was the whim of the candidate and what they decided to fund.

Ms Ogilvie decided to spend \$150 000 of taxpayers' money on her daughter's club. Mr Jaensch decided to fund the Emu Valley Rhododendron Gardens and give them \$61 273 for irrigation. He also decided, as the patron of the Cradle Coast Outrigger Canoe Club, to give them \$78 000 for new canoes. Mr Barnett, a patron of the Deloraine Bowls Club, gave them \$25 000. Let us not forget the \$1 million that went to the Launceston Football Club and the \$500 000 that went to the Cradle Coast Authority, where Mr Jaensch was the chief executive before his election in 2014.

None of this was with any merits-based assessment and none of it was within the independent established criteria. It stinks. Tasmanians will not forget it and we have not finished.

Estimates of the Minister for Community Services and Development, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Hospitality and Events and Minister for Local Government agreed to.

DIVISIONS 2 and 9

Minister for Women, Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Primary Industries and Water

[6.22 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE - Deputy Chair, it is my great pleasure to rise to reflect on the 2022-23 Budget on behalf of the minister, Ms Palmer, as I was minister for Women and Disability for a very short time, so I will give it my all and do my best for Ms Palmer.

This Budget is a clear investment in securing Tasmania's future, and outlines measures to help us deliver on our plan. There has been a significant investment in Ms Palmer's portfolios of Primary Industries and Water, Disability Services and Women. The minister and the entire Rockliff Liberal Government are proud that this is a Budget with heart, which focuses firmly on what everyday Tasmanians need most - health, education, housing and building safe and inclusive, thriving communities.

Ms Palmer particularly noted that we are investing a record \$11.2 billion in our health system and the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians. A record \$8.5 billion will also be invested in education, skills and training to enable Tasmanians to get jobs with local employers, which will support and drive our economy forward. While our economy is strong, we know that many Tasmanians are still doing it tough and there is more work to do. That is why this Government is implementing the most comprehensive and ambitious affordable housing strategy in Tasmania's history.

Mr Barnett - Hear, hear.

Ms OGILVIE - Hear, hear, indeed: up to \$538 million into social and affordable housing and initiatives to address homelessness, with \$204 million allocated in 2022-23 alone. We are also on track to build 1500 homes by June next year, rising to a total of 10 000 new homes by 2032, as part of our 10-year \$1.5 billion housing package.

Ms Palmer reflected that this Budget is a winner and has the support of a range of experts and stakeholders, including the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Michael Bailey, who said, 'After two years of COVID chaos, it is terrific to see not just a way out of COVID, but also how well the economy is travelling.'

On women, the minister stated in committee hearings that our state is stronger and more prosperous when we support all Tasmanians to achieve their full potential. She reiterated that this Government is continuing our strong focus on reducing barriers to women's economic participation and increasing opportunities for leadership and advancement, particularly in industries in which women are traditionally under-represented.

Our work to achieve gender equality in Tasmania is guided by the Tasmanian Women's Strategy. The focus of this strategy is for government-led cultural change. The minister outlined initiatives proposed under the 2022-27 strategy, including the development of a gender impact assessment process to build the capability of government agencies to assess the gender impacts of initiatives and policies. These initiatives will include training and resources, and will be publicly available so that other organisations can adopt these processes.

The minister reported that in the 2022-23 Budget, the Government has committed \$800 000 over four years to implement the Tasmanian Women's Strategy to support cultural change. She was particularly pleased to welcome the Government's first Gender Budget Statement. The statement highlights our policies and the actions we are taking to create a more inclusive Tasmania. This is an important first step and will be built upon in future years.

The minister made the point that this statement is not just symbolism and we are not just talking about equality. Our gender statement was welcomed by Dress for Success CEO Amanda French, who said:

Dress for Success congratulates the Rockliff Government, including minister Palmer and Treasurer Ferguson, for the first State Budget that includes a gender statement. This is an important step forward in ensuring economic and social wellbeing for Tasmanian women. We also welcome the range of funding initiatives supporting women across areas including workforce, tackling family violence and a range of other areas.

During budget Estimates last week, the Minister for Women discussed the current gender breakdown of government boards. She said it was an honour to recently announce the 2022 recipients of the Women's Leadership Scholarships Board Diversity Scholarship Program. The 10 scholarship recipients for 2022 will join 87 women who have previously been supported to undertake these courses to help them further their careers and take on leadership and board positions. Through our policies and actions, we are creating real change.

The minister was pleased to report that in the 2022-23 Budget, as part of the 12-point \$5 million funding for the third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan, there will be an increase in core funding for our specialist counselling services throughout Tasmania. This includes Yemaya, which provides an important outreach service in northern Tasmania, specifically Beaconsfield, George Town and now Scottsdale. Ms Palmer would like to acknowledge the former minister for Women, Jane Howlett, as I would, and thank her for her work and oversight in developing the Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27.

We welcome initiatives right across the 2022-23 Budget that increase opportunity for leadership and participation for Tasmanian women and girls. This includes a continuation of funding for women's workforce participation through the \$2 million Supporting Women to Succeed grant program; \$450 000 to support increased gender and cultural diversity across our resources sector; and continuing the Women's Leadership Board Diversity Scholarships.

These commitments are helping to increase opportunities for women in the workforce and in leadership positions, and to promote and recognise the contribution of Tasmanian women across all aspects of our economy and our communities. They are the foundation for meaningful change for Tasmanian women and girls.

In relation to disabilities, in the portfolio of Disability Services, Ms Palmer announced that this Government is committing a further \$400 000 to support the establishment of the new Tasmanian disability commissioner. This decision comes after extensive consultation with the disability community, where it was identified that there is a need for a disability commissioner, alongside a review of the Tasmanian Disability Services Act 2011. It is envisaged that the commissioner will act as an independent oversight body, provide leadership across the community to support inclusion, and promote the rights and safety of people with disability. I am advised that in coming weeks, we will begin recruitment for an interim disability commissioner while work to develop the legislative framework for this important role continues.

The interim commissioner will activate the role by making referrals, taking complaints and scoping out the roles and responsibilities of this very important position. On behalf of Ms Palmer I can report that this investment is in addition to the \$1.2 million committed to this initiative in 2021-22. Ms Palmer highlighted that the 2022-23 Budget is about delivering for all Tasmanians and includes continuing our 2021-22 budget commitment of \$1.4 million over four years to boost the Tasmanian Autism Diagnostic Service. This service assists with

additional assessments to meet demand and help support more Tasmanians to access necessary supports.

We will also continue our investment of more than \$1 million in annual funding for independent advocacy organisations such as, Speak Out Advocacy, Advocacy Tasmania, and the Association for Children with Disability. Ms Palmer spoke during hearings about the current review of the Disability Services Act 2011, stating that while the act has provided a strong foundation for the provision of disability services in Tasmania, over the past 10 years many things have changed, most notably the introduction of the NDIS. Ms Palmer also noted the report from the Legislative Council inquiry into disability services, which was tabled earlier this month. The minister assures the House that this Government will carefully consider the findings and recommendations.

The minister spoke extensively about our agriculture sector, which is showing strong growth and recently exceeded \$2 billion for the first time. Speaking on her primary industries and water portfolio, Ms Palmer acknowledged our farmers, our fishers and food processors who work hard every day to produce premium goods that are sought after the world over.

She went on to announce new support for our primary industries in the 2022-23 Budget, including \$1.9 million over four years to resource the implementation of the wild fallow deer management plan and support our balanced approach to deer management, including funds to help deer farmers market, and showcase their products. She announced \$535 000 from the Tasmanian Government to leverage Australian Government funding, giving a total of \$1.8 million for three fresh water science projects as part of the Rural Water Use Strategy. Would that be liquid gold? I think the minister would like to hear me say that.

These projects will support continued evidence-based policy and decision making in relation to climate change, ground water, risk assessment and water use accountability by water users. They will also provide tools and data to support water management policy and water infrastructure planning. Our Government is strengthening Tasmania's future. These science projects will help deliver key actions identified in the Rural Water Use Strategy and will be completed by the end of 2024, with input from water industry leaders and key stakeholders. The minister also highlighted that the Government is firmly backing our sustainable agricultural sector to support growth, innovation and strategic partnerships. I was pleased to note that the minister announced four new, exciting projects in the latest round of the government's Strategic Industry Partnership Program, supporting projects delivered by peak bodies for dairy, fruit, wine and small-scale producers to a total value of \$667 000 over four years.

