

Tuesday 19 June 2018

The President, **Mr Wilkinson**, took the Chair at 11 a.m. and read Prayers.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS
Lindisfarne Riverside Arts Club**

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, I welcome members of the Lindisfarne Riverside Arts Club. It is their sixtieth anniversary and we welcome them. The member for Pembroke will speak on a special interest matter relating to the Lindisfarne Riverside Arts Club.

Members - Hear, hear.

**SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS
Norman 'Bluey' Watson - Tribute**

[11.05 a.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, I wish to mark the life of one Norman 'Bluey' Watson, who sadly passed away on 18 April this year at the age of 88. First, I thank Mr John Livermore, a West Hobart resident, for providing a great deal of information toward this matter of special interest. Information has also been gained from *Semaphore*, issue No. 2 of 2016, which I believe is linked to the Royal Australian Navy, and from Norman's daughter, Julie, to whom I am also very thankful.

Norman Watson was born on 23 August 1929 in the suburb of Deagon in Sandgate, Queensland. At the age of three, Bluey, along with his sister Alma, was placed in a Nudgee orphanage in Brisbane, where, sadly, his sister later died.

Bluey started singing at four years of age and at age six and seven was the lead singer in a church choir. You would have to say that is quite amazing. At a very young age he went on stage at the Tivoli Theatre in Brisbane with George Wallace, and sang 'Madam, will you walk?' He was one of life's great characters, with such an engaging manner that it does not take much to imagine him accomplishing that at such a young age.

Bluey left the orphanage around 1941 at the age of 12 to work as a farm labourer. At the age of 18 he went west to work on cattle stations in western Queensland. He bought a hillbilly's guitar. I imagine he entertained people out there. If you knew Bluey, you would say, 'Try to stop him doing that'. In 1949, at the age of 20, he went to Japan as part of the Royal Australian Navy task force, visiting various ports there, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 1952, Bluey was on the HMAS *Hawkesbury*, which was participating in part of the United Kingdom's atomic tests at Montebello Islands, 130 kilometres off the Pilbara coast in Western Australia.

Bluey later realised he had been exposed to radiation while patrolling in the prohibited area, as were others at Montebello, of course. The *Hawkesbury*, in a position some 28 miles to the south-east of ground zero, became the closest Royal Australian Navy unit to the detonation, where the ship was used to conduct security and safety patrols before and after the tests. The British scientists failed to realise prevailing winds would take fallout from the tests across the northern part

of the Australian mainland. As a result of that test, and after later tests at Maralinga and Emu Field, a number of participants suffered from cancer, some fatally.

Bluey's medical records in Hobart recorded minor cancer spots being removed, 'caused by exposure to radiation', on his card. He was in fact a member of the Australian Ex-Services Atomic Survivors Association. I am led to believe that none of those impacted by radiation as a result of these atomic tests have ever, to this day, received compensation from either the British or Australian governments, something that should most certainly be investigated and consequently addressed by those governments, if it is not already on their agenda.

Prior to his death, Bluey was apparently one of only two survivors of those tests who were living in Tasmania. He was awarded the federal government medal commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the atomic tests at Montebello Islands. That medal is now with the Glenorchy RSL, where he was a member from about 1990.

In 1955, Bluey married in Hobart, but it eventually ended in divorce. However, years later he met up with those he believed to be his family: a daughter, Julie, and two grandchildren. He was certainly treated as family by them.

In Hobart, he established himself as a singer. He played at the Valern Hotel and was also a regular performer at the RAC Club [TBC] in Victoria Street. He was well known in musical circles. He played for around 15 years with the likes of the Ian Pearce Quartet, a well-known jazz band in Hobart back in the day. In 1980, Bluey played with a band known as 'Shandy' with John Livermore's wife, Net [TBC]. He sang Frank Sinatra and Louis Armstrong songs for the dinner music part of their repertoire. He often performed with another band known as 'Back to Back' at the Crescent Hotel in North Hobart. He also performed with the Jazzmanians. He was what you would call a goer. The Crescent was always packed.

His old mates, Woodsy and Snowy always cheered him on. You can just imagine those days - 'Woodsy', 'Snowy', 'Bluey'. I wonder if we will be remembered in that way - 'Kezza', 'Boggles', 'Bumper', 'Finchy' and 'Biscuit', not forgetting Tain - 'Ratters minor', I was told that was. It was an interesting time in Hobart's history.

Over the past decade, Bluey chaired the West Hobart Neighbourhood Watch committee and he was a vital part of the Lawrenny Court community. He also took an active interest in the traffic problems of West Hobart. He was always looking out for the welfare of others. He suffered from cardiovascular problems and was repeatedly in and out of hospital over the years. However, you cannot keep a good man down and he cheerfully bounced back from those setbacks until recently, of course, when those problems proved too much for him and he passed away.

Today the larger-than-life character of one Bluey Watson is celebrated for all he did for his community. One hopes that eventually we will see some real investigation into the atomic tests conducted in and around Australia to find out whether some compensation should be paid. Every year that passes, there are fewer of them - some who may have paid the ultimate sacrifice years later as a result of peacetime service to our nation, albeit largely due to a lack of understanding of the impacts of nuclear testing in those days.

Bluey will be sadly missed by his many friends in West Hobart at Lawrenny Court and the West Hobart Neighbourhood Watch fraternity, but especially by his remaining family, daughter Julie McLain and two grandchildren. May Norman 'Bluey' Watson rest in peace.

CH Smith Building - Redevelopment

[11.12 a.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, today I will talk about what probably was the longest-running planning dispute in Launceston's history: the very bitter argument over the redevelopment of the CH Smith building, which is about five minutes' walk from Henty House.

Ms Rattray - I missed the car park

Mr FINCH - That is right. There are plenty of new parking spots down at CH Smith. The buildings in Charles Street have been vacant since 1986 when the CH Smith company moved elsewhere.

I have an interesting story to tell you. In 1990, the then owner of the site decided to demolish the building in the early hours of the morning. His main protagonist was a person who wanted the adaptive reuse of the building, and members will know from our inquiry into heritage tourism, how good that can be. That person wanted the building's facades to be saved. He was restless one morning and around five o'clock he decided to go for a drive down there. I will not mention any names, but a huge excavator was warming up, ready to pull the building down.

Ms Rattray - He had a sixth sense

Mr FINCH - He raced home, got his family and stood them in front of the excavator to stop that happening. Then the police and the council became involved and stopped the demolition. When I lived in West Launceston, I bought my property from one of the people involved while my neighbour on the other side was the owner of the building. I felt like I was in a demilitarised zone.

The building was saved. Now we have the adaptive reuse of that facade and also a fantastic development after numerous protests about what should go there. Soon we will have a cafe and a restaurant there. There will be 4500 square metres for government offices; among the tenants will be Service Tasmania and the departments of State Growth, Education and Health.

This open-plan space will create an opportunity for collaboration between departments. The agencies will share facilities like kitchens, toilets, showers, meeting rooms and so on, which will maximise the use of the building's resources. The Department of Justice will also have office space. That will be great to see because Launceston's justices of the peace have been from pillar to post around Henty House - now they have their own designated offices in which to conduct their business.

Of the 300 car park spaces, more than 100 will be available with approximately 300 workers on site.

While the building is not finished, an amazing fly-around video is available that I will post on Twitter and Facebook. If members want to see what it is going to look like, I will be happy to send them the link. It is excellent.

The partners in this project are Errol Stewart and architect Scott Curran of the firm ARTAS. They have invested \$25 million in cold, hard cash. Errol Stewart has recently had success with the opening of Peppers Silo Hotel, and we all remember how wonderful Seaport has been for Launceston. He says that history will remember Lionel Morrell as the saviour of the CH Smith

building. I mentioned another one a little bit before that, but Lionel has been a dogged supporter of the restoration of the building's facade. Having the original building incorporated in the project has made the Tasmanian Heritage Council very happy.

The Mayor of Launceston, Albert Van Zetten, is ecstatic about the development, describing it as exciting and fantastic. He reflected on the unresolved eyesore it has been in Charles Street for more than 30 years and what a negative message it gave as the first sight to all who drove into Launceston.

Roberts Real Estate will be the first tenants to move into the original building. The building has a long history, as CH Smith building originally consisted of wool stores owned by Dalgety and Company until Charles Henry Smith took them over in the late 1850s for his shipping and insurance agencies and his wool and produce export business. When he died aged 77 in 1904, his sons used the building until 1986.

As Errol Stewart points out, the site was not without problems - 500 huge piles had to be driven into the site to stabilise the building so the road next door did not slip into it.

Ms Rattray - Silt comes up to there?

Mr FINCH - Yes. Historically it is under the surface. The CH Smith development is going to look amazing. It is the best thing in Launceston for years since the Silo development and Seaport.

[11.18 a.m.]

Lindisfarne Riverside Arts Club

Ms SIEJKA (Pembroke) - Mr President, this year marks the Lindisfarne Riverside Arts Club's sixtieth anniversary, and I welcome members of the club to the Chamber today.

The arts club has a remarkable history of providing performances to entertain members of the community. On 25 March 2018, I had the pleasure of joining members and attending a high tea to celebrate Riverside's sixtieth anniversary, which included a wonderful custom-made cake to celebrate the occasion.

The highlight of the afternoon was a slideshow of pictures and videos from various productions Riverside had put on. Riverside has a long history of putting on a variety of performances, including plays and concerts.

The Lindisfarne Riverside Arts Club was founded in 1958 by Ellen Dickson.

Mrs Dickson had a barn on her property in Lindisfarne where the first performances by Riverside were held. With help of donations and hard work from the community, what became known as 'The Barn' was refurbished to have a rustic look and provide a hub for many community activities and performances.

The first performance by Riverside in The Barn was a performance of *Alice in Wonderland*. This was directed by Mrs Dickson, who also made the costumes for the occasion. She had excellent

sewing skills, previously having a business selling fashionable garments in Hobart from fabric her late husband, Roy, had made.

Ellen Dickson was said to have had an infectious enthusiasm for the club which continued throughout her whole involvement with the club and is carried on by the current members.

Riverside quickly became highly regarded as an amateur theatre group in the early 1960s. As the club continued to focus on drama performances, there were 46 full-length plays between 1958 and 1992, as well as small performances for charities and other events.

Over the years, performances by Riverside members have included: *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Dear Children*, *Murder She Wrote*, and *As Long as They're Happy*. Performances have been held at locations including Clarence High School, Rosny College, Corpus Christi Hall and the CWA Hall in Lindisfarne.

Drama continued to be the prominent activity until the early 1990s when the Geilston Bay Choral Society provided some members to establish a choir within Riverside. The choir has since grown and is now the predominant activity.

The Lindisfarne Riverside Arts Club is particularly popular at Christmas time, with the choir invited to sing at Christmas carol events, nursing homes and other festive events. I attended last year's Christmas concert and thoroughly enjoyed the event.

The choir has also recorded a CD featuring 18 tracks performed by the choir at Riverside concerts, which was recorded at the Rosny Barn. In 2008, for its fiftieth anniversary, the club launched a DVD produced by Sheila Spargo that featured both drama and choir performances. Both the CD and DVD are treasured by members because they hold beautiful memories of their history - and some of them are quite entertaining as well.

Riverside has an active committee that supports the work of the club, and many of its members have been involved for some years. As well as general support for the club, the committee coordinates choir concerts.

Riverside also has a long history of wonderful musical directors, drama directors, actors and singers who have been part of these varied accomplishments. Johanna Bostock is the current musical director, appointed in 2016, and she previously held the role in 2010 and 2011. Johanna is a young woman who is extremely passionate about her work and has a high level of skill and expertise. The current accompanist is Jeffrey Cheal, whose dedication and musical skill is highly valued by members of the club. Riverside members describe their music as middle of the road but they are known to perform rock and roll and classical pieces.

Currently the Lindisfarne Riverside Arts Club has approximately 45 performing members and 15 non-performing members, many having been with the club for over 30 years. The choir meets weekly for rehearsals at the Lindisfarne Citizens Activities Centre. Members are very committed to maintaining a regular schedule to ensure they are performance-ready. From what I have observed, Johanna certainly runs a tight ship.

Drama continues to be an important aspect of Riverside's performances with the speech, drama and play reading component held at a member's home on the eastern shore once a month. This provides members with the opportunity to develop pantomimes and short sketches for their

concerts. Riverside hosts major concerts in June and December each year, with plenty of other events and performances sprinkled throughout the year. They host quarterly social events for members, which I understand can involve impromptu mini-performances from those who attend.

The club runs on the commitment and dedication of the committee and actors, performers and directors. I acknowledge the effort of previous and current members, who have built a legacy within the Pembroke community. As it is in its sixtieth year, the Lindisfarne Riverside Arts Club will be having a sixtieth anniversary concert for its midyear performance at the Lindisfarne Citizens Activities Centre. Performances will be held on Saturday and Sunday, 23 and 24 June.

I am looking forward to the midyear concerts - I'm taking my mother along - and seeing the Riverside members shine. I urge all members to attend one of these concerts if they are able to. I am certainly willing to find you some tickets if you would like to come. It will be excellent. The Lindisfarne Riverside Arts Club is a wonderful group to have as part of the community, and I wish them all the best for their future performances.

Members - Hear, hear.

Children's Development - Importance of Play

[11.24 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, an abundance of research highlights the importance of play in children's development and learning across all cultures, particularly in the years from birth to eight years. Many experts in the area believe it is impossible to disentangle children's play, their learning and their development. Of course, play does not happen in a vacuum. It is usually undertaken within a physical and social space and after the age of four to five, much of this play occurs within the school environment.

There is also evidence that one of the greatest benefits of playing is its assistance in developing social confidence and self-regulation. Playing is linked to the development of resilience and the beginnings of empathy as children begin to understand others' points of view. This development is essential to a child's future because it assists the child to build relationships, learn to resolve conflicts, negotiate and regulate their behaviour. Playing is a stress releaser and is often linked to child wellbeing.

I commend Mr Rockliff for his work as the Minister for Education and Training in supporting a proposed amendment to his 2017 legislation to support, in legislation and in the Education budget, the requirement for all children in our schools from kindergarten to grade 2 to be taught in a play-based, inquiry-led learning environment. I am aware significant work is going on in this area with human and financial resources being provided to achieve this. I was particularly impressed to hear about the work being done that focuses not just on formal learning spaces in schools, but also in school grounds and outdoor areas.

I recently attended a meeting with board members of St Brigid's Catholic School, which is in the heart of Wynyard. Under principal Gregg Sharman's great leadership, parents, friends, staff and local community members have been consulted in the redesign of the school's outdoor areas. This has been done to develop an outdoor area that meets the vision of an engaging, safe outdoor play-based learning area.

I was particularly impressed with the level of engagement during the consultation with the primary stakeholders, the children. Some of their input has been very enlightening and has highlighted the need to create an outdoor area children can use often as an integral part of their learning. The input of children will also be sought continuously throughout the project and will assist as construction is undertaken, provoking and inviting ways to encourage exploration, learning and inquiry. There is nothing like seeing the world through a child's eyes.

An environment that is secure and warm is one that will build trusting relationships so these children can be confident and supported in their explorations, risk-taking and learning. As this project is being undertaken in a Catholic school in Wynyard, I note and commend the work of the Catholic Education Office. Catholic schools are actively engaged in building and creating these outdoor learning, nature-based environments: they have been leaders in this area.

At the meeting I attended I was informed significant work is going on in our public schools, with the Department of Education working hard to ensure the intent of the legislation is delivered to all Tasmanian children. I was very encouraged by this news because it showed just how able this House is. We have worked with the Government through the minister and his advisors to do what we know is in the best interests of our young students. The future of our state depends on these young children.

I acknowledge the support of members in this House in achieving this outcome. We know it will greatly assist Tasmanian children and their development of essential life skills. These outdoor learning spaces will foster the children's creativity and imagination, and prepare them for a world where creative problem-solvers will be essential. The final outcome of the Education Amendment Act 2017, which took some time to get to, was with the agreement and support of the parliament - the parliament working well together. Negotiation occurred, compromises were made and further investigation into what was not universally agreed in the originally tabled bill led to an outcome the whole parliament supported. That outcome will create better outcomes for Tasmania through our most valued resource - our children, our future.

Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden, Burnie

[11.29 a.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, it is now almost three years since I had the privilege of showing my fellow members of the Legislative Council around the beautiful north-west electorate of Montgomery.

Ms Rattray - We had afternoon tea at the gardens

Mrs HISCUTT - We did. Since then we have welcomed some new faces to this House. As such, I take this opportunity to tell them and, in some cases, remind others about the wonderful Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden in Burnie. Known locally as the EVRG, the garden was founded in 1981 by members of the Rhododendron Society, North West Tasmanian Branch. Today it is an independent non-profit organisation. The area started as scrub, a blackberry-infested hillside, but visionaries Hilary O'Rourke, the landowner, and rhododendron breeder Noel Sullivan - a learned expert and teacher - and Bob Malone, a talented breeder and nurseryman, changed that.

This unique garden has acquired international acclaim in recent years due to the many irreplaceable species grown there. Classified as a plant museum and one of Australia's major rhododendron gardens, it is featured every year in 'Blooming Tasmania' brochures.