The minister also announced three industry projects that have been selected for the first round of the Agricultural Development Fund, which have received a combined total of \$1.36 million and demonstrate active partnerships with industry that have a clear pathway to deliver research outcomes for our state's farmers. The successful recipients play a critical role in supporting the resilience and growth of the agri-food sector. The minister said:

We will continue working with the Australian Government and farmers to progress the next six irrigation projects of tranche 3 including the Don, Northern Midlands, Sassafras, Wesley Vale, Tamar, South East Irrigation and the Southern Midlands. We are passionate about supporting Tasmanian

businesses, families and communities, and providing the platform to help build a bright future for Tasmania.

Ms Palmer also stated that the Government is the strongest supporter of our iconic seafood industry, having provided an unprecedented \$5.5 million package to support the sector during COVID-19. The minister also outlined how we followed this with further relief: \$663 000 to support wild fisheries, in particular, the rock lobster fishers, who have been affected by both COVID-19 and the China trade situation.

The minister was clear that there is more to do. That is why we are continuing to invest \$3 million to deliver our Wild Fisheries Action Plan with industries, which will include funding to support boat improvements, uptake of new technology, skills development, supporting emerging industries, and the development of Aboriginal cultural fisheries, continuing to support the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council, and the Seafood Trails website.

Duncan Spender, the CEO of Oysters Tasmania, which is the peak body representing Tasmania's oyster farmers, praised the \$400 000 injection into the Shellfish Market Access Program as a smart investment in the state's seafood industry and a unique natural environment.

We are focused on continuous improvement across all of our productive industries. This includes salmon farming, which is Tasmania's largest primary industry, having surpassed \$1 billion in value. That is why, in this Budget, we are investing \$377 000 towards the development of a new 10-year salmon plan, allowing industry and the community to identify new long-term actions that support a vision for a sustainable industry which can continue to support Tasmanian jobs, businesses and communities.

In relation to recreational fishing, Ms Palmer reflected that this Government has a strong record for supporting recreational fishing, stating 'Recreational fishing is part of the Tasmanian way of life'.

The minister outlined this Government's investment of \$350 000 to support Tasmania's first 10-year Recreational Sea Fishing Strategy. This includes funding for the improved sustainability of the flathead resource, which is the most popular fish for most Tassie fishers in terms of take and accessibility.

I join Ms Palmer in welcoming the allocation of \$100 000 to make fishing easier for youth, women and people with a disability, with initiatives including assessing fishing infrastructure to ensure it is accessible, establishing a buddy-style fishing program to support people living with disability, or have limited mobility, and developing new fish-care programs that target young people, women and girls, people living with disability, or who have limited mobility.

The minister said these initiatives are complemented by our continued support of the recreational peak fishing body, TARFish, with \$400 000 provided over three years. We all want to see more opportunities for people to go fishing and to ensure fishing is an opportunity that is there for all future generations.

The minister said that to achieve this, the Government is delivering \$2 million for new and upgraded facilities and amenities for recreational seafishing, and \$1 million over four years for new and upgraded facilities for inland fishing and improved access.

We are encouraging the next generation of inland fishers with free licences for the next three years. We are increasing the funding for the popular tagged trout promotions. As a Government, we are backing our industries and ensuring that every Tasmanian is given the opportunity to participate and excel.

In summary, minister Palmer commended this Budget as an investment in a positive future for all Tasmanians. It has been such delight to present minister Palmer's words today and I thank her for that opportunity. I would also like to commend the work that minister Palmer has done to bring this to fruition. The work she has done across her budget is indeed an investment in a positive future for all Tasmanians, and I commend that to the House.

Time expired.

Ms O'BYRNE - That was fabulous, thank you so much for that speech. I do note that the *Hansard* does not record sarcasm. It might be something we work on.

Mr Wood - Why do you have to be nasty?

Ms O'BYRNE - You can actually present a speech to be tabled, which would have given us a bit more time tonight.

Mr Wood - Why do you have to be nasty to people?

Ms O'BYRNE - From you. We will deal with your Estimates in a little while.

Mr Wood - You were nasty to me in Estimates, too, and you did not need to be.

Ms O'BYRNE - I want to deal with the disability section first of Ms Palmer's portfolio. Interestingly, Ms Palmer was one of the few ministers who actually gave information that we were struggling to get hold of, and I commend her for that.

Mr Wood - You will commend her, but you will take a shot at the messenger.

Ms O'BYRNE - We raised the question around the NDIS, and the number of people who live in Tasmania for whom the NDIS program does not cover all of their needs. I raise it because when we originally did the intergovernmental agreements on the NDIS, there was always an understanding that there would be an obligation by states to pick up a load of certain things that were not picked up by NDIS. The idea of the NDIS scheme was not that people would end up being disadvantaged.

We have seen successive state and federal Liberal governments undermining the NDIS. I look forward to a renewed passion for the NDIS from the new federal minister responsible, who drove a very strong agenda for the NDIS originally, which we have seen undermined all the way through. I am excited about the future for that, because we know there are many Tasmanians with disability who are not able to get the support they need because it falls outside of the NDIS. As I said, there was always an understanding that states would have a responsibility for some things that they would provide to members of their community.

We raised the issue of housing and homelessness for people with a disability. This particularly came from a constituent of mine who has an acquired brain injury. She has been

homeless for four years. She sleeps on her ex-partner's couch with his new family. She has a son who has a disability who also requires her support. The minister gave a very genuine, caring statement about that, but the fact remains that this Government is failing to meet the needs of people with disabilities who are homeless.

Ms Palmer was very helpful because she gave us the number of people that she is aware of. She was dismayed when she saw the demand for disability homes - that there were 344 active applicants on the housing register who are NDIS participants. That is a lot - 344 active NDIS participants, and 229 of them were priority applicants as at 30 March 2022.

I have written to the responsible minister about my constituent because she has an NDIS plan that she cannot use, because she cannot use the elements that are about growing her capacity and growing her engagement because she is homeless, because she is couch surfing, because she is in insecure and unsafe accommodation. That is unacceptable.

I raised another unacceptable issue for another constituent - a 13-year-old child who needs an autism assessment. When he first went on the waiting list for an autism assessment, they were told it would take 12 months. They got a call a few weeks ago to let them know that not only was he not going to get his appointment in 12 months, the new list had blown out to 18 months. The list is getting worse - not just because more people are getting onto the end of the list, but because we cannot manage the amount of people on the list already.

Ms Palmer was able to give additional information, particularly in relation to autism demand, with St Giles, for instance, having approximately 411 people waiting to access services. Ms Palmer said that number was broader than just the autism diagnosis because it is inclusive of those awaiting diagnosis assessment. TADS have a wait list of 630 people, with an average wait time now of 18 months. That is unacceptable.

Every time we raise these concerns, we have a very well-meaning and passionate Government member saying oh, but we really do care, we really do care. In reality, if you really do care, then we would have seen some movement in this.

This Government is very good at announcing significant plans, and very bad at delivering on those plans. That is why I get frustrated. The minister asks why I am so negative and why am I so mean? I am really frustrated. I am so frustrated. We want to help our constituents, we want to be able to do the right thing, and every time you contact a government minister they say some nice platitudes, encourage people to continue to engage with their department, but nothing changes. Nothing changes. That is, without a doubt, the most frustrating thing to sit through.

In terms of housing, I used to be able to place people. I have done this job for a little while. We used to be able to place people. It has never been as hard as it is now. It is heartbreaking as we send people back out into their cars, back out into their tents, knowing what they are going through - well, imagining what they are going through, because all of us have a level comfort. We will all go home tonight to a nice warm place to sleep.

I do not have a huge amount of time, so I will move onto the Women's portfolio. The gender Budget statement was announced on Budget day with some great fanfare. I have thought a lot about this because I was a bit disappointed with that statement. Minister Ferguson announced it with fanfare on the day, and then within 24 to 48 hours he was saying, oh well,

the Women's portfolio provided a lot of this information. I did feel a bit bad for Ms Palmer, who is the fourth Minister for Women in a reasonably short period. It is just over 12 months since we have had minister Petrusma, followed by minister Howlett, followed by minister Ogilvie, now minister Palmer.