It is home to native fauna such as platypus and echidna as well as many bird species including wild ducks, native hens, grebes and many other bird species; I have seen some reptile species slithering around there from time to time.

This wonderful garden covers 11 hectares with more than 22 000 established rhododendrons and other species, and they are currently adding more.

In this famous garden at this time of the year, the Vireya rhododendron section is about to burst into colour, as are the big leaf rhododendrons - just one of the many huge and gorgeous flower trusses around the garden. People really do need to see the garden themselves in the next few months.

With a majestic view over the small lakes and gardens, it is used frequently for functions. Some members might remember the view.

I have officiated at many weddings at the gardens. There are many private places among the trees and rhododendrons to hold ceremonies. Anything from small intimate weddings to large well attended weddings are easily catered for.

The most mind-blowing part of this garden is that most of the development was completed thanks to the hours of time volunteered by members. The volunteers have been extremely busy over the last few months preparing the garden for spring. They have used all the mulch stacked around the place and an entire pallet of Kahoona fertiliser around new and more established plants.

The EVRG's most recent newsletter showed a very busy autumn period, with the members playing host to school groups, including a class from the Sacred Heart School at Ulverstone. The preps and grade 1 classes were learning about living things in their science class.

The garden also receives many visitors from cruise ships. A record 32 cruise ships were booked to visit Burnie in 2017-18, and they are looking forward to welcoming more interstate and international visitors from the 30 ships booked to dock at Burnie in the upcoming 2018-19 season.

Each busload of visitors is hosted by volunteers and shown around the garden. Autumn has also seen the addition of 384 new plants, including rhododendron species, deciduous azaleas, kalmia latifolia, sorbus, conifers and maples.

The volunteers are currently working hard to label each of these new plants in time for the garden's spring opening in September.

These members run the garden's tea house and information centre; they keep the small plants nursery flourishing and roll up their sleeves to help with catering when they play host to an event.

Without these volunteers, past and present, we would not have this gem in our north-west community. I sincerely thank each person who has given their time to make this garden the world-renowned destination it is today.

I urge all members of this House and visitors to the region to visit the Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden.

New Bridgewater Bridge

[11.34 a.m.]

Ms HOWLETT (Prosser) - Mr President, in last week's state Budget, the Hodgman Liberal Government committed \$115 million to the construction of a new Bridgewater bridge and in May's federal budget, the Turnbull Coalition Government committed \$461 million to the project.

This combined funding of \$576 million will construct a four-lane bridge to seamlessly connect the Brooker and Midland highways.

The construction of a new Bridgewater bridge is long overdue and desperately needed. The current bridge was built in the 1940s and has been a long source of frustration, with many motorists impacted daily by its cumbersome design.

As it currently stands, the causeway and existing bridge create a bottleneck that not only slows all traffic and leads to significant delays for commuters, but also contributes to an increase in costs to the many businesses that rely on the highway for transport and freight.

The Brooker, Lyell and Midland highways meet at the Bridgewater Bridge and Granton roundabout. This critical link in the road network of southern Tasmania is the nexus between the growing areas of Brighton and the Derwent Valley as well as the greater Hobart area. It is also an integral part of the major freight thoroughfare between northern and southern Tasmania.

Constructing a new Bridgewater bridge is critical to cater for our growing population, not only in the southern areas of Tasmania, but also across the state. With this being the main arterial connection between north and south, we must provide adequate infrastructure to accommodate the increasing volumes of freight on Tasmanian roads, as well as the growing number of tourists visiting our state.

It is estimated that construction of the new Bridgewater bridge will support around 200 jobs. It will be the single biggest infrastructure project in Tasmania since the construction of the state's hydroelectric dams during the 1960s and 1970s.

It is only due to the tireless lobbying by the majority Hodgman Liberal Government and the Tasmanian Liberal Senate team that the federal government made the funding for this project available. It is also due to the prudent economic management of Tasmania's finances by the Hodgman Government that the state now has the funds available to invest in these important infrastructure projects. After years of no action by previous Labor and Labor-Greens governments, and despite talking about it a lot and Labor wasting the \$100 million the Howard government provided Tasmania in 2005 to construct a new Bridgewater bridge, it has taken both state and federal Liberal governments to deliver a cohesive plan and, through sound financial management, the funding needed to deliver a new Bridgewater bridge.

This will deliver to our community much-needed infrastructure to keep the momentum for the work we have already done, which is a stark comparison to the Tasmanian Labor Party, which should have invested the money the way it was meant to nearly 15 years ago. Had it done so, a new bridge would have delivered more than a decade ago.

The construction of the new bridge under the majority Liberal Government will begin in around three years' time, with completion forecasted to be by 2024. This complex and vital project is one part of our \$711 million investment in Tasmania's infrastructure, delivered only by the Hodgman Liberal Government. It will build for Tasmania the infrastructure of the twenty-first century and take Tasmania to the next level.

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2018 (No. 16)

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2018 (No. 17)

Noting of Budget Papers

Resumed from 14 June 2018 (page 33)

[11.38 a.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, as Leader of the Government, first I will reiterate some of what the Treasurer said in his second reading speech, after which I will make some comments about my own electorate. I will then go through some excellent points I was reading while going through the budget papers that particularly pertain to my specialty of agriculture, a sector I hope to champion from now on. Finally, I will deliver a raft of facts and figures that demonstrate how well Tasmania is travelling under the Hodgman Liberal Government, as demonstrated by this and previous budgets.

I came home late on Thursday night and for light reading, picked up the budget papers. It was 1 o'clock before I put them down, as I was quite excited.

Mr Finch - Should you seek treatment for this?

Mrs HISCUTT - I was thinking I should. Tasmanians are the most confident people in the nation. We should be proud our economy is now one of the fastest-growing in the country. The Treasurer says the budget is a plan to deliver the infrastructure of the twenty-first century, massively increasing investment in roads, hospitals, affordable housing, dams, bridges and schools.

There is a contagious buzz of confidence in the air and people are excited about what the future will bring. The Treasurer goes on to say that people will move to where there are jobs. It is no surprise our population is increasing when we have the strongest growth rates in over seven years and the highest rate of net interstate migration in eight years.

Being the mother of sons, their friends have travelled overseas and onto the mainland for work. It is good to see them come back, bringing their skills with them, getting married and settling down. It has been my pleasure to officiate as a marriage celebrant at a few of their weddings.

The Treasurer says that a balanced budget delivering services and providing an appropriate buffer is critical to ensuring we can deal with any unexpected events. While Tasmania is in a strong position, it would be reckless to do what others have called for - spend every dollar earned. As a farmer, it took me years to get a buffer in the bank. That buffer gives me comfort at night. If there are droughts, floods, crop failures or any emergency, it is so comforting to have a small buffer behind you. It is prudent we keep a small buffer.

The Treasurer says that is why we will not spend the surplus forecast before we have received it as it is the Tasmanian people's insurance policy against adversity. It will do no good to pursue the Treasurer for money - if he says no, he means no.

Ms Forrest - That is a defeatist attitude.

Mrs HISCUTT - No, he is very good with fiscal management. The Budget delivers investment into trade training centres of excellence. Anyone who has tried to do any renovations will know how extremely hard it is to get a tradie. Some people are waiting up to a month to be able to secure a tradie, especially in the building, construction and renovation areas. These trade training centres of excellence will be much needed and hopefully will increase the number of tradies available.

The successful Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme for apprentices and trainees in areas with skill shortages will be extended to encourage employers to make the crucial down payment on skills and training. We want the benefits of a strong jobs market to extend fully to all regions in the state. In addition, the Coordinator-General will work with regional councils to help them develop regional investment package attraction packages. In my electorate, the Hermal Group moving into Hampshire is one good example, while a new mine, Forward Mining, is opening in the Hampshire area. There will be over 200 jobs in building one of those projects and they will end up with about 160 employees each, which is very welcome.

The Government is providing \$6 million over three years to fund more drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds across the state and more than \$1.8 million of funding for the Rural Alive and Well program. The Rural Alive and Well is an excellent group of people that uses their money wisely.

During the floods in the Smithton area - how many years ago would that be, four or five? - Rural Alive and Well was there and active among that group of people.

Talking about the drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds, I notice \$2.4 million is going into such beds in Ulverstone.

The Hodgman Liberal Government knows a strong agricultural sector delivers jobs and opportunities across every region. The Treasurer says -

Key to our plan is a new \$70 million commitment towards the third tranche of irrigation schemes which will continue our successful partnership with the Australian Government and local farmers to deliver the water that farmers rely on to produce higher value food products.

We are at the end of an irrigation scheme. It is so great to go up there and be able to turn the tap on and have enough pressure come out of that pipeline to irrigate our crops without too much effort. It is one of the best things that has happened in our area and across all irrigation districts.

There is also a \$20 million biosecurity emergency response and research fund, which is in collaboration with the Australian Government. It will help meet the eradication costs of the recent fruit fly incursion and, importantly, boost our capacity to respond to future threats.

The Treasurer says -

We will invest \$7 million in capital upgrades to modernise our research farms, \$5 million in building an agricultural centre of excellence, \$3.7 million into the Weeds Action Fund and \$1.8 million in competitive grants funding for the Landcare Action Fund.

One of those research farms - the Elliott Research Station - is in my old haunt, the member for McIntyre's electorate.

Ms Forrest - It has always been in mine.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, I used to live up there for many years. It was just down the road from where I lived.

Ms Forrest - One of your old haunts.

Mrs HISCUTT - One of my old haunts, yes.

Mr President, this Budget invests more than \$13 million in the aquaculture industry, including \$5.1 million to support an industry-led abalone industry productivity improvement program, and \$5 million to develop the Government's fisheries integrated licensing and management systems.

The Budget also contains \$72 million to fully develop the potential that exists at Cradle Mountain to create what we believe will be an experience in the north that will be as important as MONA is in the south. Cradle Mountain has just come into my recent boundary-adjusted electorate, so I am very pleased to hear this. If the north can get a venue that will rival MONA, or even equal it, we will get some more tourists in this area, which will be an offspring to all areas up here.

The Caves to Canyon Tourism Association, in my electorate, is very keen to see some of this activity at Cradle Mountain. Its operators know that the offshoots from visitors will be very beneficial to the north-west coast. I will illustrate how busy our tourism sector has been lately on the coast. I recently went to a meeting where I met with a man from Gunns Plains Caves, Geoff Deer. We call him the 'caveman' because he has long hair and a long beard, although he recently had that all cut off for a worthy cause. He turned up to one of these Caves to Canyon meetings. His eyes were hanging out of his head, he was that busy with the cruise ship season. That is a good start.

An additional \$12 million will be invested into marketing Tasmania as a premium destination and attracting high-yielding visitors and boosting flights to the state.

I now touch on a few highlights in my own electorate. I have cut across two electorates now, the divisions of Braddon and Lyons. I will start with Braddon. I note \$6 million has been allocated for the Burnie ambulance station. I will be interested to see how that is developed. People who can see the ambulance station have said that the ambulances have trouble getting out onto the highway from where they are positioned at the minute. That is well worth a \$6 million spend there to make the Burnie ambulance station more accessible.

The drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds in Ulverstone are to receive \$2.4 million. Parklands High School will get \$1 million. This is also funding part of a larger project, which is good because Parklands High School desperately needs some renovations.

Outside my electorate, the Spreyton Primary School will receive \$1.7 million. My granddaughter will eventually attend Spreyton Primary School. The member for Mersey has informed me it definitely is in his electorate.

In addition, the whole Penguin District School campus, from kinder to year 12, will be integrated on one block of land, while \$5 million has been allocated to a new agricultural centre of excellence in Braddon.

The Leith overpass on the Bass Highway has been a problematic intersection for many years. There will be an investigation into how to deliver better outcomes for slow-moving traffic on both sides of the highway trying to merge into fast-moving highway traffic. There have been numerous accidents and a couple of deaths, so that is a very good project for the government to bring on.

The Ulverstone Lions Club bike park has been allocated \$100 000, which is excellent; in Lyons, the Sheffield School farm redevelopment has been allocated \$3 million. They have an excellent school farm up there and I am pleased to see money going there.

An amount of \$72 million has been allocated for the Cradle Mountain visitor experience project; that includes some Australian Government funding. This proposal looks fantastic, and I am glad some money is finally there.

The Kentish Family Support House will receive \$580 000; those groups will be thrilled with what they will be obtaining.

I now move to the budget papers and highlight some of the things I found particular exciting.

First a comment from the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association made in a media release -

Budget endorsed by State's peak farming body. The Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) has endorsed the State Government's 2017-18 Budget ...

This is from last year. I called Peter Skillern on the phone; he is very pleased with this budget. I tried get a message from the president, but unfortunately he was overseas.

The Australian Government has provided \$20 million to establish a biosecurity emergency response and research fund to help meet costs associated with the current Queensland fruit fly eradication program. The odd fly has popped up in different areas outside the restriction areas, but the biosecurity department has deemed this not an outbreak, rather a controllable incursion. The fund will also support additional operational staff and specialist advisers to work across the state to boost Tasmania's capacity to respond to future threats by Queensland fruit fly, delivering biosecurity operations and services, and assisting with understanding future biosecurity disease risks to Tasmania.

Biosecurity risk management truck and machinery washes - the current funding of \$510 000 over four years will support Biosecurity Tasmania's continued collaboration with industry groups and farmers, to plan for and manage post-border biosecurity risks and support on-farm biosecurity hygiene strategies. This will provide capital funding of \$2 million over four years for a network of

truck and machinery washdown stations, which will be delivered in partnership with farmers, agribusinesses, non-government organisations and local government.

The networks of washdown stations will contribute to improvements in biosecurity and farm hygiene. I know that our other agricultural member in the House, the member for McIntyre, will be interested in that, too. When I started out as a meat buyer many years ago, one of the biggest issues for the truckers was their washdown area.

Ms Rattray - The Powranna washdown station has been an issue for four years.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes. There are always arguments about who has responsibility for washdown stations - the agents, the councils or the government. There is nothing worse than driving along the road and having your car coated by the spray from a cattle truck in front of you. I am glad to see this \$2 million in the budget.

Ms Rattray - We are only \$120 000 or thereabouts short of finishing the Powranna truck washdown station.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, that is right. Mr Peter Skillern of the TFGA said that having truck washes strategically placed around the state would reduce the chance of an incursion of some sort spreading from region to region. There is also an issue about manure coming from the back of trucks. I am glad to see \$2 million going towards those washdowns.

Ms Rattray - From that, can I take it that the shortfall for the current Powranna truck washdown will be there ready to go?

Mrs HISCUTT - I have not gone far enough into that. That is a good question which the member will need to pose to the minister next week. She might be able to get a breakdown on where that money is going to be spent.

I remember the fallow deer census from being on a committee into fallow deer with the member for Huon, who chaired the inquiry. In 2018-19, the department and the new Tasmanian game council will work with stakeholders to develop a statewide fallow deer census. This \$150 000 initiative will allow commencement of the census, which will increase knowledge and understanding of the distribution of deer across Tasmania, and, for those areas vulnerable to their spread, to support better management of deer in Tasmania. One outcome from that committee is that we do not really know how many deer there are. We hope this is a good start to doing something about the problem. I am sure the member for Huon will be pleased to see that funding there.

In growing our world-class inland fisheries, a range of initiatives will be arranged in conjunction with the Inland Fisheries Service to support participation in the growth of Tasmania's inland trout fisheries. I touch briefly on the Anglers Alliance Tasmania and the support it will get. Believe it or not, I am a keen fisherperson. I am a member of the Penguin branch of the North Western Fisheries Association, which is allied with the Anglers Alliance Tasmania. Try as hard as I do, fish are very rare for me to catch. I believe this has a connection to the name as I do not know any members of the Hiscutt family who are big trout fishers. I am going to go with that theory.

Funding of \$215 000 over four years from 2019-20 is provided to Anglers Alliance Tasmania, the peak group which represents 26 000 trout anglers, of whom I am one. The funding will support

Anglers Alliance Tasmania in its work to improve trout fisheries and support anglers. It will be cheaper to go trout fishing. The cost of inland trout fishing licences will be frozen at 2017-18 prices for the next four years. This initiative will make it cheaper to go trout fishing. Funding of \$300 000 will fully offset the revenue the Inland Fisheries Service could have otherwise received.

There will also be upgraded amenities at high-visitation trout waters, with funding of \$300 000 over two years for the Inland Fisheries Service in collaboration with Anglers Alliance Tasmania and local authorities to build and upgrade existing and new community amenities to support high-visitation fishing locations. That came out of a recent meeting and it is a good initiative. Some of the members complained that because of the way these locations are set up, they find people camping on some of these amenities, and when they want to launch a boat, they cannot because there is a camper in the way.

I move on to the Cradle Mountain experience. The Government's vision will take the iconic Cradle Mountain to the next level. The unprecedented investment in the region by the Tasmanian Government is \$56.8 million. The Australian Government commitment of \$30 million will align with the Cradle Mountain Master Plan, which I have seen. It will build on the popularity of Cradle Mountain as a destination through a new era in visitor experience that elevates the Cradle Mountain visitor experience to one that rivals World Heritage sites around the world.