What concerns me, as I thought about it after the interrogation and after the conversation, is that this was only done in that very short period of time - those last few weeks - because if you were genuinely going to do a gender budget statement, you would first recognise that it is an economic statement. Some of the vast resources that exist in Treasury would have been assigned to preparing that piece of work.

Ms Ogilvie - Are you having a go at the workers who did it?

Ms O'BYRNE - No. What I am saying is that this is supposed to be a Treasury document. I feel - and what you know, minister Ogilvie - that there are a lot of people in the Women's area and they work incredibly hard, but if they are also being charged with delivering an entire gender budget statement in a short period of time, then you cannot get the work that is supposed to be done.

This is supposed to be a Treasury document. It is supposed to be a Budget document. It is clearly a grab-bag of things that are funded that have the words 'women', 'men' or 'transgender' associated with it. That has been the criticism, not just from me, but from across the sector, saying that this is not what they were told they were going to get.

Minister Palmer said, well, that is okay, because there is the upper House committee that has been supported in the upper House and, once we have that down here, it will be fantastic. The motion that was moved in the other place is an excellent one and I look forward to it producing work, but it is not the replacement for the work that Treasury can do, which is what a gender Budget actually does. All of the research around gender Budget statements are about the inequities that exist in the structural systems in which women operate, in which women live, in which women work.

The most progressive thing that we are getting out of these policies - and this is not a bad thing - is that we are encouraging women to work in male-dominated areas. That is fantastic. I am a big fan of it. A lot of women are going to have some great careers but you need to deal with the issue that areas that are dominated by women as the major part of the employment source - areas that are dominated by women workers - are fundamentally lower paid. If you genuinely want to change the economic outcomes for women, you have to start dealing with those structural inequities.

What is wrong with the care sector that we pay it so little? What is wrong with us, as a society, that we value that work less, and therefore the women get paid less? It is those areas where women, predominantly, work.

One argument is that we just get more men to work in that area, but once again, that is saying men deserve to be paid more than women, so we need to lift the salary because there are some blokes there. The reality is we need to deal with the structural inequities.

The other structural inequities that are identified in those sorts of budgets are things like under-employment, gender pay gaps, some of those economic impacts that affect women. We

did not even have the Tasmanian data for that. We did not have the Tasmanian data for women who retire with not enough superannuation. That is fundamental to understanding the economic impact of the Budget and the economy on women.

The other issue was under-employment. The answer to why many women work part-time is not that it is their choice. It is not their choice in the vast majority of circumstances. It may be the choice of some women to work part-time but I know many women desperately trying to feed their families, trying to cobble together a combination of part-time jobs so that they can get a full-time employment to manage the costs they have. That fundamentally goes to those areas of the economy where women work, where it is more likely to be casual, part-time and insecure, where women are not going to raise issues around their wages or safety because their employment does not have that level of security.

A genuine gender budget would start to identify and address the structural inequities that exist in our Budget and would not be reinventing the wheel. There is a huge amount of research about how this works. UN Women has done work; the United Nations Development Program has done work. UN Women has actually provided a little training booklet on how to set one up. I hope that we take this a lot more seriously next Budget because this has been quite offensive.

Time expired.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIR - Mr Tucker.

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr Deputy Chair, I clearly got up before Mr Tucker. You were quite slow, Mr Tucker. Also, you are not the spokesperson.

Mr Tucker - I actually have to disagree there, Ms O'Connor, but I will allow you to go first.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. You are a gentleman.

Mr Tucker - But I did jump before you and I think you know it.

Ms O'CONNOR - I also think that there is a natural order of things in this place that should be respected.

I have known the lovely and intelligent Jo Palmer for 25 years. We worked together at Southern Cross News. I want Ms Palmer to be the best minister for Primary Industries and Water this state has ever had. I think she has the capacity to do that. In order for her to do that, she needs to have honesty from her department and she needs to have a dedication to science, openness and transparency.

Something quite shocking happened at the Estimates table in Ms Palmer's Estimates as it related to water. It was established by the Greens at the Estimates table last year that the report, *The Temporal and Spatial Patterns in River Health Across Tasmania and the Influence of Environmental Factors*, which was work undertaken by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment water scientists, was always intended to be a public document. It was written internally by the department and it examined very carefully the health

of our rivers and found that there has been an accelerated decline in the health of our rivers since 2014. We established last year that this report was always intended for public release.

I asked Ms Palmer whether any of the recommendations of the scientists in that report, one of whom resigned in dismay over the Government's actions, were being implemented. There were four key recommendations in that report. The minister said:

*I understand that this relates to the internal deliberative report titled **Temporal and Spatial Patterns in River Health Across Tasmania and the Influence of Environmental Factors**.*

I took the opportunity at the table to show the minister - her department should have shown her - the communication strategy prepared inside the then DPIPW that was to go with the river health report.

What we now know is that at a senior level in the department with Tim Baker as secretary, because the report came back and said we have problems with river health, there was a decision made by the secretary and another senior bureaucrat who was the general manager of Water and Marine Resources, Ms Bourne, to take no action and to effectively bury the report. We were able to obtain that report on river health, ultimately, through Right to Information on our second attempt while the Government was in caretaker mode.

We have something very concerning here. We have a new minister for Primary Industries being fed absolute untruths in her ministerial briefs -

Ms Ogilvie - We should not be blaming staffers.

Ms O'CONNOR - Ms Ogilvie, I do not need your interruption. I just laid out the untruth and I have a deep knowledge of this subject, so stop trying to stop me. What has happened here is that somehow in the order of public servants, someone has written a brief for the minister that contained a lie, that has gone up the order, and it has been signed off by the acting secretary, Jason Jacobi. It is not true. The minister read out something that was untrue, provided to her by her own departmental advisers. It is untrue to say that the report on river health was an internal deliberative document. We have had scientists who worked on that confirm that it was always intended to be released publicly.

We have prepared a time line of development of work on that river health report; we have right to information materials that talk about the internal discussion about how we communicate this report in the department to the people of Tasmania. This document is a communication strategy for the statewide analysis of river health. We obtained it through right to information on the second go. It is heavily redacted but it talks about communicating with the people of Tasmania about the health of their rivers. Shouldn't Tasmanians be part of that conversation?

It is one thing for us to expect dishonesty from a politician but to see a minister hung out to dry at the Estimates table by her own departmental advisers and her own acting secretary is next-level.

Mr JAENSCH - Mr Deputy Chair, can I please seek your advice? In this presentation Ms O'Connor is making, she has named a number of public servants who are not here to defend

themselves. The minister is not here to represent herself or her staff. I believe that Ms O'Connor, under parliamentary privilege -

Ms O'Connor - I am exercising my rights.

Mr JAENSCH - and I would like to be heard in silence. She is attacking people who cannot defend themselves here. I do not know what particular -

Ms O'Connor - What is your point of order? What do you want?

Mr JAENSCH - I do not have a particular point of order. I am seeking the chair's advice because there is a pattern of behaviour from Ms O'Connor that I think is damaging to people's reputations under privilege. On their behalf, I am seeking some procedural fairness from our parliamentary system. I ask for your advice, please?

Ms O'Connor - I have not broken any standing order.

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIR - Order. Since it is not a point of information, there will be other opportunities for members and others to seek remedies through the process. We are happy to advise further on that if necessary.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. I am simply laying out facts that are on the public record. We have a time line, we have established the truth that a significant public good science report was suppressed within the department under the former secretary of DPIPWE, Tim Baker, who said at the Estimates table, and it is in the *Hansard* transcript, that it was his advice that this public good science report was superseded by another policy document. I am simply laying that on the record.

To have a minister of the Crown be presented with a brief to read at the Estimates table that contains a blatant untruth is very worrying. We expect untruths from politicians. What we expect from public servants is straight-talking. If I were the minister, I would be calling in my acting secretary and deputy secretary and saying: 'How is it that you did not tell me that this document was intended to be publicly released? How is it that I read out something at the Estimates table that is demonstrably untrue? Will you reassure me, dear departmental advisers, that you will never again give me material to read out that is demonstrably false?'