The \$35 million commitment over five years by the Tasmanian Government, in addition to the previously allocated \$21.8 million and the \$30 million Australian Government funding, will revitalise visitor facilities at the existing gateway to Cradle Mountain outside the national park, including the new visitor centre, commercial and retail precinct, car park and shuttle bus transit stations, and will significantly improve visitor facilities. It will also redevelop the existing car park at iconic Dove Lake - as an aside, the first time I officiated at a wedding was at Dove Lake, for an English couple, so I have fond memories of the place - within the World Heritage Area, and develop a new viewing shelter to create an enhanced visitor experience. It will invest \$30 million, matched by the Australian Government's commitment of \$30 million, to facilitate the development of a Cradle Mountain cableway, ensuring visitors have all-year, all-weather access to Dove Lake. As part of this commitment, funding of \$5 million will support development of a sensitive and appropriate iconic tourism experience in partnership with the private sector on crown land adjacent to the World Heritage Area.

These strategic investments will ensure the visitor experience at Cradle Mountain matches the spectacular natural beauty of the area. It will further build the Tasmanian brand and will increase investment in the Cradle Coast region, boost the visitor economy and create jobs. I have already mentioned, on a more local note, that the Caves to Canyon Tourism Association is looking forward to these developments at Cradle Mountain.

Mr Finch - I have an interested participant in and spectator of those developments in my electorate, too - McDermott's Coaches, which has the contract to run the buses in and out. They are very keen for that development, which represents a growth in the opportunities there.

Mrs HISCUTT - Hopefully they will be able to purchase some new buses and coach drivers. That would be good.

Mr Gaffney - I am not being pessimistic, but people already go to Cradle Mountain. Yes, it will be enhanced and improved, which is great, but it will be interesting to see whether that has a flow-on effect of more numbers, which is different to the MONA situation. Everyone went to

MONA because it was new. It will be interesting to see what the growth in numbers will be just because the facilities have improved. People go there for the mountain and the lake.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, it will be interesting to see. Time will tell, of course.

I also note \$16 million over four years has been allocated for visitor infrastructure across the state, and at Cockle Creek in particular. I picked that one out mainly because I walked through Cockle Creek maybe four years ago now. There is \$800 000 to improve the southern gateway to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. I am very pleased to see this. When we came home from Cockle Creek, after talking to some other campers there, there was mention that upgraded facilities - boardwalks and things - would enhance the area a lot. They happened to mention particular sections. I wrote a letter to the then minister, Mr Groom. It looks like it has been picked up on, and that is wonderful.

Down to the engine room of the state - this is where, at about 12.30 a.m. when I was reading the papers, I was getting very excited: the move of 100 Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment staff to the north. The north and north-west are key contributors to our state's economic growth through primary industries such as agriculture, agribusiness and fisheries. The location of government offices and staff positions in the north and north-west should reflect the important contribution these regions make to our economy. An initiative of \$1.8 million over four years will facilitate the move of 100 positions in DPIPWE from Hobart to the north and north-west through staff turnovers and voluntary incentive programs. Additional capital funding of \$600 000 over two years will support capital works and fit-out of the Prospect, Mount Pleasant and Stony Rise offices, to support the move of positions to the north and north-west. I reiterate, we are the engine room of the state.

The new Tasmanian game council and Game Services Tasmania - this initiative is to modernise the management of game and browsing animals through the establishment of an independent Tasmanian game council and the Game Services Tasmania with a primary industry focus of providing support to landholders, farmers and hunters to manage all issues relating to game and browsing animals. This should help farmers get their message to government.

The On-farm Energy and Irrigation Audit Program of \$750 000 over three years from 2018-19 will provide a subsidy to engage qualified professionals to review farm energy use, infrastructure and systems and to identify saving strategies. This initiative will be led by the Department of State Growth and is one small thing government can do to help farmers save money.

Recreational fishing improved boat and trailer parking: improvements to parking facilities at a number of key locations for recreational fishing will be provided over three years from 2018-19. In conjunction with local councils, the Government will provide \$2.2 million for upgrades to current parking facilities at key boat ramps and look at developing overflow parking opportunities at these sites. This initiative will be led by Marine and Safety Tasmania. It is a good initiative - as a member of the North Western Fisheries Association of Tasmania, I often hear complaints about trailer parking and facilities.

The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens and its new visitor centre - this initiative of \$1 million in 2018-19 and a further \$2.6 million in 2019-20 will contribute to the construction of a new visitor centre at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. Then we will take agriculture to the next level with agriculture centres of excellence and the Blundstone Scholarship. The contribution to the Blundstone Scholarship of \$60 000 per annum over six years from 2018-19 will assist students who

would otherwise not access higher education to undertake an associate degree in agribusiness at the University of Tasmania. Associate degrees are becoming very popular on the north-west coast, and more education is always a good thing.

The Tasmanian Government's additional contribution to the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture of \$3 million over the five years from 2018-19 will take the total investment to \$28 million. The increased funding will support the establishment of a new agricultural innovative fund for specific industry-aligned priority research programmes.

Another initiative provides \$7 million over three years from 2018-19 to modernise crown and TIA research farm assets and make our research farms centres of excellence for practical research and demonstrations. Maybe the Elliot Research Station will come into some funding. Freer Farm, where I did my apprenticeship, will benefit from this funding.

Ms Forrest -Also in my electorate.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, I spent my four years trade apprenticeship there.

Extending the Stock Underpass Program - an additional \$600 000 has been provided over three years, commencing in 2019-20, to offset costs associated with stock underpass infrastructure, improving farm and road safety and increasing farm efficiency. In addition to existing funding of \$500 000 in the 2017-18 Budget for 2018-19, this will bring the total funding for this program to \$1.1 million over four years. This is a great initiative as highways and more major roads begin to dissect farms. With properties on either side of a road, moving stock backwards and forwards across the road becomes problematic, and putting in an underpass is very expensive. It was up to farmers to work out how to do that, with engineering and all the necessary work for this, but the Government has taken on this underpass program and designed a standard set of model engineering papers for that underpass, which is a good thing that will help farmers.

Mr Finch - Leader, are you suggesting farmers need to cover the cost of doing that?

Mrs HISCUTT - It used to be that way. If you wanted to move your stock from one side of the road to another side of the road and you wanted to go under, it was up to the farmer to do that. It was getting problematic and expensive as highways were being upgraded all the time. We have now put some money into this to help alleviate the problems and come up with a standard engineered design for underpasses so farmers do not have to go through all that.

Mr Finch - What is the ratio? Does it depend on each project?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, of course it would. It depends on how wide the road is and whether it is a highway.

Mr Finch - Did you suggest a figure had been okayed for that?

Mrs HISCUTT - An additional \$600 000 has been provided over three years. That is on top of an existing funding of \$500 000, so there is \$1.1 million over four years for that.

Ms Rattray - That will not do too many. It is an expensive exercise.

Mrs HISCUTT - That is absolutely correct, but this is a good start.

I touch now on the hemp industry. An amount of \$150 000 over three years has been allocated to support the hemp industry of Tasmania's exponential growth with grower communications, product development and brand marketing. This is a fledgling industry. With government support, it should go ahead in leaps and bounds. It will cover a lot of products and markets, from food to fabric. It is good to see that happening in our state.

Implementing the bee industry futures report - funding of \$750 000 over three years from 2018-19 has been allocated, so we can work closely with beekeepers and crop pollinators to implement the Government's bee industry futures program. This initiative will focus on resourcing access, biosecurity, hive productivity and crop pollination resilience. This commitment includes \$500 000 for selected infrastructure upgrades to improve resource access. Members may remember being lobbied by the bee industry at one stage about the roads that give them access to leatherwood areas. They were old forestry roads that were not being used anymore and had deteriorated very quickly. Crop pollination resistance is very interesting. As a farmer, if you have a seed crop, you need to get bees into that crop to pollinate the crop. You cannot spray during the day, otherwise you would do away with all those lovely little bees. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of that report and what it will actually mean.

I am interested in red meat, besides the fact that I like a good steak. Having been a stock buyer over many years, I am pleased to see this sector go ahead. An initiative of \$1 million has been allocated over four years from 2018-19 to work with farmers and processors to increase the trade, marketing, value and sales of Tasmanian red meat. This will complement practical strategies to increase livestock production and throughput by effective pasture and grazing management, seasonal supply strategies, disease prevention, food development and quality assurance.

We all know Tasmania has some of the safest and best red meat in the world. A lot of that is through hormone- and GMO-free, mainly grass-fed, product so we have premium markets to places where some do not. It is good to see us shoring up that market.

There will also be a review of insurance duties on agricultural insurance products. The review of agricultural insurance products utilised by farmers, including any impediments to manage risks of natural event such as drought, flood, hail and fire, will be undertaken. The final scope will be determined in consultation with the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, farmers and the insurance industry. This is something that needs to be discussed.

It would be remiss not to mention the rural youth of Tasmania. Rural Youth Tasmania develops young people in rural industries through leadership programs. The commitment of \$70 000 over four years from 2018-19 will enable their future work. Agfest is one of the beacons of rural youth in Tasmania and a great place to be. They deserve huge accolades for what they do.

The TFGA will be provided with \$100 000 over three years from 2018-19 towards a 'living next door to a farmer' campaign, which will support the TFGA's work with farmers, the real estate industry and local government to support good neighbourly relations, especially where farmland adjoins existing or new urban and peri-urban developments. It is important to develop and foster these relationships, so residential people know what is going on.

In the past there have been reports of farmers not treating their sheep correctly by having them on dirt paddocks. Farmers know they are there to clean up spuds, swedes, broccoli and any other leftover crop, so helping urban dwellers to understand this is a good thing. Another issue is working with machinery at night; this does not happen all the time, but sometimes farmers need to work

through the night. Helping urban dwellers understand that this will happen, but not all the time, is a good thing. This is a good initiative by the Government.

I cannot fail to mention women in agriculture. This initiative provides \$120 000 over four years from 2018-19 for women in agriculture to build capacity for more rural women to take leadership roles in Tasmanian primary industries. This is an issue close to my heart and that of the member for McIntyre, having been a member of Women in Agriculture for many years.

Ms Rattray - Absolutely.

Mrs HISCUTT - I recently opened and attended the Women on Farms Gathering. Did the member for McIntyre attend their dinner on Saturday night?

Ms Rattray - No, unfortunately I was already committed.

Mrs HISCUTT - Around 100 ladies attended opening night and it was my pleasure to offer a few words and jovial moments with women and about how they manage on farms. Tasmanian Women in Agriculture also helps support women - not necessarily women in need, although that is included - in many ways by providing information on all sorts of things women should be aware of on the farm.

The Tasmanian rural water strategy is to support the next phase of Tasmanian water development. A new Tasmanian water strategy will guide our future water management arrangements; it will ensure integrated, fair, efficient water administration and compliance to deliver water security for farmers and irrigators and management of our water assets to achieve sustainable outcomes in a changing climate of agricultural growth, environment and rural communities.

During my apprenticeship one of the things we had to learn is what a weed was. A weed is a plant out of place. That sometimes gets me into trouble. I might go out with a group of people and there might be a plant I do not recognise, and I would say, 'That is a weed, not being disrespectful, a plant out of place.' So a new weed action fund of \$5 million over five years from 2018-19 will be invested with farmers, Landcare Tasmania and other community organisations to tackle weeds impacting on valuable agriculture and environmental assets.

A Tasmanian weed advocate will be established to work in partnership with the department to identify strategic on-ground priorities across land tenure and to coordinate the weed action fund. This is an initiative many farmers will access and use.

I will deliver a raft of facts and figures demonstrating how well off Tasmania is under the Hodgman Liberal Government, as demonstrated by this and previous budgets. This is a snapshot of where we are currently and the economy-wide performances.

For the March 2018 quarter, State final demand is a measure of spending by households, businesses and governments in Tasmania. This grew by 1.1 per cent compared with the December quarter 2017 and is the largest growth rate in Australia.

Over the year to March 2018, State final demand grew by 4 per cent, the second strongest rate in Australia, only behind Victoria at 4.4 per cent. This is 10.5 per cent above the level recorded in

March 2014; by way of comparison during the previous four years - between 2010 and 2014 - State final demand went into reverse, contracting 1.4 per cent.

The increasing in State final demand over the last 12 months was driven by the strongest growth in private investment in Australia, at 11.1 per cent. This was underpinned by business investment, broadly defined with growth of 16.7 per cent, and investment in machinery and equipment, with growth at 49.6 per cent. This shows Tasmanian businesses are gearing up and are expecting continued growth.

Tasmanian households are confident. Household consumption growth, a key component to State final demand, topped the nation, growing 4 per cent over the year. Since being in recession in 2012-13, the Tasmanian economy has grown by 5 per cent. In 2016-17, Gross State Product - GSP - grew by 1.1 per cent, to \$28.6 billion. Between 2015-16 and 2016-17, the health care and social assistance sectors grew by 6.1 per cent and the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors grew by 4.9 per cent.

Tasmania's export sector is booming and continues to outstrip the nation, with a total value of exports in the year to April 2018 growing by 35 per cent to roughly \$3.54 billion, with more than \$1 billion in exports to China alone. Exports' growth is over three times higher than the national growth over the same period.

Tasmania's strong economic performance is reflected in the most recent MyState Tasmanian Economic Update, which identifies the start of the year as a boom time for Tasmanian housing, tourism and exports.

Employment - as at 29 May 2018, 248 500 people are now in work, up 13 400 since the 2014 election.

Ms Rattray - Does it say how many of those are not full-time employment opportunities?

Mrs HISCUTT - This is taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics - ABS - information.

Ms Rattray - We are finding a lot of people have work, but it is under the normal.

Mrs HISCUTT - As at May 2018, the unemployment rate was 6.3 per cent, down 1.2 points from the 2014 election. As a result, nearly 2005 fewer people are in the unemployment queues since the 2014 election and 10 900 have entered the labour force and found jobs. Our participation rate is at 61.4 per cent, 0.8 higher than when we were first elected. This means more people are joining the workforce, confident in their abilities to find a job.

Industry performance - the retail trade has had 42 consecutive months of growth and 23 consecutive months above the \$500 million mark, which means every month since the 2016-17 Budget. In April 2018, turnover was 2.1 per cent higher than the year before.

Business investment - in the year to March 2018, private new capital expenditure data released by the ABS shows business investment in new machinery, equipment, building and structures was 19.3 per cent higher than the year before. Tasmania is the strongest state in Australia and has significantly outperformed the national average growth of 4.1 per cent over the same period.

With dwelling approvals and values, the average number of dwelling approvals in the year to April 2018 was 228 per month - an increase of 28.3 per cent on the year before, compared to the national increase of just 1.8 per cent. Tasmania has the strongest average annual growth of any state or territory. To put this into perspective, the average number of dwellings approved in the last year of the Labor-Greens government was just 170 per month. In the year to April 2018, the total value of building approvals grew by 25 per cent to \$1.45 billion.

The annual growth in motor vehicle sales in the year to December 2017 was the strongest in the nation, at 10.9 per cent, well above the national average of 2.8 per cent, and the highest monthly level of sales on record.

Mr Dean - That is great because we have had the oldest fleet of vehicles in the country forever and a day.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is a good thing.

For the third month in a row, the May 2018 NAB Monthly Business Survey shows that Tasmanian business confidence was the highest in Australia, well above the national average. Tasmania ranked third for business conditions and was above the national average. The Deloitte Access Economics Business Outlook report for March 2018 confirms that under our long-term plan Tasmania is surging ahead. Deloitte says that success breeds success. Tasmania's better economic news is feeding better news on population growth, which is itself feeding back into better news for the state's economy. That is now evident in everything from housing prices to international tourist numbers, both of which are running hot.

According to the March 2018 quarter Sensis Business Index survey, Tasmania's small and medium business confidence was the equal strongest in Australia, at 45 points, 12 points above the national average, and 29 points more than it was in March 2014 under the previous government. At the same time, Sensis found that regional small to medium business confidence is the strongest of any state or territory. Hobart is the most confident capital city in Australia. The Hodgman Government is by far the most popular in the nation for the third quarter in a row.

The April 2018 CommSec State of the States report confirms that under the majority Hodgman Government, Tasmania is heading in the right direction, lifting and keeping its fourth position of all states and territories. This is backed by strong business investment and population growth that is the highest in seven years. Under the Labor-Greens government, Tasmania ranked dead last on economic measures. The most recent ANZ Stateometer report confirms that Tasmania's economy is growing at above trend rates and stated that the biggest positive for the economy was the labour market.

Other key indicators include population. Our population is growing at the fastest annual rate in more than seven years under the Hodgman majority Liberal government. Because the economy is growing, jobs are being created, confidence is soaring, and people are realising that Tasmania is the place to be. Tasmania's population increased by nearly 1200 persons in the 2017 September quarter. Our population is now 522 042, 0.7 per cent higher than in September the year before. Not only that, but in the 2017 September quarter our net interstate migration was the highest it has been since March 2010.

I will touch on some tourism figures. The Hodgman Liberal Government's plan to grow tourism is working. More visitors are coming to Tasmania and spending more. In the year to

December 2017, 1.26 million visitors came to Tasmania, up 2 per cent from the previous year, according to Tourism Tasmania's December 2017 Tasmanian Tourism Snapshot. Total nights spent by visitors in the state has increased by 1 per cent to 10.7 million. Tourists continue to bring more money into the Tasmanian economy. Visitor expenditure increased by 8.4 per cent to \$2.326 billion, according to the Tasmanian Tourism Snapshot of December 2017. The number of interstate visitors to Tasmania now sits at 1.05 million in the year to December 2017, up 1.2 per cent from the previous year.

For the year to December 2017, international visitors increased by more than 18.4 per cent, compared to the year to December 2016, to 279 000, with a 39 per cent increase in visitor nights and more than an 11 per cent increase in average expenditure during their stay. Those figures came from the International Visitor Survey 2017, Table 3a, if anyone is interested in looking at it.

In 2016-17, tourism directly contributed about \$1.4 billion to the Tasmanian economy, an increase of 20.2 per cent for the year. The total direct and indirect contribution of tourism in Tasmania to GSP was the equal highest in the country.

To regional employment - in the north-west and on the west coast there has been a strong increase in jobs since the 2014 election. The average number of people employed in the year to April 2018 was approximately 1300 more since 2014 when we were first elected. In total, there are 1500 fewer unemployed on the north-west coast.

The year average unemployment rate is now 6.2 per cent. This contrasts with an average of 9 per cent during the last years of the Labor-Greens government, an improvement of 2.8 per cent. In Launceston and the north-east, as at April 2018, 3300 more people were employed since 2014. In the year to April 2018 the average unemployment -

Mr Dean - Are they all full-time?

Mrs HISCUTT - I do not have those figures here. They have come from ABS figures so they are nationwide figures.

In the year to April 2018, the average unemployment rate was 5.8 per cent, down from 7 per cent the previous year. In Hobart and the south-east, the labour market is booming. Average employment for the year to April 2018 has grown by 6100 over the last year. That is 9800 since the 2014 election. The unemployment rate in this region in April 2018 was 5.8 per cent, well below the average of 7.2 per cent during the last days of 2014.

To sum up, I will finish on the key 2018-19 Budget figures. The 2018-19 Hodgman Liberal Budget focuses on building for the future and taking Tasmania to the next level. It includes all of the Government's election commitments, with surpluses across the Budget and forward Estimates, with the first in 2018-19 a modest amount of \$162 million, investing in health, education and Tasmanians in need. There is \$757 million for health and \$324 million for education, both over six years.

The Budget includes a record investment into job-creating infrastructure of \$2.6 billion. That includes \$1.1 billion for roads and bridges; \$120 million for rail infrastructure; \$476 million for hospitals and health facilities; \$205 million into human services and housing, including stage 2 of the Affordable Housing Strategy; \$192 million for new schools and education facilities;

\$170 million for law and order; \$142 million for tourism, recreation and culture; and \$70 million for tranche 3 irrigation projects.

The Budget delivers a strong economy and more jobs with the regional business relocation payroll tax exemption, a new lower payroll tax rate and threshold, and extension of payroll tax rebate schemes for apprentices and training in skills shortage areas; extending the First Home Owner Grant of \$20 000 for eligible first home buyers of newly constructed homes, those who have new homes constructed and owner-builders, and 50 per cent duty concessions for first home owner buyers of established homes and senior downsizing from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 inclusive; and a foreign investor duty surcharge.

I look forward to presenting the bill to the House on Thursday. I thank all members for working with the Government on that bill.

The Budget includes measures to keep Tasmanians safe, with \$36.8 million for an increase in frontline police officers, \$22 million to build new police and emergency services infrastructure, \$70 million for a new southern remand centre, \$45 million towards the cost of a new \$270 million northern prison; \$16 million in additional funding for correctional services; and \$8 million over four years towards the \$15 million upgrades of the Burnie Court Complex.

The Budget includes nearly \$300 million to take action on the cost of living. The Government is living within its means. Since 2014-15, when we came to office, at the end of the forward Estimates in 2021-22, the compound annual growth in expenditure is 2.9 per cent. This is lower than the forecast revenue growth rate of 3.5 per cent over the same period. By way of comparison, expenditure growth under the last eight years of the Labor-Greens government averaged 4.9 per cent.

As you can see, Mr President, there is an awful lot in this Budget. I reiterate that the most exciting bit that I read was the agricultural sector. So the state of Tasmania is booming and doing well. I note this bill to the House.

[12.36 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, reading these budget papers takes my mind back to 2010. The then government had decided that Tasmania had survived the first round effects of the Global Financial Crisis - GFC - better than expected and all indicators were again pointing in the skyward direction. It was a case of onwards and upwards without a safety net. It is a similar story today.

Just look at the policy and parameters statement on page 56 of budget paper 1. The increased revenue from parameter adjustments - Mr President, as you know, that means increased revenue from windfall gains under fortuitous circumstances - is \$1.084 billion; that is over four years.

The election commitments are also listed in the policy and parameters statement. They total \$1.375 billion. Half of the windfall revenue is from specific purpose grants; no problems there - we have to spend that. It is the other half - which comes mainly from extra GST, extra stamp duties and extra payments from Hydro - that is more problematic. Spending it before it is in the bank might be flirting with danger. The GST is anything but guaranteed. Hydro is having its dividends increased back up to 90 per cent of after-tax earnings. How can a capital intensive business, preparing to be the battery of the nation, survive on a few crumbs left over by the Government? Add to this the stamp duty increases.

At some point the tide will turn. It is starting to happen already on the mainland. When will the runaway house price increase slow down? What will we do then? Do not worry, the Treasurer has assured us, he is delivering surpluses. As he said in his budget speech, they 'provide an appropriate buffer ... critical to ensuring that we can deal with unexpected events'. [tbc]

I argue that we do not accept this piece of spin. The Treasurer's surpluses will not create a buffer. You only create a buffer by building up cash reserves and, as the Leader said, you do that by having money in the bank or by having an increased ability to borrow and service these borrowings. Neither is occurring. Cash reserves are being run down and borrowings are increasing. There is no buffer.

If we look at the Government's balance sheet at the end of the forward Estimates in 2022, you will see \$876 million in the bank. You are tempted to think that is not too bad, but then you realise that about \$800 million is from overnight borrowings from Tascorp undertaken on 30 June 2022. The next day it is gone; the borrowing is repaid. The true state of Mother Hubbard's cupboard is revealed. There is only \$76 million left. The Treasurer is lying to us about a buffer. There will be no buffer.

It is also very difficult to determine how much hay is missing from the barn. What I mean by that is: how much has the Government spent from the Special Deposits and Trust Fund that has to be repaid each year by overnight loans? The budget papers do not explicitly say. We know the figure was \$310 million at 30 June 2017 from the Treasurer's 2016-17 Annual Financial Report. By the look of the extra borrowings needed in this year - 2017-18 - the overnight loans needed to replenish the missing hay will be about \$345 million at 30 June 2018.

If you turn to page 107 of volume 2 of the budget papers, a figure is buried in footnote 4 which says that the missing hay will be \$507 million at 30 June 2019. By the time the Royal Hobart Hospital is paid for, it looks like the missing hay will be almost \$800 million. Why are these figures not included so it makes it easier for the reader to understand what is happening? More hay is borrowed from the barn each year, exactly what former premier and treasurer, Lara Giddings, has been punished for, yet here we see the Treasurer being the Lord and Saviour for doing the same thing - a short and convenient memory or a blatant hypocrisy?

We are running down our cash reserves. How can we be building up a buffer if we are running down our cash reserves? When the Treasurer is running surpluses, we must remember they are not cash surpluses. If we prepared a budget income statement like the Australian Government does, we would be running deficits. We are spending more than we are receiving and we are not building up a buffer. These are pretend surpluses; they are not real, tangible cash surpluses. Let us stop talking about a buffer that will protect us as we glide into this golden age.

I am not saying the Treasurer is being reckless from a policy viewpoint. All I am saying is that he is being reckless with the truth when trying to explain it. The Treasurer must be prepared for unexpected events. That is why we are running surpluses. The way you prepare for a lot of unexpected events is to set aside money in the Tasmanian Risk Management Account. If you look at page 131, volume 1 of the budget papers, in 2022 there is supposed to be \$290 million in cash to cover unexpected liabilities, but there will not be much there at all because it will have been spent elsewhere.

If we are to have a proper conversation of where we are and where we go, we need to understand the current situation. As soon as the Treasurer says he is producing surpluses everyone

says, 'Why not spend them now; there are plenty of needy causes'. The Treasurer said in his budget speech that -

... it would be reckless to do what others call for and spend every dollar that is earned.

That is the absolute height of hypocrisy - that is exactly what he is doing. If you do not believe me, look at the Government's cashflow statement on page 53. Outflows exceed inflows for every year but 2022, and that is about break-even - not that anyone takes much notice of forward Estimates four years out. If you want further evidence, look at the movement in the Government's net debt over four years - it is on page 52. It worsens by \$560 million. Because we do not have much debt in the general government, the run-down in cash reserves is not much different to the movement in net debt.

The real reason the Treasurer cannot spend more of the surpluses is because there is no cash. As I said, the surpluses are paper surpluses; they are not represented by increased cash in the bank. That is what everyone needs to understand.

As I noted, the general government net debt will worsen by \$560 million over the forward Estimates, most of that being the run-down in cash reserves. The movement in net debt for the total state sector, which includes government businesses as well as general government, increases by \$1.498 billion - nearly \$1.5 billion. I do not know about you, Mr President, but I think a footnote was the least the Treasurer could have offered to explain this. Such a significant change, an increase in the borrowings of the state sector, did not even warrant a footnote.

We try to work out for ourselves what this relates to: \$560 million relates to the general government so that means \$938 million must relate to government businesses. The cash run-down in government businesses is only about \$140 million, so there is about \$800 million of extra borrowings. That is \$800 million of extra borrowings and no explanation by way of a footnote to even inform us. Who is borrowing the \$800 million and why were we not told? Why do we have to be forensic accountants? Have we not arrived at a clearer explanation as to the extra \$800 million in borrowings? Is it for the new ferries? What else can it be? I expect it is.

The replacement of the TT-Line ferries is the biggest single outlay in the state's history and the spending is buried in the forward Estimates without so much as even a footnote. Am I missing something here? I suggest we need and deserve a bit more detail. If the borrowings are for the ferries - I am not arguing against that - does that not make it just a little bit harder for the Government to borrow money for other purposes when there is so much being borrowed? Does it not give the Government less of a buffer? To reiterate: I am not arguing against the borrowings; I am saying that the notion the Treasury is building up a buffer is complete nonsense.

Most of us remember the TT-Line Vessel Replacement Fund Bill 2016. Cash the TT-Line was accumulating to help fund the new ferries was removed from TT-Line and placed in Tascorp's safekeeping away from the grasping hands of the grubby Labor Party. Of course, as we all remember from the debate on the related bill, it was pure coincidence that removal of TT-Line's cash as a special dividend was recorded as revenue on the government's books.

Over half the surpluses in 2016-17 and this year's - of 2017-18 - coming are due to these two \$40 million special dividends. Over half, \$80 million, has been transferred so far. It relates to money coming through from TT-Line via the Government's balance sheet ending to Tascorp. I

recall during the debate on the TT-Line Vessel Replacement Fund Bill - I believe it really should have been called 'propping up the Government's bottom-line bill' - the Treasurer assured us the earnings would be credited to the fund and would be returned to TT-Line when needed. TT-Line will need it because it needs to buy new ferries.

Well, 2019, the year we are just about to enter, seems to be the year when they are needed. The budget papers, on page 120, say that \$80 million plus interest is being returned to TT-Line. Just as we thought, the \$80 million return of cash is an equity contribution to TT-Line. There is no prize for guessing that the equity contribution does not have a negative effect on the surplus. How very convenient: a positive effect on the way through and no impact on the way back.

Why is the money being returned to TT-Line at this time? I hope it is not to fund a subsequent \$40 million special dividend planned for 2019-20, as per page 90 of the budget papers. If it is, it could be the same money going around the circle twice - back through the government balance sheet, then back out again when the new ferries need to be bought. Once is a sham, but twice? I will be watching. Every time the money passes 'Go', the Government records another \$40 million on its bottom line but not on the way out. Is this what the Treasurer means by building up a buffer?

Again, we have been bombarded with statistics on how much extra is being spent on health. This year we are told an extra \$757 million will be spent over the next six years. Only the first three years have ever appeared in the forward Estimates in previous budgets. The outlying years, years 4, 5 and 6, have never appeared in budgets before, so how can you claim that extra is being spent? Compared to what? We do not have those in our budget papers; it only goes three years out, as it has in the past. We will have to have landscape printing soon if they are going to include them. Perhaps the increase relates to years 1, 2 and 3 in the Budget, those that are in the papers - in other words, the budget year of 2018-19 and the two subsequent years

Mr President, if you look at the table on page 165, the Government will spend \$1.810 billion on operating the health system in 2017-18. Next year - the one we are about to enter, 2018-19 - we will spend \$1.806 billion. That is \$4 million less than we are spending this year that we have budgeted for next year in Health.

I will say it again: it is really important that we understand this. The Government is planning to spend \$4 million less in the coming year than we have already spent in this year. Even the minister acknowledges the deep set of problems with Health, but he is still planning to spend less than what we have spent this year.

Perhaps it picks up in the next year, 2019-20? Yes, it does slightly. An extra \$45 million will be spent, compared to the 2018-19 Budget and compared to what the Government planned to spend in that year as per last year's budget, an increase of \$56 million. We will receive an extra \$55 million in specific purpose health grants in 2019-20 compared to what the Government expected in last year's budget. The Government plans to spend \$56 million more on Health in 2019-20 than it planned to spend this time last year, but \$55 million of that is coming from extra Australian Government grants. That means we will only spend an extra \$1 million of our own money on Health operating expenses in 2019-20. Investing in health? GST is projected to rise by \$70 million that year. The Government has allocated an extra \$1 million of that for Health. Surely we can do better. Surely the Government cannot be serious.

It is getting to the stage where we need a code of conduct about the use of statistics. Many of the Government's claims on spending increases on Health operations are misleading, if not outright

lies. The Health budget, as we know, always overruns. On average, the present Government overspends its Health budget by five per cent each year. Over the past four years the average overspend has been \$82 million - that is the average. True, some of this has come from specific purpose grants, but even so it is a large overspend. The overspend on Health is not much different to the underspend on infrastructure, which has averaged \$95 million per year over the last four years. In percentage terms, that is even larger. On average, the Government has only spent 80 per cent of what it said it would spend on infrastructure. This is a repeated pattern and not just from this Government, but from the previous government as well.

That immediately takes the gloss off the record proposed infrastructure spend in this Budget. Apart from the fact that such a huge chunk, \$277 million, is for the belated Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, if the Government gets into trouble with any of its other budget predictions, that area will suffer.

As always, the error is the lack of investment in infrastructure. The Government will continue this pattern of underspending in infrastructure, because that is what it has always done when money gets tight or circumstances change.

On the question of infrastructure, I was pleased to see the Treasurer talk in terms of a 10-year strategy infrastructure pipeline and a 30-year infrastructure strategy. As members know, I have a strong belief in the need to develop a long-term, non-parliamentary approach to infrastructure so that we can free it from the vicissitudes of the electoral cycle.

I am looking forward to assisting the Government to take infrastructure planning to a new level, but we should not be stacking the round table with the construction industry. Luci Ellis from the Reserve Bank of Australia made some very important points about infrastructure. Her speech was recorded in MacroBusiness. In her closing remarks she said -

... it isn't helpful to think of infrastructure as the new 'engine of growth', receiving the handover from the mining investment boom and later, the apartment building boom. By its nature, infrastructure is justified by its contribution to the public good. It is not so much an engine of growth as an enabler of growth, but for this to be true, projects need to be rigorously assessed, carefully designed and appropriately timed.

In other words, infrastructure needs to be seen as providing public goods, not just jobs, for the construction sector. Infrastructure is provided in many forms and each are important. Infrastructure in its broader sense is about shared facilities to help economies function well and provide social benefit or, if you prefer, the public good.

Ms Ellis described a broader consideration of infrastructure at the beginning of her speech -

When macroeconomists think about infrastructure we think about the capital goods that provide public services. They are shared facilities that help economies function well. These include the structures, that is the things produced by the construction industry, that unlike buildings, don't have roofs. But there are also many other shared facilities that promote a well-functioning economy and society. One example of those other important pieces of infrastructure is a New Payments Platform that was launched recently. There are also important social

infrastructures such as our legal system or our frameworks for safeguarding children.

Let us be sure we do not narrow our focus if we want to take the much-desired pathway to a long-term infrastructure strategy and plan, and be sure it does not in time refocus on the tangible physical infrastructure. It is much broader than that.

The budget papers devote nine pages to budget risks and sensitivities. There is not much about the latter, but much more about the former, the risks. There appear to be more risks to this budget and the financial position of the Government than in other years. We should all be aware and informed of these risks. If members have not read these in budget paper 1, I encourage them to do so.

It is important to note that GST funding is not only at risk. It is all the specific purpose grants that are maintained. We will soon find out in Estimates what basis the Treasurer will use to increase the dollar amount received for the GST next year for forward Estimates, as we are yet to see the Productivity Commission's final report.

The budget papers also report a risk associated with national health reform funding under the National Health Reform Agreement that will expire on 30 June 2020. There was a stated risk in the budget in forward Estimates if demand for health services in this state were to grow at a faster rate than the Australian Government's funding contribution of 45 per cent of the efficient growth in activity in activity grants and block grants.