That is certainly what I would do if I were minister, having been hung out to dry at the Estimates table like the delightful, intelligent and, no doubt, committed minister Ms Palmer is.

Ms Ogilvie - Oh!

Ms O'CONNOR - Do not groan to me, Ms Ogilvie.

Ms Ogilvie - I sighed.

Ms O'CONNOR - You are in enough trouble for being one of the great pork barrellers of the 2021 election campaign. I do not know what your relationship is like with Ms Palmer, but she and I go back 25 years. I am giving her this advice for free because I actually want her

to be the best Minister for Primary Industries and Water this state has ever seen. No minister should be fed a manifest untruth by their departmental advisers. It is a matter that the Integrity Commission should have a look at. Honestly, it is so disgraceful.

The public service is there to uphold a set of standards, to be impartial, to give the minister frank and fearless advice, not to lace the minister's briefs for Estimates with untruths which are easily disproven. I appreciate Mr Jaensch's attempts to run cover for Ms Palmer but I hope Ms Palmer reads my contribution and takes it seriously.

Time expired.

Mr TUCKER - Chair, I reflect on the 2022-23 state Budget and the exciting initiatives raised last week by Ms Palmer across her portfolios of Primary Industry and Water and Disability Service and Women. What I heard is that the Budget is a clear investment in securing Tasmania's future and outlines measures that help us deliver on our plan.

The Government is continuing our strong focus on reducing barriers to women's economic participation and increasing opportunities for leadership and advancement, particularly in industries in which women are traditionally under-represented. Our work to achieve gender equality in Tasmania is guided by the Tasmanian Women's Strategy. Initiatives proposed under the 2022-27 strategy include development of a gender impact assessment process, to build the capability of government agencies to assess the gender impact of initiatives and policies.

In the 2022-23 Tasmanian Budget, Ms Palmer reported that this Government has committed \$800 000 over four years to implement the Tasmanian Women's Strategy to support cultural change. The Tasmanian Government's first gender budget statement highlights our policies and the actions we are taking to create a more inclusive Tasmania. Ms Palmer confirmed this is an important first step and will be built on in future years.

Our gender statement was welcomed by Dress for Success CEO, Amanda French, who said:

Dress for Success congratulates the Rockliff Government, including minister Palmer and Treasurer Ferguson for the first state budget that includes a gender statement. This is an important step forward in ensuring economic and social wellbeing for Tasmanian women.

We also welcome the range of funding initiatives supporting women across areas including workforce, tackling family violence and a range of other areas.

In the 2022-23 Tasmanian Budget, as part of the \$12.5 million funding for the Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan, there will be an increase in core funding for specialist counselling services throughout Tasmania. Other initiatives detail that we will increase the opportunities for leadership and participation for Tasmanian women and girls and includes the continuation of funding for women's workforce participation, for the \$2 million Supporting Women to Succeed grants program and \$450 000 to support increased gender and cultural diversity across our resource sector and continuing the Women in Leadership board diversity

scholarships. The minister was pleased to announce the 10 women's leadership and board diversity scholarship recipients for 2022.

These commitments are helping to increase opportunities for women in the workforce and in leadership positions and to promote and recognise the contribution of Tasmanian women across all aspects of our economy and communities.

In the portfolio of Disability Services, this Government is committing a further \$400 000 to support the establishment of the new Tasmanian disability commissioner. This investment is in addition to the \$1.2 million commitment to this initiative in 2021-22.

The 2022-23 Budget is about delivering for all Tasmanians. It includes continuing our 2021-22 budget commitment of \$1.4 million over four years to boost the Tasmanian Autism Diagnostic Service. This service assists with additional assessments to meet demand and help support more Tasmanians to assess necessary supports. We will also continue our investment of more than \$1 million in annual funding for independent advocacy organisations, such as Speak Out Advocacy, Advocacy Tasmania and the Association for Children with Disability.

An area of particular interest to my constituents and me is primary industries, including aquaculture, agriculture and water management and fisheries. I was pleased to hear that the Budget announced new support for our primary industries, including \$1.9 million over four years to resource and implement the wild fallow deer management plan and \$535 000 from the Tasmanian Government to leverage Australian Government funding to provide a total of \$1.8 million for three fresh water science projects as part of the Rural Water Use Strategy to support continued evidence-based policy and decision making in relation to climate change, ground water risk assessment and water use accountability by water users.

The minister also highlighted that the Government is firmly backing our sustainable agricultural sector to support growth, innovation and strategic partnerships. The minister announced four new and exciting projects in the latest round of the Government's Strategic Industry Partnership Program, supporting projects delivered by peak bodies for dairy, fruit, wine and small-scale producers to a total value of \$667 000 over four years. She also announced three industry projects that have been selected for the first round of Agricultural Development Funds, which have received a combined total of \$1.36 million and demonstrate active partnerships with industry that have a clear pathway to deliver research outcomes for the state's farmers and contribute to sustainable growth and jobs in agriculture.

The minister reiterated we will continue working with the Australian Government and farmers to progress the next six irrigation projects of tranche 3, including the Don, Northern Midlands, Sassafras, Wesley Vale, Tamar, South East integration and the Southern Midlands.

The Government is the strongest supporter of our iconic seafood industry, having provided an unprecedented \$5.5 million package to support the sector during COVID-19. On top of that, this Government provided further relief of \$663 000 to support wild fisheries, in particular the rock lobster fishers who have been affected by both COVID-19 and the China trade situation.

Ms Palmer outlined that the Government is continuing to invest \$3 million to deliver our wild fisheries action plan with industry. Duncan Spender, the CEO of Oysters Tasmania, the peak body representing Tasmania's oysters, praised the \$400 000 injection into the shellfish

market access program as a smart investment in the state's seafood industry and unique natural environment. This funding will continue to support delivery of the program and enhance Tasmania's reputation for quality seafood.

I was pleased to see of the focus of continuous improvement across all our productive industries. This includes salmon farming, which is Tasmania's largest primary industry having surpassed \$1 billion in value. To achieve this the minister announced we are investing \$377 000 towards the development of a new 10-year salmon plan, allowing industry and the community to identify new long-term actions that support a vision for a sustainable industry, which can continue to support Tasmanian jobs, businesses and communities.

The Government has a strong record of supporting recreational fishers and will invest \$350 000 to support Tasmania's first ever 10-year Recreational Seafood Fishing Strategy. This includes \$100 000 to make fishing easier for youth, women and people with a disability, with initiatives including accessing fishing infrastructure to ensure it is accessible, establishing a buddy-style fishing program to support people living with disability or who have limited mobility and developing new fish care programs that target young people, women, and girls, people living with disability, or who have limited mobility. The minister noted that these initiatives are complemented by the Government's continued support of the recreational peak fishing body, TARFish, with \$400 000 provided over three years in our ongoing support for the east-coast rock lobster translocation program.

I was pleased to hear that this Government is creating more opportunities for people to go fishing and to ensure fishing is an opportunity that is there for all future generations, with \$2 million for new and upgraded facilities and amenities for recreational sea fishing and \$1 million over four years for new and upgraded facilities for inland fishing and improved access.

Chair, the minister also announced we are increasing the funding for the popular tagged trout promotions. I heard we are a government that backs our farmers in sustainable primary industries while ensuring that every Tasmanian is given the opportunity to participate and excel. This is clearly demonstrated in our 2022-23 state budget that is delivering for all Tasmanians.

Time expired.

Ms BUTLER - Chair, that was a pretty unbelievable contribution on behalf of minister Palmer by Ms Ogilvie and Mr Tucker in relation to primary industries: a positive future for all Tasmanians and for every Tasmanian to participate and excel!

However, no mention, not one, of the biggest challenge facing rock lobster fishers at this time - actually one of the biggest challenges that they have ever faced, and not one mention from you guys - the proposed changes to expand the 60-pot area in the rock lobster fishery. Now, either the minister has not yet grasped the devastating impact this rule will have on so many Tasmanians, their families, and their communities, or the minister is hoping that if she just ignores it, it will go away. I assure the minister, on behalf of the Labor Party, that it is not just going to go away.