With our ageing demographic, predicted growth in population, acute health services, high incidence of chronic disease, more people living in low socio-economic circumstances and tourism, the risk of this occurring is more likely to be the case than not. Tourism adds to the demands of our emergency departments - talk to anyone who works in the Royal Hobart Hospital's Emergency Department when the cruise ships are in.

In preparing for this debate and budget Estimates, I always read budget paper 1 from cover to cover first, because it provides much information useful to inform us of the economic position of our state and where the money will go into the various output groups.

Mrs Hiscutt - Did you sit up until 1.00 in the morning, too?

Ms FORREST - No, I went into it much earlier in the day.

In budget paper 1 there is a change in the description in expenditure purchases. In previous years under 'Other expenditure', other expenditure has included, among other things, recreation and culture. The Leader mentioned in her contribution that expenditure is being apportioned out over various areas, and she talked about recreation and culture.

This year the same group contains religion. So how much does the state spend on religion and for what purpose? How much of the \$150 million allocated to recreation and culture and religion is spent on each?

I would have thought the separation of church and state would not see taxpayers funding religion. I hope the Treasurer is able to shed a bit of light on that, because it will be asked next week if he does not respond to the Leader's response.

The budget is not beyond hope. Do not get the wrong impression from what I have said so far. The misgivings I have outlined have more to do with how the Government is trying to airbrush our problems instead of solving them.

I commented on some of the risks facing the Government in meeting all budgeted commitments, but we must remain aware and mindful of the risks.

The commentary regarding public sector wages and the continued application of the 2 per cent wages policy for wage increases - I accept approximately 47 per cent of total operating expenditure is wages. This is no surprise because the state is responsible for many labour-intensive service delivery areas. Many employees in the public service have very little capacity to dramatically improve their productivity.

Service delivery areas such as health, education and public safety, for example, services which are the responsibility of the state Government to provide and fund, are not areas where cost cutting is easy, nor are productivity gains easily made.

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

QUESTIONS

King Island - Specialist Rural Worker - Redundancy

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

[2.32 p.m.]

The specialist rural worker on King Island, a position created to provide counselling and social welfare support on the island, who has provided full-time counselling, support and health promotion for 17 years, has been made redundant.

The specialist rural worker provided support and care to residents of King Island in the areas of mental health, suicide prevention and post-suicide support, domestic violence, court and legal aid, child protection, staff debriefing, financial support with food vouchers and Christmas hampers, pharmacy costs and one-way emergency air fares off the island. This worker maintained working relationships with other services both on and off island, including police, churches, school, community groups and Centrelink, Rural Alive and Well, Housing Tasmania, YFCC, Anglicare, child protection and mental health services.

The specialist rural worker averaged 200 contacts per year over the last three years. I am informed there is no further funding from 30 June this year for this position. My questions are -

- (1) What plans are there to provide these services to residents on King Island?
- (2) How will urgent requests for support be provided for?

- (3) How are police expected to manage crisis situations where they currently rely on the backup and support of the specialist rural worker?
- (4) How will families in emergency need of food be supported and provided with essential supplies?

ANSWER

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

- (1) The services are provided by Rural Health Tasmania, an organisation created by Primary Health Tasmania, and funded by the Commonwealth Government. The Tasmanian Health Service provided staff, including the rural specialist worker, under a labour hire arrangement, from 1 January 2017, which will finish on 30 June 2018. Rural Health Tasmania will employ staff directly from 1 July 2018. Rural Health Tasmania has advised there will be no change in service provision. The clinical coordinator, chronic disease registered nurse and a new mental health clinician physician will continue to provide the same level of service to the King Island community, with additional hours to address more complex mental health and counselling services. The Government will continue to work in collaboration with Rural Health Tasmania for the benefit of King Island residents.
- (2) Urgent requests will continue to be managed by Rural Health Tasmania as the service provider. In addition, the King Island District Hospital and Health Centre is a 24-hour facility which has a close working relationship with the medical service provider, Ochre Health, with Rural Health Tasmania and with other key health and service providers on the island to ensure the diversity of activities supported under previous arrangements will be managed appropriately.
- (3) The service continues to be provided by Rural Health Tasmania through the mental health clinician who will work with Tasmania Police. The Tasmanian Health Service will also continue to work collaboratively with key providers to support crisis situations.
- (4) Support for families requiring emergency relief was funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services and provided by the Salvation Army at designated sites throughout Tasmania. King Island provided some services, \$1000 per year for two years, under an agreement that expired on 30 June 2017. The Tasmanian Health Service and Rural Health Tasmania will continue to refer eligible families to the Salvation Army and other service providers to access this level of financial support.

Electric Vehicles - Grants for Installing Charging Points

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

With reference to the recent state Government announcement of \$250 000 to be made available to the public by way of grants for the installation of publicly available charging points for electric vehicles across the state to encourage their purchase and use as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to assist the tourism industry in this state, outside of that grant commitment, is it the

Government's intention to progress toward the installation of appropriate charging points in government buildings across the state -

- (1) To encourage the increased purchase and use of electric vehicles by government departments that do not currently incorporate them into their fleets?
- (2) For the use of staff who have a government-supplied vehicle as a part of their job package?

I declare an interest.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Hobart for his question.

- (1) Climate Action 21: Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan 2017-2021 sets the Tasmanian Government's agenda for reducing emissions and taking action on climate change. In it, the Tasmanian Government commits to identify and address barriers to the uptake of electric vehicles in the government fleet. The Government recognises that purchasing electric vehicles to use in government fleets has widespread benefits. It established the Tasmanian Government's Electric Vehicle Working Group to develop a coordinated approach to support the uptake of electric vehicles in Tasmania, including by governments. The working group is playing an active role in identifying and exploring barriers to electric vehicle uptake, reviewing relevant policy and regulatory settings relating to each barrier, identifying priority areas of action to support electric vehicle uptake, understanding the impact of electric vehicle uptake on Tasmania's electricity sector, assessing approaches to support the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Tasmania, considering the impact of increased uptake of electric vehicles on existing industry sectors, and investigating ways to improve electric vehicle data collection. The Government currently includes three electric vehicle models on its whole-of-government common use contract - Nissan Leaf, Holden Volt and Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV - and actively encourages the uptake by individual agencies. More electric vehicle models will be added to the Tasmanian Government's vehicle contract as they become available in Australia. This number is expected to increase in the near future, with seven new electric vehicle models anticipated to be introduced into the Australian market in the next 18 months.
- (2) As electric vehicles are incorporated into the government fleet, appropriate charging facilities will be put in place to support this uptake.

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2018 (No. 16)

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2018 (No. 17)

Noting of Budget Papers

Resumed from above.

[2.39 p.m.]

Ms FORREST - Mr President, before lunch I was talking about public sector wages and the Government's policy on the 2 per cent wage increase and its continuation. I accept and note that 47 per cent of the total operating expenditure is in wages. I was commenting on the fact that some of our service delivery areas such as health, education and public safety are very labour-intensive.

You cannot really get away from having a lot of wages in those areas and they are service delivery areas that the state Government is responsible for.

To provide context, service delivery areas such as Health and Education and public safety are the responsibility of the state Government to fund to provide services, and they are areas in which productivity gains are not necessarily easy.

For Education, for example, I suggest we may not want to increase class sizes to improve productivity or efficiency because outcomes for students are not going to be as good.

With regard to Health, nurses, for example, can only care for a limited number of patients at one time. This can be a very small number of patients in the case of acutely ill patients. Furthermore, if nurses here are paid less - as they are - than mainland nurses, we will find it very difficult to recruit and retain them. When this is the case, our recruitment and turnover costs add to the overall cost.

If the budget is in such a strong position as the Treasurer has said and we have this buffer, this is not the time to raise wages to try to deal with recruitment and retention issues and to ensure we can fill the positions we have, particularly when the new Royal Hobart Hospital beds come online. I have argued why this is not the case. We do not have the buffer to do that sort of thing. I suggest that this is perhaps why the Treasurer is being very firm on the commitment not to vary from the 2 per cent wages policy. He knows the budget is not in a position to do so, even though wages growth has been very flat for so long. We need to get the budget into a stronger position to facilitate this and for it to ultimately occur. It could assist in easing the current challenges of recruitment, enhance confidence to invest and grow consumer spending with obvious economic benefit to the state. Clearly we are not there yet.

In comments regarding the labour market, I note the increase in employment largely reflects continuation of the trend of increased female employment and increase to full-time employment. The member for McIntyre was asking the Leader about that. The budget papers actually say it is an increase in female and more full-time employment. That is in relation to employment figures. This is a matter we can drill down further into next week - the areas of employment in which this growth has actually occurred.

I also note comments regarding the variability of employment rates around Tasmania's regions. While the rates have more recently been converging, the labour market differences remain quite different across the state. I will be asking for further detail on this from the Treasurer next week.

While things might be improving in Hobart and the south-east and in Launceston and the north-east, it is a different story on the west and north-west coast. The Leader was happy to spruik a number of extra jobs on the north-west coast but we came from a really low base and we are still behind.

Budget paper 1 says that the west and north-west experienced increasing employment up to mid 2016 and rising labour market participation until late 2015, but these have since been easing. The participation rate in the west and north-west is now significantly below the rate in the other two regions.

The budget papers note that varying economic conditions have also been reflected in population movements, with population growth highest in the south of the state and lowest in the west and

north-west. Hence the need for the boundary redistribution that pushed my electorate to the east and affected everybody else - some majorly. This also includes several years of population decline, particularly in the west and north-west.

Decline in the unemployment rate in the west and north-west has therefore been due to a decline in the working age population and the participation rate. There is no comment in the budget papers as there usually is on the actual participation rate. That is a question I have. The Leader mentioned in her contribution that it was a 0.8 per cent increase in the participation rate, but we were well behind the national average anyway. In other years, we have had the comparison of the participation rates. It is okay when it is doing okay, but when it is obviously not, we prefer not to list that in the budget papers.

So the Treasurer can get his answers ready for next week: could we have details about the actual participation rate, a comparison of previous years and the regional participation rate because obviously they have the figures, they just have not given them to us in the budget papers?

Regarding the comments made on tourism affordability in the budget papers, according to the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania, the median house price in Tasmania in the March quarter 2018 was \$360 000, up 10.8 per cent from the previous year, but still the lowest of all states and territories. House prices are highest in Hobart, but they are around 40 per cent below the median price for all other capital cities in Australia.

Tasmania remains one of the most affordable jurisdictions in Australia to own a home. A Tasmanian household on a median income would need to allocate 25.7 per cent of its expenditure to service the average new mortgage, based on minimum payments required according to the REIT. While all this may be true when considering averages, how many Tasmanians in our regions, particularly in the north-west and west, are below the median income range as opposed to those above? A higher percentage of Tasmanians living on the west and north-west coast would be on an income below the median and therefore they will struggle to buy a house even at the median house price of \$360 000.

Moving on to some specific areas of government activity, I will comment on some and ask some questions in some key areas. Next week at Estimates, I will seek further explanation and comment from the Treasurer or relevant minister in all areas covered in Estimates Committee A.

Some observations regarding health. Provision of quality health services in a timely, efficient and effective manner continues to challenge governments across the country. Our ageing population and high levels of socio-economic disadvantage add to the burden and challenge this delivery. We continue to see a major focus on the acute health sector, which is the responsibility of the state Government.

However, investment in and commitment to primary health care, community and age care, although predominantly the responsibility of the Australian Government, needs to be enhanced with better connections between the services - that is, between acute and non-acute. Within the state's capacity, more can be done to support access to community-based care and preventative health initiatives within our public health services. The Government has taken some welcome action in these areas. With the output group restructure, it makes comparisons more difficult.

Looking at the forward Estimates this year and the budget for the 2017-18 financial year, we are told there is a significant increase spending in Health. The glossy brochure presented as part of

the budget papers tells us a massive \$757 million over six years will be spent. This is not much of a promised increase, in funding in the first two to three years of the budget, which are only the years you can truly believe.

No doubt the minister will show us how he calculated his \$757 million increase next week. The same glossy brochure also informs us that this includes 478 extra FTE health and hospital staff. Quite a commitment. However, budget paper 2, volume 1, page 115, notes that approximately 946 FTE staff will be recruited in 2020-21, which is clearly within a six-year window. So which is it? There is a 468 FTE discrepancy here.

The constant claim we are spending record amounts and record increases in Health are not backed up by the budget papers. If we look at the general government expenses from transactions by purpose on page 165 of budget paper 1, the coming year's budget for 2018-19 is \$4 million less than we have spent this past financial year. It may be \$83 million above last year's budget, but it is less than what was actually spent this past year. We just dealt with the supplementary appropriation bill that allocated \$6 million to the Health budget, so that is out there and in the budget papers in black and white. Will we see this again at the end of this coming year? Demand not decreasing, it makes it hard to believe what we are told and being promised here.

We are also told there has been a significant increase in spending forecast in admitted services this coming year, even taking into account \$20 million from last year allocated to Finance-General, as a last minute fix of the under-resourced Health budget, because it became very clear that funding for admitted services was inadequate, but a decrease in non-admitted services, which is partly explained in the budget papers by a forecast reduction in hepatitis medications on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme - PBS. We need to maximise access to non-admitted services because these services can assist in keeping people away from the admitted services, where the real cost pressures are.

We also see a very small increase in the emergency medicine area, only \$630 000 above last year's allocation, and \$800 000 less than last year's forward Estimate for this year - hence my scepticism about forward Estimates per se. Our emergency medicine departments are under enormous pressure and we are seeing that reflected in the papers all the time. There is no footnote to explain why such a small increase in funding is deemed to meet the need. I note there is a new secondary triage initiative with Ambulance Tasmania and, if it works effectively, it should reduce the pressure the DEMs are currently facing, but I expect this will take some months or longer to establish and become fully operational. In the meantime, the pressure on our DEMs remains.

The budget papers note funding of \$8 million over four years to fully rollout secondary triaging of Ambulance Tasmania calls. The plan will be rolled out over four years and therefore the pressure on our DEMs will not significantly reduce any time soon, especially with winter demand.

A secondary triage model is proposed and we are informed this will ensure that patients not requiring emergency intervention or transport to an emergency department will be referred to an appropriate health service, keeping paramedic resources available for emergency calls. We are told that once it is fully operational, the secondary triage service will assess almost 2200 calls per annum and has the potential to divert up to 16 000 patients to alternative service providers.

While this sounds in many respects an ideal solution for many patients, and I certainly believe it should be part of the services we provide, the real challenge will be with access to other service

providers in our regional and rural areas, where other service providers can be in short supply. I am sure this may also be a challenge at certain times in our urban centres.

The Community Rapid Response Service, initially trialled in the north of the state and now being extended into the south and north-west, may also assist to ease pressure, but, again, this will not relieve pressure in the immediate to short term. We have only a \$600 000 increase to the DEM budget. I will certainly be asking more questions about this next week.

The concern regarding pressure on DEMs was reiterated in the *Mercury* on 16 June by the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine president, Dr Simon Judkins. The article reports the concerns of Dr Judkins that the state budget will not cure a health system that is failing Tasmanians as the funding commitments do not go far enough to address existing resource pressures, which are being further undermined by increased patient demand. I have highlighted why that is so much the case. To quote the article from the *Mercury* -

ACEM says emergency department overcrowding and bed block remain significant issues in Tasmanian public hospitals.

'We have repeatedly said we are keen to work with the government hospital leadership and health department executives to develop the actions to improve patient outcomes,' Dr Judkins said.

'We stand by this commitment and would welcome the government working with us to achieve these ends.'

ACEM withdrew the Launceston General Hospital's emergency training accreditation in March because the hospital did not meet the College's standards.

These concerns were echoed by the Royal Hobart Hospital Medical Staff Association, which said it was deeply concerned that the state budget would not meet the needs of patients presenting at the Royal with severe mental illness or older patients with complex medical problems.

I do question why staff allocations for the 250 new beds at the Royal Hobart Hospital will not be funded until the 2020-21 financial year, and as it continues to be stated publicly and in the budget papers, the rebuild will be completed by mid-2019. Mid-2019 is the beginning of the 2019-20 financial year.

Why the wait? So effectively we will have a 'Yes, minister' hospital built? You would think the beds will be there, but there will be no patients because there will be no staff. We have to wait a year before the budget allocation is there to fund the staffing for the beds and the operational costs.

Would putting the necessary staffing costs, which we would have to have to open the beds, blow a big hole in next year's finances, as all the election commitments are planned to be funded in that 12-month period? Surely we need the staff to open these beds as soon as possible, certainly before next winter.

I expect it will also be difficult to recruit the 946 FTE staff required if nurses are paid an inequitable salary with mainland nurses. Demand for nurses continues to grow on the mainland with population growth in other capital cities, so demand will be strong.

We have also seen for years that the real difficulty is in recruiting specialist medical staff and specialist nursing staff. You cannot have a registered nurse who has just graduated - you need a specialist in intensive care in our DEMs, in our operating theatres and a range of other places. A new hospital may assist but will not be enough on its own if services are not adequately funded or resourced.

I note other positive announcements, including the new purpose-built antenatal clinic at North West Regional Hospital. That is very welcome and absolutely necessary. The space that the midwives, medical staff and women have been using is totally inadequate. I hope this is finalised very promptly for the benefit of all.

With regard to community nursing, I also note a significant reduction in funding. Again, we need to invest in care delivery in the community rather than in the acute health setting, whenever possible and appropriate. I note an explanation - some things did have footnotes - on the line item stating that work is currently underway to reform the community nursing service delivery model. This matter will need further explanation next week as to what that actually means, and how you can do it with less money, yet still provide a comprehensive community nursing service.

Our rural hospitals appear to continue to be underutilised if the average occupancy rate and performance information are any guide. These rural hospitals continue to be an underutilised resource; however, if some of the community rapid response care and secondary triage services could access health care at these hospitals, provided adequate staffing resources were available, this could be a win/win outcome. We could see better utilisation of our rural hospitals and somewhere for some of these patients to go from the ambulance rather than into the major acute hospitals.

I remain disappointed that the performance information predominantly reports outputs and not outcomes. For example, it would be good to know how many of the patients who were discharged from the emergency departments within four hours did not need to return due to the complications or exacerbation of symptoms related to their initial presentation at the ED. I am sure this information will probably be available and something we can ask next week. I am just saying that if we got rid of those people in four hours, tick; if they came back two hours later, worse, that is not a tick - that is a cross and you are increasing your demand on the DEM. Hopefully, with the new THS act now passed we will see outcomes being reported in next year's budget papers as well as in annual reports.

There are many other areas in Health that could be commented on; however, these are best addressed next week during Estimates.

To talk briefly about Education, I have long held and expressed the view that access to quality education for all Tasmanian students is vital to the future success of the individual and the state. This must include support for and investment in our teachers, and ensuring that learning environments, opportunities and pedagogical approaches meet the needs of all learners. While all areas of education are equally important, today I will focus my comments on two areas: the very welcome commitment to improving and enhancing the early years, and support for students with a disability.

Quality education supporting best possible student outcomes starts with ensuring a play-based, inquiry-led learning environment for all children from birth to eight years of age.

Following the passage of the Education Act, where this was included by amendment in this House, I am pleased to note the ongoing commitment to this reform. I commend the Minister for Education and Training on this. I agree that high-quality early learning improves outcomes in later life, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. I certainly have more than my fair share of these children in my electorate.

I note the comment made that the Government intends to continue to refocus teaching and learning in the early years of education from kindergarten to year 2, to ensure that high-quality and age-appropriate pedagogies are used in all government primary schools.

I note the 2018-19 investment will support the delivery of early learning hubs and free preschool for three-year-olds with the greatest need, as well as improvements to kindergarten facilities, and will provide more support for learners in prep to year two to engage in play-based enquiry learning. Investment in contemporary learning areas from birth is vital to the success of all students in the future of our state. The capital funding allocation of \$6 million this year and \$12 million next year for education and infrastructure includes \$10 million over four years and \$21 million over six years for six new early education hubs.

From the budget papers, the new hubs will be located in Sorell, Kingborough, Glenorchy, East Tamar, West Ulverstone and Waratah-Wynyard. This will hopefully reach some of the particularly disadvantaged children who will benefit the most. However, it is important we do not undermine other quality early learning and care centres in urban as well as regional areas. These early learning hubs will provide access to services for families with young children, including health and education support, both within the hub and through outreach. The member for Elwick is not here at the moment, but in the committee we looked at child and family centres. Outreach is one of the things we believe could improve and enhance the impact of the child and family centres. This is essentially doing the same thing with this cohort of young children in families.

I hope they would be broad enough to encompass health, as well as education support. It says they are but it will remain to be seen what is delivered. The hubs will include early child education and care services and according to the budget papers they will be designed and delivered in partnership with the early childhood education and care sector. This is particularly important, and I commend the minister for his ongoing commitment to work with the ECEC sector. It was a real concern during debate on the Education Act, particularly around the school starting age and the early years, that some of our centres could be undermined through some of these changes. Estimates Committee B will seek further advice regarding this, to ensure the best possible outcomes for all Tasmania's young children and that the existing quality ECECs will not be negatively impacted, but rather will benefit, with that benefit spreading to more children.

The funding of \$2.3 million in 2018-19 to support the co-design of the Working Together For 3 Year Olds initiative will be delivered as a partnership between the Department of Education and the ECEC sector. Again, I hope this continues to work well. There are still some people who feel left out of the discussions, but the commitment is definitely there. I want to make it clear the commitment is there. Some are feeling disenfranchised and probably need to get in touch with the minister or his office to find out how they can be involved. I will be interested to know how many children were engaged in the Working Together For 3 Year Olds initiative last year because this is the second year of its delivery. Once implemented in 2020, this initiative will provide up to \$10.5 million per annum to support a free preschool delivered by the ECEC sector. Will the ECECs, whenever they are, be able to access this funding? Have they been identified as yet and if so, where

are they located? If that information cannot be provided in the Leader's reply, maybe one of the members of Estimates Committee B can chase that up next week.

I acknowledge the commitment to ensuring a play-based, inquiry-led learning environment for children in the delivery of the Australian Curriculum in the prep year through the additional teacher assistant support into the prep year. The budget papers note this support is equivalent to 80 full-time equivalent teacher assistants, with the first stage to commence in 2020. I now ask for similar support to be provided in years 1 and 2, as the act clearly requires now a play-based, inquiry learning environment in grades 1 and 2. They are focusing on prep, which is fine because in 2020 these children will continue through and should be able to have the same level of support and access to play-based, inquiry-led learning environments. I note the commitment to support the inclusion and achievement of students with a disability by developing a new needs-based funding model for students with disability.

This would be most welcome because there are young people in my electorate and in other parts of the state who have a disability or whose learning and support needs are not being met now because they have grown physically and their needs can change. Will this new process assist or result in further assessment of children or students with physical or intellectual disability if they have been assessed in the past?

Budget paper 2 states that the 2018-19 investment in school education will provide more quality teachers in government schools, expand and improve school infrastructure to support learning, further deliver on the recommendations for children and young people with a disability identified by the ministerial taskforce, and support children and student wellbeing.

I note provision will be made from this funding to support the design and testing of a new needs-based funding model for students with a disability focusing on delivering resources on the basis of educational adjustment required to give students with a disability the best possible opportunity to thrive at school.

This takes me back to my previous question, as I understand that one of the current barriers relating to the outcome of the initial assessment of the needs of students with a physical or intellectual disability is that they are assessed once on their entry to school and they are not reassessed as their needs change. Young children who are assessed with a physical disability in kinder or prep can easily be picked up and moved. As they get bigger and go to high school, these children continue to grow. Obviously they cannot be picked up and moved easily by one person. Sometimes hoists and other equipment are not suitable because of the nature of the disability. How is this going to work? Again, maybe someone on the committee can follow this up and I can have a discussion with the minister at a later time.

Also, what is the time frame for the design and testing of the new needs-based funding model for students with disability? When is an outcome expected? Some of these students clearly need to have their needs met now. We cannot have them waiting for another two or three years if we want to ensure they have the best possible chance of accessing a quality education and obtaining an education that assists them in the future. We do not have time. These kids' needs are right now, right here, right now.

There are so many other areas worthy of comment, particularly with regard to accessing housing for all Tasmanians and public safety, especially following the tragic death of Eurydice Dixon in Melbourne. That beggars belief. The vigils held around the country have shown the

strength of feeling about that. There has been much discussion on social media saying we really need to change the way we all think. Women should be able to walk home at night in safety. Anyway, that is a matter for another day.

There has been a lot of concern about safety of our children in recent times in the media, but these are questions I will be looking at next week.

Mr President, I conclude my contribution but I will raise a range of other matters next week in Estimates scrutiny. I am confident that members will also comment on other aspects of the 2018-19 Budget. There we have it: the economy of Tasmania is in pretty good shape and we have opportunity at our doorstep. We need to ensure that the decisions made benefit Tasmanians and that we are open, transparent and honest about the reality of the opportunities and the risks.

A long-term vision and plan is needed. My real concern is that we are not well placed to face any economic shocks or revenue downgrades from any revenue source, particularly the Commonwealth on which we rely so heavily.

I am tempted to say this budget is a bit like the curate's egg: good in parts, but it is slightly better than that - it is bad in parts.

The Government's message is wrong. One can say, 'So what? That is the way politics works - put as much spin on the good bits as possible and denigrate your opponents at every opportunity', but before we are able to forge common solutions, we need a better understanding of our problems and a common understanding if possible - and that is where the Government has been remiss. It has not adequately explained the problems or challenges, and despite all the talk about providing buffers for the future, the Government does not understand what constitutes a meaningful buffer if one is to judge by its words alone.

I do not always disagree with the Government's priorities, but this budget is a workmanlike effort. So far the breaks have gone the Government's way - one only has to look at the windfall revenue gains each year - but we are ill prepared for future shocks and that is my greatest fear.

[3.10 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, before I begin my contribution, I will make a comment that others and I have made in this place previously in regard to the process. I still believe we should have this debate in reply to the budget after the Estimates process. It would cut out many of the questions we have here now - we would already have the answers and our contribution would reflect more the information we have. I do not know how we can change the process, but if it needs a letter to someone like your good self, I am happy to do that. We stand up here and talk about what we can glean from the budget papers we receive. We also scan the plethora of media articles following the budget and the numerous press releases that come into our inbox; we go through all those. We have not had time to read them from cover to cover. If anyone has, I take my hat off to their work ethic, but some of us have eight hours of driving to do and do not have a driver. I cannot read and drive.

Ms Forrest - We are dealing with a bill, and this is like a second reading debate we are having; then we go to the Committee stage, which is budget Estimates week. That is the Committee stage of it.

Ms RATTRAY - If we were able to make our substantial contribution after the Estimates process, we would not have to ask myriad questions that get asked once we receive the budget papers. I find the process is around the wrong way.

Mr Finch - I don't mind it the way it is, but I think of it as a grievance debate. It is just unfortunate we have only recently had the Governor's Address-in-Reply where we put on the agenda all our observations about the state of play in Tasmania and what the budget represents - good, bad or whatever. We can make those comments then. I have actually shot my lot - I put all mine into my response on the Address-in-Reply.

Ms RATTRAY - As the member for Rosevears indicated, many of us probably used the opportunity three or four weeks ago to talk about our aspirations for our communities, and we will delve into the details of those next week. It seems to me that it would be a better use of our time after we have gone through the Estimates process when the information comes back. We do not really have an opportunity to talk about the overall effect of the budget. We only get to talk about the various line items that may be left open for one reason or other, if the answer was not adequate or there is information still outstanding.

Ms Forrest - Maybe you need to speak on the third reading.

Ms RATTRAY - I am sure Mr President does not want to encourage too much of that.

Mr Finch - I always appreciated that week off we used to have to prepare for budget Estimates. That was always a good thing.

Ms RATTRAY - The process is what it is. We miss that week between, I appreciate that. Some of us will leave here possibly on Friday morning and head back to wherever, and then we will be back here on Sunday afternoon ready for next week. It does not leave a lot of time for anything else other than the budget. I know it is only once a year, but I thought I would again raise an issue I know has been raised in this Chamber previously about the process. Would it not be good to discuss this process with the government of the day? Perhaps I can be convinced we have it the right way round. At this point I question that. Other members might like to ponder that as we go through this process over the next few days.

There will be a number of question marks over some of the issues I raise, which we will have an opportunity to drill down into during Estimates next week. As I said, scanning the plethora of media articles following the handing down of the state's budget has become a regular occurrence for me over the past decade, to assess how the budget is reported and received. Following the same processes in the past, the reporting shows what I consider a favourable response with lines such as 'a golden time for Tasmania's economic future', when the Tasmanian community voted in March for stable government and strong economic growth. This Budget is well on the way to this with 'a beautiful set of numbers'.

I found that in one of the media releases. Not my words; the words of others.

Crunching the numbers in the fine print on what is being funded and where, tourism is a big winner with unprecedented investments in tourism marketing, parks, skills and visitor infrastructure across all corners of our state. We are looking forward to being able to drill down into that particular area, which will be on Tuesday next week, when we have the minister for Tourism, the Premier, before the committee. That will be of interest to the community. I say that for a very genuine

reason. The area of parks the department looks after has been significantly elevated. People can use their vehicles more to access those areas. Having the necessary infrastructure for visitors will be of interest.

When we had our reply to the Governor's Address, I asked about Ben Lomond and the building that burned down about a month ago. How is that progressing? I have not received any feedback from the Government about what is happening with the rebuild. It was the only toilet facility. It is not as though another building can be utilised. It is an area of interest.

It was hard to find any bad news. The business community has confidence when the Government has its house in order. I think, from the member for Murchison's contribution, that she would certainly challenge whether the Government has its house in order.

Ms Forrest - No, no, I did not say that - I said there is no buffer. It is not true there is a buffer. You cannot run down your reserves.

Ms RATTRAY - I think your words were 'No hay in the barn'.

Ms Forrest - You cannot run down cash reserves and increase borrowing to the extent they are, and say you have a buffer. There is no buffer. There are other things I do not disagree with.

Ms RATTRAY - Then we have peak bodies across the community with opposing views such as 'the budget does nothing for the next generation'. Another commentator pointed out that there will possibly be an issue sourcing suitably qualified medical staff following the Government's announcement to increase staffing numbers in the area of nursing and midwifery services.

The member for Murchison spent some time touching on that area. Equally, as she has said, wages are lower in Tasmania than anywhere else in Australia.

My mind went to the member for Western Tiers, when he, on a number of occasions, presented to this House information that it was not exactly correct that wages were at a much lower base. He cited the Education department as being one area where they are on equal footing. I recall he obtained some research in that area. If I thought he was home and had access, I would ask him to provide that document. An interesting observation where it said wages are less in Tasmania than anywhere else in Australia.

The argument comes forth again that everything costs less in Tasmania than it does in other places. Our cost of living is not as high, particularly in the area of property, but if you do not have a home, a deposit or a job, it will not matter whether it is \$200 000 or \$2 million.

Mr Willie - Look at the latest Rental Affordability Index. Hobart is only marginally behind Melbourne and compare it to wages - it has skyrocketed.

Ms RATTRAY - That will be thrashed out, but that is from one of the quotes. How do you please everyone? How can a Government do that? Is it possible? We are never going to please everybody; it is just not possible.

The Government has done what it perceives as the best job. The issue is how the budget is received, how departments work within their budget and whether we continue to look at section 19 reports and have to provide requests for additional funding provided and requests for additional funds in this place. We know some departments seem to manage a lot better than others. There are

external circumstances they have no control over, but others do not budget adequately for some circumstances, as is the nature of government departments.

The Treasurer's speech informs us that our economy is one of the fastest-growing in the country. The Leader honed the point that is a positive for our state. It has certainly provided a level of upbeat business confidence that, in turn, flows out into the wider community. The Government considers the Payroll Tax Rebate (Apprentices, Trainees and Youth Employees) Scheme a success and has extended it by cutting payroll tax on payroll up to \$2 million from 6.1 per cent to 4 per cent. It has added to the mix \$7.5 million over the next three years for grants to small businesses to support apprentices and trainees in areas of high skills demand.

What are those areas regarded as having high skills demand? Accessing grants and meeting the necessary requirements is not always as simple as it sounds - it is the old devil in the detail adage. I have the most recent list of skills shortages document in my folder ready for discussion next week. I very quickly put my hand up this morning for an allocation on that line item.

Ms Forrest - As chair you could just demand you have it.

Ms RATTRAY - I would never demand. I will be very interested in the responses to the questions next week in regard to the skills shortage and that \$7.5 million over three years. When you spread it out over three years, it is not an enormous amount of money, but small business people and anyone who can access some money to support a trainee or an apprentice they put on in their business will be very grateful for that. I look forward to having the heads-up from that area with those skills shortages, where it is likely that some of this \$7.5 million over three years will be targeted, and what businesses will be able to apply for some funds to support their small business. Most of Tasmania's businesses are small- to medium-sized businesses. We do not have many big businesses; small to medium is our nature of business. I hope there are opportunities for those small to medium businesses to get in on the act.

I liken gauging business confidence to the farming community - and perhaps you are not surprised we often talk about the farming community in this place, given our rural backgrounds. When there is rain and the prices for farm produce are up or at least stable, the entire community benefits from that confidence and optimism, which sit beside each other. We have one of those key factors in play: we have the rain - and it was raining when I was writing this on Friday - but we know there are constant challenges to the farming sector with weather events, types of seasons, market fluctuations and prices, to name a few. I expect the budget is exactly like that: there will be unforeseen challenges and it will be like running any business - you do not always know what is around the corner and you cannot be always prepared for all events.

Potato growers who have contracts with Simplot Australia for next year are potentially facing yet another one of those challenging times. I read in our local paper on Thursday or Friday that Simplot has lost a major contract that was rumoured to be 30 000 tonnes statewide to Coles. Coles' industry rivals McCain's are the growers for Coles. That is going to cause some problems. It has only been reported and it has been suggested that it may not be the whole story. I have also heard on the farmers' grapevine that Simplot is not very impressed with this story at all. I hope that regardless of who is growing the tonnage of potatoes in our farming community, they get a fair price for their produce. That is all we ask.