Chair, I rise to respond to Estimates Committee A, Minister for Women, Minister for Disability Services, minister for Primary Industries. I give a huge shout-out to Janie Finlay,

our shadow for primary industries. She is unable to be here today. I put on the record the sheer amount of work she has done in this area. She is an absolute go-getter and a wonderful member of our team. She has spoken to many people and knows this portfolio area well. She is not going to let you guys get away with infomercial-style speeches. She really wants to do the best for the industry. She is as passionate about small business as she is about primary industries, and those two portfolios go together really well.

One area my colleague, Ms Finlay, has been quite focused on is the wild fishery sector around the proposed rule and policy changes of the rock lobster fishery. The real changes, which will take effect after 1 November this year, are intended to improve the management of the fishery for the future. This will ensure that stock levels are sustainable for all Tasmanians for years to come. Ms Finlay has met with or spoken to a number of fishers both recreational and commercial investors, representative bodies, and researchers about this very important issue.

One proposed rule change within the consultation paper that has been highlighted of concern, is the expansion of 60-pots into the north-west and north-east regions of the state's waters. There are concerns that fishers will be catching stock in an area that is vulnerable to excess fishing efforts due to the low biomass and egg production in the area. There is also concern that this expansion will only further support some larger operators, while smaller operators, the many who have had this tradition passed down through generations, will be shut out of the industry, placing potential strain on the economic and social viability of regional communities.

The commercial fishery consists of 312 license entitlements with around 165 active vessels, and 10 506 individually transferable quota units. There are around 18 500 recreational licence holders each year.

I am going to give you a bit of a history lesson because we are not talking about the elephant in the room, so it is important that this is on the record.

In 1995, the fishery had 340 vessels and the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) estimated 680 direct jobs. Individual transferable quota (ITQ)s were introduced in 1998 with the recognition by the Tasmanian Parliament that this would promote rationalisation. A reduction in vessels and employment with these costs converted into rent, and lease payments to quota holders. Bradshaw surveyed the fishery in 2000 and found that 100 vessels had been removed from the fishery through the process of increasing maximum pot per vessel, from 40 to 50, and lengthening the open season. IMAS published direct employment in the fishery in 2018-19, and it had fallen to 341 full-time employees working from only 178 vessels, half of where the fishery was 20 years prior.

This issue of the 60 pots has been raised with Primary Industries and Water minister, Jo Palmer, on a number of occasions, both in the upper and lower Houses. The minister is on record saying that she: 'Certainly, supports all the families of our fishers across the state'. However, in Estimates Hearings last week, minister Palmer admitted that: no research into the social and economic fallout of this proposed rule change had been undertaken.

No research. So this decision rests entirely in the minister's hands. No data or evidence to rationalise such a significant rule change. Let us get that right as parliamentarians. We are

going to make a decision like that without any data, without any evidence, and without any research.

What this Estimates Committee highlighted is that the minister is going to make that decision without any empirical evidence, without any data. That decision will be made based on lobbying pressure, will be based on political pressure, will be based on politics, not evidence, not data. A decision that, according to Break O'Day Mayor Mick Tucker, could spell the end for other small businesses living in the region, like boilermakers, for instance, who are reliant on the fishers in these areas.

In a letter received by Ms Finlay, and written by Mayor Tucker, who is also quite a good friend of mine, it said:

It is Break O'Day Council's belief that in the absence of an economic and social analysis of the proposed rule and policy changes, a precautionary principle must be applied.

As the Discussion Paper outlines, on page 30, there are significant economic and social contributions local vessels offer to Eastern Tasmania. It is easy to quantify some contributions. However, contributions such as sense of community and indirect economic impact are not considered.

It is our belief that the risks presented to the East Tasmanian economy have not been adequately considered.

As such we ask that the committee apply a precautionary principle approach to the proposed rule and policy changes when considering the economic and social risk to the East Coast of Tasmania.

The Break O'Day Council's approach is underpinned by the belief that long-term impacts must be considered over short-term gain.

Break O'Day Council strongly opposes the proposed rule change of expanding the 60-pot area, and request an in-depth, economic analysis of the proposal to be delivered before implementation.

To me that makes sense.

This proposal is a reactive and ill-advised response to the current market, and does not consider long-term implications. This includes detrimental impacts on the viability of smaller operators, as well as impact on local businesses, such as slipways and the boilermakers who all depend on these operators.

The economic efficiency reasoning is not adequate to justify its implementation, and is of clear, inequitable benefit to the larger operations at the expense of smaller operators.

We expect this proposal will further consolidate quotas and pots, forcing out small operators, who cannot afford to increase their quota based on the size of their boat.

The impact of such an occurrence will be detrimental to the the Break O'Day region's economy.

Mr Chair, I do not have to remind you how important it is to protect the Break O'Day economy. It is scary to think that there is no data underpinning what could be a flick of the minister's pen. It also shows incompetency on the Government's behalf and a government that says they care when they stand up and they give their informercial-style speeches but words are hollow. It really is to do with how you behave.

A government that cannot even get the basics right, a government that cannot even make decisions based on data and evidence: they will make it based on politics, political persuasion and lobbying, and a government not willing to do the work because, I can tell you what, our shadow for primary industries is willing to do the work and she has been working extremely hard in this area. We are more than happy to support her through this because she is going gang-busters.

The Tasmanian rock lobster fishery is a major contributor to the Tasmanian economy and we must protect it and the many small business operators that work within it. The minister, Ms Palmer, recently said in parliament that it is important to complete the Living Marine Resources Management Act review and also the harvest strategy to prepare the fishery for the future. Would it not be smart to complete this body of work prior to any recommendation to expand the 60-pot area, given the concerns around this rule? Would that not make sense? Like a logical business evidence-based approach? Would it not be advisable to have economic and social research completed before its inclusion in proposed changes?

This Government clearly has not done the work we have. It is incompetent and the Government is putting the cart before the horse on this matter.

The concerns keep coming. Members of the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association (TRLFA) have told Ms Finlay that they have concerns about their representation and that they do not feel like they are being heard. This is an organisation that is led by former Liberal politician, Rene Hidding. Minister Palmer has assured Ms Finlay that there are no conflicts here. At the TRLFA general meeting in May which minister Palmer momentarily attended, members raised that the association should have the fisheries proposed rule changes on the agenda for discussion, but they did not. No. Instead the room and the meeting minutes note that many had already left for the day, was told that information from the CEO and the president's port visits as well as the formal process of motions from the meeting would determine the TRLFA's view. How is that representative of members? It is not; it is not a proper process. It is certainly not representative and it is a slap in the face for those members.

Where is the data, where is the information or summary from the port visits and why has the summary of all voices at the port visits and the association's submission not been provided to all members that the association is representing? That is a matter of due process and good governance.

At Estimates hearings last week, the department's own acting secretary said no rule of the department would be broken by the TRLFA sharing the submission to members assuming it was not a privileged submission. He also said that the full submission would be actively disclosed through the process. Is this a case of the TRLFA running its own agenda rather than representing its members?

I know from Ms Finlay's conversation with fishers that many are concerned about the proposal to expand the 60-pot rule. It really is a big deal and I cannot believe it was not mentioned at all in the opening addresses from the Government. While the association says that the rule became a formal policy three or four years ago, members are expected to defend and promote this position. Much water has passed under the bridge. The industry and its fishers have had to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and the loss of trade to China.

Labor believes that the 60-pot rule should never have been included in a proposed rock lobster fishery rule changes. We know from what was discussed and confirmed in Estimates that this particular rule could simply be rolled over, as many are, or at least until the work is completed on the Harbour Strategy and Living Marine Resource Management Act. Somewhere in the system, someone has bowed to the demands of the TRLFA. Really, it stinks.

Labor urged the Government to intervene on this matter and implore the TRLFA to share the full findings from its port visits to the Government's submission to its members today and without delay. Enough is enough.

Speaking of intervention let us not forget our world leading salmon industry and the 12-month moratorium imposed on the sector. 'This is an industry Tasmania and Tasmanians should be proud of', Ms Palmer said these words herself; 'this is an industry that provides the state with thousands of direct and indirect jobs, many in regional areas'. When asked in Estimates hearings last week on what advice was provided that led to the implementation of the 12-month moratorium, Ms Palmer said it was put in place to give the Government time to adequately consult and develop a 10-year salmon plan. That is absolute rubbish. If this was the case why has a moratorium not been in place for the rock lobster industry while we are going through a proposed rule change.