Another interesting fact is that McCain's, which has been reported as securing the Coles contract, is being investigated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission in regard

to contract suppliers of potatoes to McCain's. I also know for a fact that the ACCC has contacted McCain's suppliers, seeking very detailed information from suppliers as far back as 2011. It is nothing to do with my family, but I have seen that paperwork.

The growers I have spoken to are keen to provide that information. Some interesting times are ahead for growers, product producers and customers when McCain's goes through an ACCC inquiry process when it has potentially - potentially, not necessarily - been doing the right thing by its producers. We will wait to see how that plays out, but it is probably going to take some time.

Mrs Hiscutt - I was aware of the situation also, and share your concerns. It will be very interesting to see how that unfolds.

Ms RATTRAY - Particularly if a company like McCain's is going to be taking over a 30 000 tonne contract from Simplot, which will reduce its ability to let contracts for next season. There are still a few potatoes left in the ground - some of the later ones and perhaps seed ones. I know one grower who only had three loads left on the weekend to get out.

Mr Gaffney - There is plenty for him in the barn because the hay has moved out.

Ms RATTRAY - You do not want to store potatoes too long in the barn. You need them in coolstore, at a constant temperature. We have some very adequate coolstores in Scottsdale. We used to have a very adequate processing factory, too, but we lost 120 jobs. We will not go back to that because it is too difficult.

I note there is funding of \$1.8 million for the Rural Alive and Well program across the state. As I mentioned recently in this place, it is undertaking a training program across the water showing how the RAW program operates and supports our more rural and isolated communities. Tasmanian governments, past and present, have been strong supporters of RAW. It is always hard to accept that one needs help of this nature, but it is so very much needed and appreciated in our communities. I congratulate the Government for continuing the funding. In the past couple of years, at various times, RAW has been concerned about recurrent funding. It has been quite a difficult journey. It has had to come with cap in hand so an allocation in the Budget takes the pressure off. However, it will always be looking for funding year on, year out. Hopefully, the training program with Victoria, which I believe is funded by the Victorian Government, will generate some funds. We have already have the runs on the board in Tasmania for that program, and I congratulate RAW.

Education is not an area I intend to focus on today because Estimates Committee B has this area of scrutiny and more detailed information will be sourced next week. Next week I will focus on the \$31 million to provide free preschool to disadvantaged and vulnerable three-year-olds from 2020, how this will be allocated and whether existing childcare and/or early education facilities will be involved in this initiative. The member for Murchison also touched on whether that may impact on those early education and care facilities. That was a major concern of ours during the education reforms last year.

How will the Government, and particularly how will the minister and the department, roll out this \$31 million in the community? What impact will it have on those already existing childcare and early education facilities? This point was rightly raised by Madam Deputy President in her contribution.

I understand Tasmania is currently the safest state in the nation in community safety, and we want to retain that status. We are all aware of the tremendous job of police officers in our communities. We spoke at length last week, when we noted the notice of motion from the member for Windermere on the Police and Emergency Services annual report. An additional 126 new frontline officers to be trained over four years. How long does it take to train a person to be a fully-fledged officer? The answer was 31 weeks of training. That, I suspect, will equate to approximately 31 trainees per year.

Will that put an additional 30 officers into the system, or replace those who leave the service for retirement or other personal circumstances? How many actually additional officers will there be? If it is 125 over four years, it is only going to be about 30 each year or thereabouts. With natural attrition, are we going to see the benefit? We do not want to go backwards.

Mrs Hiscutt - I think I answered that in questions last week, but I will chase it up for you.

Ms RATTRAY - I apologise if that is the case. But certainly additional -

Mr Gaffney - The point about being a safe place is really important. A lot of the safety in Tasmania comes from Neighbourhood and Community Houses, from having a proactive approach. It does not necessarily fall on policemen watching you, but more on the community being aware. That preventative safety operates in our state because other places are larger and preventative safety may not be effective. As with health, prevention is much cheaper and more effective than the cure or the penalty.

Ms RATTRAY - You are absolutely right. We tend to look out, as a community, for each other. It makes you feel safe. Although the Leader and I were talking about a horrific event that happened when we were walking in the dark this morning. Somebody got out of the car and started following us. I grabbed hold of the Leader and for half a second I felt unsafe -

Mr Gaffney - It was probably a policeman worried about why you two were walking in the dark. Watch these two shady ladies.

Ms RATTRAY - I can assure everyone the young gentleman was just going to work. It was the fact we were talking about tragic circumstances of the 11-year-old girl and the comedian. I grabbed hold of the Leader and we headed towards the brightest light that we could find.

Mrs Hiscutt - We devised a plan between us about what we might do.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - Hug your car keys between your fingers.

Ms RATTRAY - We had a room key. I have certainly gotten off the track. Among other questions to be explored more fully next week through Estimates is one around the \$45 million allocated to the northern correctional facility and where that site is likely to be. Members of the McIntyre community have already raised this matter with me after hearing various rumours about the suggested site. The community is keen to be included in discussions on that site. Interestingly, the announcement of \$7.3 million for the Ashley Youth Detention Centre was named in the Treasurer's speech. What does that involve and what relationship to the siting of the new prison could there be? There are significant questions about those two facilities - the existing one and the proposed new northern correctional facility. I hope the department and the minister have the answers and will assure our committee and the people of Tasmania that there will be a thorough

consultation process on that, and that not only will a site be identified but people will then be able to object because they have genuine concerns about it.

There will be two new police stations - one in the north and one in the south. For the one in Longford in the north, I give credit to the former member, Greg Hall - well done, Greg, it is a good outcome for this strong growth area to have a new police station.

Mr Gaffney - Doesn't Longford already have a police station?

Ms RATTRAY - It is obviously replacing -

Mr Dean - To me, it wasn't a bad police station but it obviously needs modernisation.

Ms RATTRAY - There are a number of stations like that around the state. I have been advocating for a replacement or an upgrade of the St Helens police station almost from the time I first stood in this place.

Mr Gaffney - What was the other one?

Ms RATTRAY - Avoca. I would like that reinstated. That was a demountable and they took it away. If it needs a demountable to come back, I am happy with that and the community would be happy with that.

Mr Farrell - If they moved the policemen, they would double the population.

Ms RATTRAY - I congratulate the former member on advocating so strongly for his community. Now, being the new member for that area, there will be a new police station in the north. I also will be very pleased when I hear the announcement of a redevelopment of the St Helens police station. It is not fit for work purposes.

Mr Dean - It was talked about when I was commander; I remember going to St Helens when it was under northern control and looking at the station.

Ms RATTRAY - It is still under northern control; I am still talking about it and nothing has been committed in the way of finances for its redevelopment. There are the tiniest little cubicles in which officers are supposed to be able to adequately undertake their work. They are like little pigeonholes; it is not a good work space. There is a fantastic outlook over the bay if you could actually see anything. They are all poked around the back -

Mr Dean - The position of the Police department is that if you are too comfortable in your office, you stay there too long when you are needed out on the road.

Ms RATTRAY - I do not doubt that is a reasonable approach, but there would be plenty of times when necessary paperwork put on officers from above is required to be undertaken. We have heard in the last week that Treasury people are sitting in offices that are not fit for purpose, so why should any other employee of the State Service be sitting in offices that are not fit for purpose?

Mr Gaffney - There is nobody inside the police station at St Helens.

Ms RATTRAY - I think you might be wrong there. It is in a prime location in the main street, overlooking the bay.

Mr Dean - They have a rolling program at the station and I should imagine that St Helens would be close to the top now.

Ms RATTRAY - The way I am going, I will be retired before we even get to the top. I do not want that to happen. I may have to continue to stand and renominate for a seat until it is done.

Madam Deputy President, I go now to one of my areas of passion: roads and bridges infrastructure. Bring it on, I love it. I just love talking about our infrastructure.

I read page 107 of budget paper 1 and I saw the major areas of infrastructure investment in 2018-19. I have the pie chart out. Roads and bridges, and other infrastructure - and I am not sure what other infrastructure is - if you add the 42.2 per cent of the Budget to the \$316.7 million for roads and bridges and other infrastructure of \$13.8 million, the percentages come to 44 per cent. That is a significant amount of money in the Budget for infrastructure. Infrastructure for hospitals and health is 28.3 per cent; for education and schools, it is \$63 million; for law and order, \$20.6 million; for information and communication technology, \$21.9 million; tourism, recreation and culture, \$39.3 million; and for human services and housing, \$64.3 million.

It is pleasing when you see they have been allocated those significant amounts of money. When I turn over the page, I see \$100.2 million is allocated for the Midland Highway, \$69.9 million is allocated for infrastructure maintenance and \$25 million for the Hobart airport interchange. Some of these items will have federal money in with them, but this is our contribution. Roads of strategic importance is allocated \$10 million. We know it costs \$1 million to do a kilometre or thereabouts of roadwork - do not quote me on that but this is my understanding - so \$10 million will not go a long way.

Mr Gaffney - Isn't much of that money earmarked for the Sorell upgrade?

Ms RATTRAY - It does not drill down into that, so that is a good question for next week. I will find out exactly how much a kilometre it is.

Mr Gaffney - I thought it was \$100 000, but that was a few years ago.

Ms RATTRAY - Right. It is very expensive. There is a roads package to support the Tasmanian visitor economy, and that could well be the Great Eastern Drive, \$7.2 million. There is \$3.3 million for the Greater Hobart traffic vision. There are significant funds there. I have just found other infrastructure; I did not read far enough the other day - there is \$7 million for government office accommodation in Launceston, \$2.4 million for the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, and, wait for it, \$2 million for the orange-bellied parrot facility. I mean, no disrespect to the orange-bellied parrot facility, but \$2 million could build a fair few houses for people or refit some containers.

Mr Dean - The question is: what will that do for the orange-bellied parrot?

Ms RATTRAY - That is right - obviously it is where they are breeding orange-bellied parrots. It is something that potentially has to happen but we need to be mindful there are people with no roofs over their heads. I will continue to wade through that document and the others as well.

Mr Finch - You went through that successfully, too. I have heard it pronounced as the 'orange-berried parrot'.

Ms RATTRAY - No, definitely 'bellied parrot'. The fact sheet we get with the budget speech - 'the glossy', I think the member called it - highlights a number of state road upgrades. There is \$7 million plus, and there are Dorset roads and a Tomahawk to Gladstone road package. We have been looking for that Tomahawk to Gladstone road to be sealed for longer than I have been on this earth.

Prossers Road - there is an improved Hadspen access so I expect the member for Launceston will be chasing that one up next week.

Ms Armitage - With respect, the Prossers Forest Road is with the member for Windermere.

Mr Dean - There are two - Prossers Road and Prossers Forest Road are both mine.

Ms RATTRAY - You have them both now. You are a very lucky member. You also have the Myrtle Park passing opportunity.

Madam Deputy President, I feel lucky I have some other areas to make up for those areas I was focused on for a long time.

There is an allocation for cycling improvement. I expect that as roads are upgraded, they will cater for cycling lanes as well. That is something we will look at next week in regard to road infrastructure. When I see a sod turned on the Great Eastern Drive, everyone will know about it. I will even put out a media release saying, 'About time'. We have talked about it for so long in this place. There have been solid ongoing commitments but we still have not seen any of those improvements.

Mr Finch - Is there a section?

Ms RATTRAY - There is a section from St Helens through to and past Bicheno where there will be some lay-by areas and also some shoulder widening to make it a more comfortable drive. That comfortable safety aspect should start from Launceston. It should start from the Great Eastern Drive side of our state. I have not been able to convince the department and the minister yet.

According to my paperwork, the Great Eastern Drive has been voted the number one Australian road trip to take in 2018. This came from a Facebook post so it must be right.

Mr Finch - Fake news.

Ms RATTRAY - Not at all fake news. It is dinky-di news when it comes from Facebook.

Mr Finch - It must be discombobulating to be promoting the Great Eastern Drive and not to have it in the sort of condition you would like it to be in so that tourists can relax as they are driving, to a certain extent, and savour the view. I describe it as the Tuscany of the southern hemisphere.

Ms RATTRAY - Heavens above - absolutely.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - Perhaps you could make those comments in your contribution. If the member for McIntyre could get back on topic -

Mr Finch - Just practising.

Ms RATTRAY - I was enjoying the interjections, but you have ruled so I will leave it at that. I will watch with interest for the work to commence. Another question next week will be on a firm time frame.

The last two Fridays in my electorate office have been taken up with housing matters, or, to be precise, with the lack of housing, affordable or otherwise. There needs to be action and a better understanding of the challenges faced by those in our communities who, sadly, find themselves in a situation where adequate and affordable housing is not available.

This has been talked about for a very long time in this place with the previous and current government. There is too much talk and not enough action. I hope the plan put forward in the crown land bill coming here will release more land that will make affordable housing easier to develop. I trust that gets moving as soon as possible. People who have a roof over their head and a warm bed do not necessarily understand the challenges.

I had a person in my office who had been evicted from the local caravan park because there had been some complaints made about him. He had been living there with his son, a 15-year-old, who had been attending the local school. For one reason or another, there had been complaints and he acknowledged he was in an area that did not have a long-term stay. If you have nowhere else to go, very little money, you have a van and your son is at school, I would have hoped some compassion would have been evident.

There was none. I found him a place at Longford Riverside Caravan Park, a paying caravan park. I hope and pray he and his son will be able to afford the money to pay for that into the future while on the housing waitlist. I hope those people who put in a complaint to the council are feeling warm and cosy in their home after getting somebody moved on.

Mr Dean - Which they have worked for and earned and paid for - you have to be careful here.

Ms RATTRAY - I understand, but it is easy to say someone is annoying you. The caravan park in this area is quite public and is a short-stay caravan park with no charge, but you pay for showers by a meter. The Lions Club put in meters for the showers. You never want to see people living like that. You want to take them home but you cannot take everybody home. It was a pretty horrific Friday.

We put in a request to the minister's office early in the day, saying we needed something and asking whether there was any emergency accommodation. At 5 o'clock that afternoon we had an email back saying that we needed to fill in a privacy consent form by 5 o'clock that afternoon. The gentleman was not still sitting in my office at 5 o'clock and neither was I. I found that some time in the afternoon. We could have done that in five minutes. From now on, any request that goes to the minister's office will have a completed privacy consent form go with it. We learned the hard way that they will not act on anything without that form. It took from 10.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. to receive the email back saying we needed to complete a privacy consent form.

Mr Dean - My office has a general one; we do it all the time.

Ms RATTRAY - I know that for future use, but it was not very helpful on the day. I share that story and continue to urge the Government to work as hard and diligently as it can with the other housing providers it has on board to facilitate some more suitable housing.

Moving on to the foreign investor duty surcharge, I am interested to know what quantum the Government is expecting in this area. The large Rushy Lagoon property in the far north-east has just been sold to, I believe, foreign investors from New Zealand. There could be a tidy sum of duty involved in the settlement of that - we are talking millions of dollars for that.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - I think you will find it will not be retrospective. If it has already been settled, it will not apply.

Mrs Hiscutt - We have a briefing on that on Thursday morning.

Ms RATTRAY - It has not been settled, to my understanding, at this point in time. If it is after 1 July, I am interested in what sort of quantum the Government is potentially looking at in regard to that foreign investor duty surcharge.

For out-of-home care, there is an additional budget allocation of \$24 million. Will that see more resources available to foster care homes? They are considerably low in available numbers, as the member for Rosevears and I were informed last week at an event in the north of the state. There was great concern from community members about the lack of foster carers. Is any of that \$24 million going into additional resources to encourage people to open their homes and take in people who need care?

A new agency, Communities Tasmania - is that not a core function of local government? Why does the Government need an agency to undertake this role? Should not all government agencies be striving to do just that - support and strengthen our communities? More detail, Leader, would be greatly appreciated in regard to that. I do not think any money is allocated to it at this time. If there is, I will be guided by where to look in the budget papers.

There is a TasWater customer commitment to cap future price increases. I am not convinced that is a wise move. Look what happened the last time the Labor government capped water and sewerage prices. When the cap finished, up went the prices considerably, more than was anticipated. I am not sure that capping prices is the right approach. Would we not be better off having small increments than hold to it and then have a big one after it? That is my view.

Mrs Hiscutt - I am led to believe that CPI will be part of it.

Ms RATTRAY - It is still capping; it is still interfering. I understand the difficulties people face with household bills - I acknowledge that - but I recall the debacle we had when the previous government interfered with prices. It did not end well; it ended in tears. I suggest getting the infrastructure upgrades to an acceptable standard to deliver the water quality the community expects would be a far better way of spending the state's money and, in turn, our money. Get the infrastructure right, and then people may not object to paying a 2 per cent or CPI increase in their water and sewerage charges. Then we stay out of the meddling.

I applaud the Government for its continued commitment to the agriculture sector in the way of research. Being ahead of the game in research is essential to remaining competitive in any industry,

and agriculture is no exception. Where will the agriculture centre of excellence be located? There are many suitable sites in McIntyre and I am available to discuss the merits of every one. I am looking directly at the Leader and she is probably emailing the relevant minister as we speak - letting Sarah Courtney know I am available for that very important discussion.

Weed control has long been an issue raised in this place, with \$3.7 million now allocated to it. The \$1.8 million in competitive grants for landcare action should address this ongoing problem in our communities. Continued strong support in the budget for the aquaculture industry and a significant investment to support the abalone industry will be welcomed by those who operate in these areas. More detailed information will be sought from the minister through Estimates.