This is a Government ashamed of our world leading salmon industry, an industry that has made \$1 billion, that spends \$500 million on Tasmanian suppliers and businesses, a vital part of the Tasmanian economy and community. It is absurd to see you turning your backs on this important sector when they have done so much to help put this site on the map.

As Labor mentioned in the Budget reply and again in Estimates hearings, we are still waiting on clarification on what the 12-month moratorium on 'no new net leasable areas' means. Ms Palmer said one thing and then Mr Street came in later in the day to clarify what the minister had actually meant. Does this mean that the current 12-month moratorium on no net increases in leasable areas is now underpinning the development of the 10-year plan? That is the problem: you are not being clear in what you are saying and this is impacting people's lives.

Let me draw your attention to Jason. Jason has worked in the Tasmanian salmon industry for 17 years. He is one of the 36 workers on the net slab team at Huon Aquaculture at Whale Point who repair, clean and organise tonnes of netting that are used on the states offshore salmon pens. He lives locally, supporting his young family and his children go to the local school. If the moratorium on salmon farming continues and underpins the 10-year plan what will this do to Jason, his job, his family and his community? What is ahead for him with the Tasmanian salmon industry which is sustainable, well-regulated and world-renowned fails to be part of the state government's vision to create a \$10 billion farmgate value by 2050?

While I mention it, this is a vision which the department's acting secretary confirmed there was no specific data underpinning this goal. It is aspirational. There is no map for anyone

within the sector to follow or know how their contributions meet the state's goal. Stop playing politics with people's lives and livelihoods. These are good jobs. It is really time for the Government to stop giving falsehoods. Tasmanians deserve better.

Speaking of deserving better for the second year in a row during Estimate's hearings, Ms Finlay raised the story of Gary and Lee Fegan. Last year in Estimates, Labor asked what work was being done to review the grandfathered non-transferable fishing endorsements. We then followed up two months later in November and were advised that no work had started. At the second Estimates it appears that no work has still been done with the minister advising the department has been asked to review the non-transferability status of these endorsements.

Lee also reached out this year for help to renew his DIP net endorsement as he is unable to get a clear answer from the department if this can be done. This is a father and son team who have fished the Tamar for years. The Government's handling of that is absolutely incompetent. It is two years that they have been waiting for an answer. The uncertainty and the lack of your decision has caused huge stress on the Fegans. Again, stop playing with people's lives, do the work, give people certainty. No matter what your answer is, they just need an answer; they need to know what your decision is.

That is all everyone wants. From those working in rock lobster fishery and salmon industry, Jason on the net slab through to Lee Fegan and his dad, Gary, Tasmanians want certainty. That is what they want. Tasmanians do deserve better.

It is not only in relation to Primary Industries, Tasmanians deserve better when it comes to disability housing. It is not good enough that we learned in Estimates hearings that of the 4382 Tasmanian families languishing on the Liberal's housing waiting list, 334 are NDIS recipients and 229 of those Tasmanians are classified as priority. Additionally, 411 Tasmanians are waiting for support at St Giles and over 600 are on the waiting list for the Tasmanian Autism Diagnostic Service. That is woeful.

These are some of our most vulnerable people and they are some of our most disadvantaged people. If we cannot look after those people, this Government has its priorities wrong. Trickle-down economics does not work. You have not done enough over the last eight years in building houses. That is why we have a housing crisis. I implore the Government to become more humane and make some better decisions.

Time expired.

Dr WOODRUFF - Chair, I sat through the Primary Industries and Water Estimates Committee to ask questions on behalf of people who are concerned about the state of Tasmania's waterways and the failed regulation of the large and growing salmon farm companies in Tasmania. I found the whole process incredibly dispiriting. I thought I had reached the bottom of the barrel when it came to Orwellian language from ministers responsible for the finfish industry. Ms Palmer is the latest in a line of Labor and Liberal salmon industry supplicants. She was tightly scripted and reading talking points that looked as though they had been carefully read through by lawyers.

Ms Palmer is an intelligent woman and a woman with a kind heart but that is not enough in a portfolio which covers companies as large as JBS, the Brazilian butcher which has bought Huon Aquaculture and is on a massive growth trajectory. The whole salmon industry is on a

massive growth trajectory. In another world we might welcome an industry on a growth trajectory, except this industry is effectively unregulated in the things that Tasmanians care about.

There are no effective regulations to govern the environmental harm that is occasioned on our waterways by the pollution of salmon waste and the plastic pollution as a result of the practices that are used at the moment. The industry is effectively unregulated when it comes to animal welfare. Seals are regularly shot to death or scared and have their hearing damaged with explosives which are thrown into the water. They are shot with bean bag fillings, a euphemism for lead-filled plastic shot which gets shot sometimes into their eyes, ears and the mouths. We have the footage and the evidence of photographs that have been obtained through Right To Information.

It is an appalling record. It was sad to see the missed opportunity when at the start of Estimates the Premier Mr Rockliff made a public statement about the commitment of the Government to transparency and then in committee after committee on the questions that really mattered regarding taxpayers' money there was a complete silence. There was silence from the Sport minister about the details of what was funded and which candidates for the 2020-21 election from the Liberal Party handed out money to which community groups.

In Ms Palmer's portfolio on salmon farming we had complete non-answers that did not go anywhere near the question that was asked. I could have asked any question and I would have got the same answer. When confronted with JBS's video-taped police confessions to bribery and fraud in Brazil, workplace safety negligence, crimes that they have committed and been charged for, environmental laws they have breached and the largest civil fine ever placed on a company in the United States, Ms Palmer completely disregarded them.

When I asked her whether she would refer the JBS to the Australian Federal Police so that they could investigate and make sure that this company, which has purchased one of Tasmania's largest salmon companies, was not using the proceeds of crime to purchase that company, she just went back in harder saying the Government was the strongest supporter of Tasmanian farmers and the investment of \$50 million to accelerate the agricultural sector. General statements that had nothing to do with the question.

Support of the salmon industry is something that both the Liberal and Labor parties share. The only thing the Labor Party disagrees with is that the Government should be weakening regulations instead of pretending to strengthen them.

Ms Palmer's answers showed that it is a pretense to care about the effectiveness of our environmental regulations. The finfish inquiry in the upper House made it clear that the current provisions for the disclosure of data and information in the salmon industry is inconsistent between newer and older leases. They are not comprehensive. Information is not transparent or independent from the industry. They are not presented on industry and government websites in a way that makes clear connections with the relevant regulatory requirements. The community and scientists have been talking about these things for over a decade - big issues laid out in the finfish inquiry report from the Legislative Council.

I asked Ms Palmer whether the Government would support the recommendations to investigate better legislation and regulation to increase the transparency and data availability of the industry. It is a question that you would expect a minister to at least feign some interest on behalf of stakeholders to investigate, especially given the Premier's statements about

purporting to have a Government that stands for more transparent practices, but no, she did not go anywhere near that. She said a huge body of work has been done and they will give it careful consideration.

Their careful consideration could take another 10 years. Meanwhile we have a salmon industry expansion plan that is coming out in September, just after. This is the time for the Government to be looking at this information, not some time down the track. Right now is the time to look at how we should be setting up a system that protects the environment, that protects the values for local coastal communities, that makes sure we have rich marine biodiversity into the future. However, despite the fact that we have a swag of measures that we can work on from the finfish inquiry, the minister showed no interest in taking any of them on board, expressing no interest to investigate.

The response was like an Orwellian supposed utopia, which has a reality that we know is terrible. It is terrible for marine creatures and it has been devastating for rivers like the Huon River, the D'entrecasteaux Channel, the Long Bay Channel and the Tasman Peninsula.

The so-called industry moratorium is false because we uncovered the expansions in Nubeena that have been quietly taking place.

Time expired.

Estimates of the Minister for Women, Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Primary Industries and Water agreed to.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STREET (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Southcentral Workforce Network

[7.43 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - I rise to share with the House some of the amazing things that the Southcentral Workforce Network.

The Southcentral Workforce Network is based in Pontville, and it a job hub that helps jobseekers find work and connect local employers with new staff. It is operated by Brighton Council and supported by the Southern Midlands Council, Derwent Valley Council and Central Highlands Council and it is based on the one that started in Sorell - the SERDA.

They are going absolute gang-busters. I recently received their monthly report and I will read into the House some of their accomplishments. Even just in the last month, they have had

53 face-to-face or virtual meetings with regional businesses, employment service providers, RTOs, apprenticeship network providers and industry stakeholders.

As of 31 April, they have been recruiting for 17 roles which have been advertised through social media and employment service providers.

As of 31 April, the project has also assisted 187 people to find work since its commencement, which is an amazing accomplishment. Then it runs through some of the businesses that they have met with. Here are some examples. Met with Oz Fencing in the Derwent Valley, who have vacancies within their business. Met with Mission Australia, Family Day Care Tas to discuss opportunities to increase the viability of education and care statewide. Met with the Brighton Hotel to discuss training options. Met with Colony 47 regarding jobseekers, and Expert Electrical regarding available positions.

They have completed progress reports. They have met with Interact Australia regarding opportunities for clients within the south-central jobs hub. They have made presentations to the Tasmanian Community Fund - this is all within a month - at Blundstone Arena recently. They met with Zimmah Coffee regarding equipment purchases. They met with APM Tasmania manager, John Klug, and updated each other on initiatives in the area. The list goes on about how much they can achieve and how much they have been doing just over the last month.

Outcomes since December 2020: industry and employer meetings, 53; 691 project totals. Roles filled during March and April 2022, 18; overall 187 jobs filled. Referrals to partner organisations, 4. Traineeships and apprenticeships for new workers, 2; total project, 22. Industry career awareness and pre-employment sessions, 2; total project, 59. Training courses 5, then 33 as their total. Resumes sent out to employers: 43 in a month, and total project, 422.

They also look after the Youth Volunteer Army, which is just amazing. It is about growing young people's confidence and engaging them, getting them job ready. It is a fabulous process. They also do an outreach service, and during April they commenced an outreach service for jobseekers in the Southern Midlands and Central Highland municipalities. The service provided community members with the opportunity to speak face-to-face with staff and to receive support in the region in which they live.

Their Oatlands service operates in partnership with disability employment service provider APM, after an invitation from John Klug, who is a very good operator. He is also now providing an outreach service in the town, delivered from the Rural Alive and Well - RAW - office in High Street on the second Thursday of each month. They will also be providing a service in New Norfolk soon, with the first session taking place at the Derwent Valley Community House on 3 May.

I congratulate the team at Southcentral Workforce Network. I went to their opening and we are huge supporters of this model. They are really getting some great results.

Queen Elizabeth II - Platinum Jubilee - Use of Technology

[7.48 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to congratulate London and Britain for a most fantastic party that we were all able to watch on television for the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

No matter where you stand on the issue of the monarchy and republicanism, it was such a celebration and so fantastic to see a real party happen after the pandemic. My kids loved it. We all loved watching it. It was such a deep celebration of her reign, but also of all things very British. Many of us have connections to England and have family members there. Many of us have travelled and worked there, have cousins there. Those connections are beautiful and long and old, and they are very good for Australia. With the AUKUS treaty now in place, I hope we are going to be able to renew those beautiful connections, including re-engaging with the trade that we used to have in the agricultural sector, and others.

Tonight, I want to talk about the technology and that aspect of things, which was shown in such amazing relief with that huge event and the party. I do not know if other members had a chance to watch the footage, but it is certainly worth watching, and it was truly splendid - to use a great English term - for watchers of the celebration to take a peek into the Queen's handbag with Paddington Bear, and discover that she does indeed keep in there a particular favourite treat of Paddington Bear's - a marmalade sandwich. I have never gone much on marmalade myself but the marmalade sandwich made an appearance.

The way they juxtaposed the Queen and Paddington Bear in the video, and the animation that sat behind that; the digital capacity and the content around that was fabulous. I am sure that everybody enjoyed it. It was a truly technological celebration with the entirety of Buckingham Palace transformed into a screen upon which things were projected.

In Sydney, we have Vivid, where they project right across all of those iconic buildings, so it was wonderful to see this happening in the UK. We saw the screens lining the Mall with the crowds there who were able to experience the full visual spectacle. It took me back to a time before the pandemic when there were crowds and parties, joy, fun and music. It was a beautiful gift they were able to give to everybody.

Of particular interest and so impressive were the drone displays. Those displays were an array of drones in the sky programmed to create shapes. It is a new way of doing, perhaps, fireworks as we might have looked at them in the past. Now these drones are able to create images in the sky. The company that did the drone display went to practise in the countryside of the UK and they were given a broad brief about what they could do. They came up with some iconic British things, including a bone that floated across the sky chased by corgis. So fantastic and fun, and I am sure everybody loved the joy of it. The teapot and tea cup and the Queen's iconic handbag would have been very hard to program. I was waiting for the marmalade sandwich but it did not come out, unfortunately.

The jubilee was a special celebration. My step-sister Jeannie and George were there. I felt they would have enjoyed that moment after London had been through so many hard times and with what is going on in Europe as well. It was nice to see the joy at the public celebration. No matter how you feel about the monarchy, it is true that Queen Elizabeth II has been a

significant figure for her 70-year reign and you have to give her credit for that as a strong woman in a leadership role.

From the aerial audio-visual displays to the pageantry and live performances, seeing the air force and all of the celebrations, from the music of Queen, Diana Ross, Rod Stewart, Alicia Keys, to name a few at the jubilee concert, the celebrations were wonderful and made me feel like life is coming back. I hope we are able to do something similar in a way to bring together the arts and culture and what we do so beautifully here in Tasmania. Dark Mofo is a symbol of that as well. To have people back together again, having fun, coming together and enjoying music and enjoying each other's company was a beautiful thing to see.

Lake Malbena Proposal - Hall Family's Reaction

[7.53 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, when legendary fly-fishing guide and author Greg French introduced Daniel Hackett to the daughter of Reg Hall and convinced her to sign over the licence for her father's historic hut at Lake Malbena in the World Heritage Area, both Greg and the Hall family were deceived about Mr Hackett's intentions for Reg Hall's hut and the island on which it sits.

That deception was the first in a long line of lies and half-truths that surround the proposed heli-tourism operation at Lake Malbena that continues to this day. Reg Hall's son penned an emotive talking point published in the *Mercury* on behalf of the family, rejecting the proposal Mr Hackett claims they approve of. The very first sentence of that piece portrays the family's stress, something close to grief. He says:

I write in sadness about the planned destruction of the vision of my late father Reg Hall, who helped to nurture the wilderness of Tasmania.

... My father died in 1981. As his only son, I know that if he were alive today he would be appalled by the plans to expropriate Hall's Island - the island "home" used by fellow bushwalkers - for an eco-tourism venture that includes 240 helicopter flights a year over the Tasmanian wilderness.

I ask both the federal and Tasmanian governments: take into account the vision of Reg Hall for this pristine speck on the world map and refuse permission for the proposal that's currently before you.

To this day, Daniel Hackett claims he had the support of Reg Hall's family. He does not. He deceived them in acquiring the licence by not disclosing his intentions for an exclusive heli-tourism operation that will lock out everyday Tasmanians, bushwalkers and anglers who live the simple vision Reg Hall mapped out for Lake Malbena.

As recently as last week, the minister, Mrs Petrusma, made misleading statements about the original licence Reg Hall had over the hut and the status of the current exclusive possession lease over the entire island. The minister knows full well that Reg Hall only had a licence over the 35-square-metre hut that welcomed bushwalkers for decades. Hackett has been gifted the entire island by the Liberals under a secretly signed lease for a peppercorn rent.

Fast-forward to the latest state-sanctioned deception. Right to information documents include a letter signed by the director of DPIPWE to Daniel Hackett. This was the third letter of extension to the lease and differed from the first two in that this letter very clearly stated in relation to extending the time frame that for 'practical completion, date may not be extended beyond 1 December 2022.' In this context, that the date may not be extended, it is clearly stating that this is the last chance to proceed with this atrocious development.

Yet on 6 June, at the Estimates table, the minister confirmed details of a new deed. It extends the time frame as far as the minister and proponents want to make it. This is heartbreaking to the thousands of Tasmanians who oppose this development and to the Hall family.

Here is the issue with the new deed, signed by acting secretary Jason Jacobi last week. It comes back to the same right to information request. It is a letter signed by the then minister for Parks, Roger Jaensch. In this letter, Mr Jaensch is responding to a request from the heli-tourism proponent, Mr Hackett, to remove a specific clause from the lease. The minister replies:

I have taken advice on this matter. It is the Government's position that the removal of the requested clause will not, in its own right, provide you with the ability to proceed with construction as asserted. In any event, I have given consideration to your request and determine that it is not appropriate to remove the clause.

The minister said that removal of the clause is 'not appropriate'. The minister said that they formed this view from advice, presumably advice from Crown Law. Why then, on 6 June this year, in a deed of variation to Mr Hackett's lease, did Mr Jacobi sign off on the removal of that exact clause from the lease? The minister had stated in writing, 'it is not appropriate to remove that clause'. Who is running the department, Mr Speaker? Is it the minister or is it Mr Jacobi? Or is it, in fact, property developers?

Let us have a look at some other alterations to the lease Mr Hackett requested - or, should I say, demanded:

Removal of the word 'hut'. New huts are prohibited from this part of the World Heritage Area, and rightly so. Throughout the Parks-endorsed reserve activity assessment, the proposal is referred to as involving 'huts' multiple times. The proponent's original application used the word 'hut'. RTI documents now show that on 21 February this year, Daniel Hackett wrote to Parks and told them to remove the word 'hut' and replace it with 'standing camp', and that is exactly what was done.

What is the point of having a management plan for the World Heritage Area when developers can conspire with senior bureaucrats and ministers to wordsmith their way around prohibitions on use? Changing words does not change facts.

The Government rezoned a wilderness area because the developer told them to, extended their lease three times because the developer told them to, removed words from the lease because the developer told them to, removed clauses from legal agreements because the developer told them to, leased an entire island in the absence of a development application

because the developer told them to. What else has this developer been telling Government to do?

There are serious questions to answer in relation to this most recent deed that extends the rotten proposal at Lake Malbena yet again. The threat of hundreds of helicopters into this serene and wild place will remain for just two jobs - two jobs that have put an entire community off side and exposed a once great parks service as a sad joke, one that whimpers how high when developers tell them to jump. There needs to be a root-and-branch review of how this new deed came to be and why it was effectively written by the developer and signed by the head of the Parks and Wildlife Service.

History will not be kind to anyone who hitched their wagon to this dodgy proposal because those who oppose it will not go away. They understand Reg Hall's vision and they will not be deceived again.

Tasmanian Architecture Awards

[7.59 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, earlier today in the report on the Premier's Estimates, I said that we had not received answers to questions. That was wrong; we did receive an email. It was my mistake and I apologise. I want to thank the Premier for sending the questions through.

Tonight I speak about the Tasmanian Architecture Awards presentation dinner held on Saturday at Spring Bay Mill. It was an excellent occasion that was held both in person and online and really highlighted the skill on display in the projects that were submitted. The design principles of those projects were visually stunning and practical. We have some very talented architects in Tasmania who have contributed greatly to the urban landscape and the built spaces that we enjoy. I would like to thank in particular Jennifer Nichols, the Tasmanian executive director of the Tasmanian chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects and her team, Katie Katos, Fiona McMullen and Lara Maesele. I would also like to congratulate Stuart Tanner, the Tasmanian president who is from Tanner Architecture, who was also recognised on the night, winning a prestigious award.

The event MC was Tim Ross. It was livestreamed with the awards announcements being co-hosted by Viv O'Connell. It was done incredibly well. They have had a few years to perfect the method, with COVID-19 disrupting their plans for previous years.

I want recognise the talent of all of those who were nominated for different awards on the night. I congratulate all of the winners, acknowledge all of their hard work and in particular recognise that over the course of the last couple of years through COVID-19 that job has been made even more difficult with the challenges that have been felt through suppliers, materials, labour and indeed budgets. The projects that were displayed on Saturday night were stunning and a real credit to everyone who was involved.

I also quickly acknowledge the beautiful welcome to country that we heard at the opening of the proceedings. That was conducted by a member of the paradarmerne people and the entertainment that was provided by Ange Boxall, who often provides entertainment for events that are held on the east coast. I hope that everyone kicked on and had a great night. I left after

the awards but I am pretty confident that people were going to party on for a very long time, with many of them staying the night in the glamping tents on site and the other accommodation. I hope they made the most of it.

Bay of Fires Winter Arts Festival

[8.03 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - First I have to ask: do you ever go home, Bec? You are out at everything.

Ms White - So are you.

Mr TUCKER - Mr Speaker, I had the pleasure to represent Ms Archer in opening the Bay of Fires Winter Arts Festival on Friday 10 June, to help celebrate the 10th anniversary of the prestigious 2022 Bay of Fires Winter Art Prize.

The 10th anniversary is a significant milestone for any arts initiative. I congratulate the generous and dedicated volunteers of the Bay of Fires Arts Association and members of the St Helens community whose commitment and passion for the arts continues to support both this prize and this wonderful festival.

The Bay of Fires Arts Association is a volunteer-run organisation that presents the Bay of Fires Art Prize and the Bay of Fires Winter Arts Festival in June of each year.

The efforts of volunteers and community members involved in this festival over the last seven years have helped it grow to become a significant regional arts event in the Tasmanian cultural calendar. Originally created out of a desire to enhance the reputation and impact of the Bay of Fires Art Prize, the annual festival now offers a range of exciting opportunities and events that encourage local audiences to engage with and support the many talented artists living in the area.

Ms O'Connor - My ex-husband, Stephen Lees, just won that prize.

Mr TUCKER - I did not know that. Congratulations. There we are.

The Bay of Fires Arts Association received funding of \$10 000 through Arts Tasmania Arts Recovery Support Initiative in March 2021. This one-off program was part of a \$2.5 million art and cultural support fund announced in November 2020, offering funds of up to \$10 000 to artists, arts organisations and art businesses that could prove lost earnings because of the COVID-19 restrictions.

The Bay of Fires Arts prize also received a Grant of \$9438 from Events Tasmania for marketing activities to attract increased interstate visitation through the 2020-21-22 round of Event Marketing Tasmania Program.

I ran into my former art teacher, who is an artist, Katy Woodroffe, or Miss Woody as we all used to call her. It was good to catch up with her over the night. She sent me an email, which I am going to read in tonight, because there is something else quite interesting in the state parliament. She actually taught four of us in state parliament. Her email said:

Hi John,

It was so good to see you on Friday night. The Bay of Fires Art Prize is one of my favourite events, especially after I was lucky enough to win it in 2017, and it is always fabulous to spend time in beautiful St Helens.

And to have so many of my former students in state parliament at the same time is quite remarkable, as well as Bridget creating waves and being such a success in the federal scene.

I remember you, Jeremy, Janie and Simon all so fondly, although it's hard to realise that you have all grown up now?

I have so many happy memories of our times in the old art room. It was always pretty lively and messy. I started there in 1987, when Jeremy was in his last year.

He used to visit the art room to check out Bonny's friends, and Janie was a fabulous pitcher in my softball team, and a terrific art student.

I do not know what that says about me and Simon. We never got a mention like that.

The students and staff made the school such a friendly, warm and exciting place to be, and I loved my 24 years there. Christopher Strong was a very special and encouraging headmaster in my time.

It was such a thrill to run into my old art students, as we did on Friday night, and for you to remember me. Two weeks ago at the New Norfolk market, a loud shout of 'Miss Woody' stopped me in my tracks. I really feel so blessed to have been a teacher for most of my life.

It has been quite an art journey for me since leaving teaching in 2010, and I am looking forward to being part of an exhibition Legacy of Empire in Singapore next year.

That is the end of the email. I congratulate Miss Woody. She has become quite a global artist. My wife bought one of her artworks in the last couple of years.

The House adjourned 8.08 pm.