Tourism certainly hit the jackpot in this year's Budget. A quote earlier in my contribution said the tourism industry saw it had hit the jackpot. The member for Rosevears is going to miss drilling down into this area of the Budget next week, but I am sure he will be looking into other areas on the committee he has been transferred onto. We will miss his lead-off question. I have had to allocate it elsewhere.

Mr Gaffney - He has his special area of interest.

Ms RATTRAY - Good. The list of funding to support and market the tourism aspect is so extensive it would take all day to go through and comment on. One is \$3 million to develop our hospitality workforce with a dedicated unit within government. How will this Government use its money wisely to deliver the outcomes? While \$3 million sounds a lot, how far will it go in training and developing the skills needed to keep up with the growing sector, which will always have the seasonal issue to contend with? Often those jobs are not permanent ones and it is difficult to keep those people returning to your business, particularly young ones looking for more permanent job opportunities.

It is the nature of Tasmania. Wet weather sets in and sometimes the mountain bike track, the Blue Derby, is closed. You cannot ride it so there is nobody there, and that causes issues with employment. People who work there are always going to be casual employees, who get a phone call or text not to come to work today. It is disappointing.

Madam Deputy President, \$11.6 million is provided to fulfil the Government's substantial election commitments. We were provided with the \$10 million list last week and that was substantial enough. There is still \$11.6 million, including \$3 million for the swimming pool at Scottsdale. We are not sure what that development might consist of, because as yet the conversation has not been had with the community. The announcement was made, and a couple of the stakeholder groups did not know anything about it. They had not had a chance to have any input into what is being proposed for the facilities they use. Again, we need that consultation process.

There is no point in putting money into something we think is a good idea if the people who will be using it say, 'We didn't know anything about it. That is not our priority'. When we are spending \$21.6 million on election commitments, we have to be very careful to get it right. We do not want to see another 'Building the Education Revolution' example of buildings being done too quickly and without proper consultation. Those buildings ended up being white elephants, or poorly built, or one of those issues. We have to be very careful about how the money is spent.

The contract for the TT-Line was signed recently for construction of two new ships. The vessels will be 212 metres long, and will accommodate 1800 passengers and up to 600 passenger

vehicles, and they will commence operation in 2021. Madam Deputy President, you talked quite extensively about there being no line item for that. We are not sure whether there is a revolving door of funds. It is named in the Budget but there is no actual allocation for it, so I am interested -

Ms Forrest - You have to borrow to buy them.

Ms RATTRAY - I thought that was interesting. It has a significant spiel, but no dollars connected to it. Everything else around it had dollars connected to it, but not this one. We need to be up-front about what we are doing.

We have a lot more work to do in scrutinising this Budget. I know the Estimates process will be taken on board by all members, as we always do. This House will do its utmost to gain as much information as possible for the people of Tasmania whom we represent. They rely on us, as a House of review, to drill down into the areas of importance to each and every one of us. I look forward to next week when we have that opportunity to do that. I note the Budget.

[4.12 p.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Madam Deputy President, with all its goodies, this Budget seems a little more like a pre-election than a post-election budget. No doubt the Government, with its fragile majority, is keeping its powder dry, as it were, and has decided against a usually austere first budget. It is always a good time in the first year of a three- or four-year term to crack the whip and get all the bad stuff out of the way early. However, we have phrases like 'superb', 'golden age', 'next level', 'literally building your future' and 'turbo charged'. I love it. These phrases were thrown about by a cool, calm and very collected treasurer, Peter Gutwein, and the Premier, Will Hodgman, according to the ABC.

The Hodgman Government proudly says it has kept its election spending promises. The public expects nothing less. Of course, that is not always the case. Broken budget promises started way back, even before John Howard's core and non-core promises. Predictably, the Opposition does not believe the claim that this Budget comes good on election funding promises. It points out that \$757 million was promised for Health, but says there is funding of only \$370 million. Labor says it is a similar case with Education funding.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - Order, we do not have a quorum. Ring the bells.

Quorum formed.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - Member for Rosevears, please resume your contribution.

Mr FINCH - Madam Deputy President, we are constantly being told that the key to Tasmania's future is a better educated next generation. Education takes up more than a quarter of the overall 2018-19 Budget spending, with \$192 million allocated for new schools or improvements to existing ones. That is good, but we are also constantly told that throwing money at Education does not necessarily improve its outcomes. Still, I am happy that in my growth area of Legana, we get a guernsey for money and we will finally get a school. To make a start on the school at Legana, the West Tamar Council needs \$10 million. That is to get the planning done and buy the land. The Government is giving \$5 million to the West Tamar Council to get that going. The land is to be acquired at a commercial rate. That is a good incentive for, or a good contribution to, the West Tamar Council for that opportunity to get the school going in Legana. These are all preparations

for that growth area in my electorate. We are always touting that this electorate will go from a population 2500 now to probably 10 000 to 12 000 in the not too distant future.

Of course, our budget planning relies on the GST revenue continuing as it is. The Premier says he has a firm commitment from the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, on this. Let us hope that is a core promise. We will wait with baited breath. GST revenue is expected to grow by \$63 million, based on estimated outcomes.

Apart from GST, the Budget has been helped by increased revenue from payroll and property taxes, which has enabled fulfilled spending promises and also surpluses.

Money in the bank is all well and good, but some would argue this should be spent - and spent urgently - on people in need, especially those suffering from chronic homelessness. I am sure the current Minister for Housing is concerned about this as much as others are, and that he is looking forward to explaining to us in the budget Estimates about how he will focus on this issue. Imagine what chronic homelessness would mean to your life and the way you live. We have seen the people in tents on the parliamentary lawns and we have seen caravans with the wind hurtling around them on the old showgrounds.

Ms Rattray - I have shared my story about someone being made to move on.

Mr FINCH - I think that is just terrible. Homelessness is no joke in the middle of winter. I am not suggesting the Government treats it that way, but even generally it would not be a good situation to be in.

Ms Rattray - I will be relying on you, as a former member of Estimates Committee B, who had housing, to be really drive home some of these points next week.

Mr FINCH - Okay. Will you be offering a series of questions?

Ms Rattray - I do not need to give the member for Rosevears any questions.

Mr FINCH - I will look to your colleague sitting next to you to provide those; any help will be acknowledged and appreciated. The \$125 million for building of affordable homes is all well and good, but it takes time to build houses. The problem, especially in the south, is bigger than \$125 million. Colony 47 and its Housing Connect partners, Anglicare, the Salvation Army, CatholicCare and the Hobart City Mission have been working with the Government to find solutions to the housing crisis.

I want to quote from Colony 47's latest newsletter -

We know from research provided by the University of Tasmania that the private rental market in greater Hobart has experienced increasing demand due to population growth and increased demand from the tourism and hospitality and education sectors. People with low incomes seeking housing in the private rental market are, as a result, being increasingly disadvantaged as property prices and rentals increase. Our strong message to governments of all persuasions is that there is an urgent need for the construction of affordable, safe and fit for purpose housing for disadvantaged Tasmanians. This will require a commitment from all levels of government to deliver these housing outcomes for disadvantaged

Tasmanians as a priority. In the short term we are working with the Tasmanian Government to increase social housing over the next 12 months for people with high needs, and in making available private rental housing through incentives for landlords.

It appears that the housing crisis may be worse than the Government realises. There might need to be another swing around, and another look over the shoulder to put focus back on that particular area. We will see what the Estimates bring and what the new minister is making of the latest circumstance.

One of the big health care announcements was about the new private hospital co-located to the Launceston General Hospital. I cannot understand why this is in the budget speech, given it will be entirely funded by Calvary Health Care and will not need government funds.

Ms Forrest - Not only that, but the Treasurer or minister both were saying this is the first time this has ever happened. Rubbish, it already exists in Burnie.

Mr FINCH - It is nothing new. It has been discussed for years under both Labor and Liberal governments. The site would be the car park south of the LGH building, just fantastic. It is not a problem. If you have a situation where it is full up and people need extra care, wheel them straight into the LGH and care will be provided there - just like you have the private hospital next to the Royal Hobart Hospital.

Ms Forrest - That is a leased site. The lease is about to run out on it and there is no certainty of continuity.

Mr FINCH - That is the sort of circumstance we would have in Launceston. That is good. I only hope there will be provision to cope with the ever-increasing parking problem around the LGH. It is interesting that so much parking is required for hospitals, not only for patients but also for staff.

Ms Forrest - Put a multilevel underground car park off Howick Street and build on top of it. It is sloping land.

Mr FINCH - I am reflecting on the way that situation has developed over the years. Even with the development a few years ago, which put extra parking in, it is still very difficult to find a parking space at the hospital. That is a dynamic of any hospital area development - parking is vital. You cannot have patients going in and out of hospital having to walk a long distance and people coming to visit and not being able to find adequate parking.

Ms Rattray - If you start any business in any local government area, no matter how big or small it is, you have to supply at least five car spaces for every business. If you are only a two-person business and you do not, you have to provide money in lieu if parking is provided elsewhere. Why isn't it the same for a hospital?

Mr FINCH - It probably will be. As I say, plans will get underway now for the private hospital.

Mr Dean - How about some of the hospitals in Melbourne and other places? There is no parking at all.

Ms Forrest - Look at the public transport they have.

Mr Dean - There is some public transport here and in Launceston. There is a free bus service that goes around to hospitals.

Mr FINCH - It is interesting that sort of facility draws such a requirement for the dreaded motor car. It dominates our existence. Think about all the beautiful real estate wasted on highways, by-ways, back roads and parking spots. No doubt they will take this issue into account when they establish the planning for the new private hospital next to the LGH.

I welcome the budget allocation for a cleaner Tamar River. I remind members that my electorate of Rosevears stops at the eastern edge of the Tamar. The member for Windermere will have nothing to do with the silt problem.

The discussion this morning about the pile driving at the new CH Smith development was interesting: how they had to pound 500 piles down through the soil and below the silt, which is historically there from pre-settlement days, to find bedrock and a stable platform on which to place the building. It has been going on for time immemorial.

I was never given a heads-up about the group searching for a solution to the Tamar River problem. The member for Windermere, myself and former president of this Chamber Don Wing were part of a select committee inquiry into the Tamar River and the need for a statutory management authority. I would have thought that might have reflected a modicum of interest.

Ms Forrest - You should have had the member for Western Tiers on the committee. That might have made a difference. All the silt came from his electorate.

Mr FINCH - That is right. We just wanted to blame him.

The point is that we showed we had a strong interest in the health of the river. I do not believe any of us were consulted or requested to make a contribution or to be part of it, but I was busy at the time so it is okay.

The Treasurer skated over Tasmania's public sector superannuation liability continuing to hurt future budgets. It will cost \$284.5 million next financial year. The now-defunct pension scheme for workers is expected to reach an unprecedented \$7 billion in value in the 2022 forward Estimates and remains unfunded. That situation is the old elephant in the room. Of course, times have changed and some people do not enjoy the pension process. I know, Mr President, you will agree with me wholeheartedly when I say there is a sense of concern for your fellow members in the Legislative Council and what they might not enjoy in their retirement.

While we are on about public servants, the Government seems determined to keep them to a 2 per cent pay increase limit. Public servants contribute to the retail sector like the rest of us. This lack of spending power will probably contribute to the predicted future decline in that sector. I imagine anyone in retail will be concerned about this situation where they have levelled the 2 per cent off over a long period. Does that give people the confidence to go about that spending that helps the retail sector? I think not.

The Treasurer spoke of the Government's infrastructure program and the investment of \$1.1 billion on roads and bridges over the forward Estimates, and the member for McIntyre referred to that. Improvements like these are needed not only by Tasmanians going about our normal business, but also by the tourism industry which is burgeoning quite fantastically - but it is getting around the state. I will continue with what we were discussing, member for McIntyre, about the

Great Eastern Drive. Of course you have some of it in the northern end coming into Launceston, as you are progressing with your suggestion. For the tourists who come here, the Great Eastern Drive has a magic about it. It is a great name; it is like the one from Melbourne to Adelaide - what is that called?

Mr PRESIDENT - The Great Ocean Road.

Mr FINCH - The Great Ocean Road.

Mr Farrell - It is marketing it.

Mr FINCH - Yes, it is marketing, but it fuels the imagination. When you get on it, some of those views are stunning. Did I hear somebody say earlier that it is the Tuscany of the Southern Hemisphere? What a wise observation - it is like that. We are promoting that situation, but not in a safety sense.

Ms Rattray - We put big signs up, but we never do any work on it.

Mr FINCH - Yes, the view is there, good for tourists, good for Tasmanians touring around the state, but it is not as safe as you would like it to be. I am glad that is being looked at. I know some of that infrastructure spending will go to the West Tamar Highway - I think \$12 million was the figure I saw. The first spend of that will be on an area I have mentioned here before: as you come into Exeter, the Lanena section between the turn-off to Rosevears Drive and the turn-off to Gravelly Beach. You have this narrow-guttered highway; if you had a truck and a bus passing each other, I would be surprised if rear-view mirrors have not been lost - they probably have been. If somebody is walking a pram on the side of that highway, they are only about a metre from heavy trucks and buses. Something has to be done about that section.

On the other side of the road is a gully that would be as deep as that table, and probably about a metre-and-a-half wide. That is just bizarre in an area where all that tourism traffic is heading to Seahorse World, the mine disaster site and all that activity in the northern end of the Beauty Point area. People travel up there and must wonder where in the heck they are going when they head north and come through Lanena - it is bizarre. At long last, like Chinese water torture, this Government has realised that Lanena is the next section that needs to be looked at and rectified. It could take about 18 months, but that is all right - we have been waiting since time immemorial to get the work done on that.

The Frankford main road has attracted some dollars too, which is necessary because of the heavy truck traffic coming from forestry and plantation timbers and going to the chipper at Bell Bay Timberlink. The trucks turn off Birraleee onto the Frankford.

Ms Rattray - That is the B-double route.

Mr FINCH - It is a shocker. You should come with me on an election campaign up and down the Frankford Highway and talk to the people who live there and how they feel about the activity on the Frankford main road. I am not singling out log trucks, but heavy industry transport comes from Devonport through to Exeter on the Frankford main road. Cars and trucks often travel over the speed limit on that narrow road - school buses and everything. I have to stop on the highway -

Ms Rattray - All the milk tankers use the main road; they do not have to use the B-double route.

Mr FINCH - They all come down the Frankford main road and while there are little patch works done here and there, it is not the fulsome effort that has been down on the Midland Highway. It is a good thing some money has been allocated for the Frankford main road.

I might put this on notice - that is, the heavy vehicles coming down the highway through Birralee on Frankford main road as they go up the West Tamar Highway and turn off at Sidmouth to cross the Batman Bridge. From the Batman Bridge out to the East Tamar Highway, it is member for Windermere's area. We should get a takeaway coffee, and go up there to look at the state of the road, its narrowness and the volume of trucks and traffic on it. Anybody nervous about driving would be horrified by it. The life would be frightened out of them on that stretch of road.

Mrs Hiscutt - Perhaps you should try doing what the member for McIntyre has done - getting into the back seat of the ministerial car with the minister.

Ms Rattray - What good did that do me? None.

Mr FINCH - Yes, we will try something else, but this is a dangerous section. It is not in my area but it needs help. Little bits and pieces are done here and there, but there is so much heavy traffic on that road. If the plantation industry keeps going and the log truck traffic keeps coming through, at least the residents need to feel they can share the road with the heavy vehicles.

The Treasurer's speech paints a glowing picture of Tasmania's future. Most of it is credible as long as the revenues keep coming. If they do not, for unforeseen reasons beyond our control, some of the Treasurer's glowing picture may turn to a fantasy, but let us hope not.

You could call this Government lucky. Like a Labor government when they had so much revenue coming in. Remember with David Crean as treasurer?

Ms Rattray - Rivers of gold.

Mr FINCH - Rivers of gold.

Ms Rattray - That was Michael Aird's rivers of gold.

Mr FINCH - Before him it was Jim Bacon, Paul Lennon and David Crean.

Ms Rattray - That was a property boom then, too.

Mr FINCH - Absolutely. They were there ready. Johnny-on-the-spot ready to take advantage of the opportunity and they did us proud. I remember budget Estimates clearly with Jim Bacon - the way he conducted himself and talked about Tasmania was inspirational and Tasmania was very positive. There is an element of that coming through here.

In my community, people and businesses are feeling positive about the current Government. I heard Errol Stewart say at the opening of the Silo Hotel in acknowledging Will Hodgman, 'Will Hodgman, premier for the second time, maybe historically could for the third time'. Nobody disagreed. That was early in the night and they had not had enough alcohol to let people know what

they were really thinking. We will wait to see what happens. Errol Stewart was feeling positive about the Hodgman Government and the way things are unfolding.

This might be an opportunity to talk about partnerships between private enterprise and the Government. That is what the conservative Liberal Government is all about - working for us in the north with some of these projects, which are giving a positivity to our community -

Mr Dean - I can see Opposition members nodding too.

Mr FINCH - A government of any shade or flavour is going to back such people as David Walsh, Errol Stewart or Josef Chromy because they are good for Tassie. Development is so good for us and the community and it is good for jobs. It is a no-brainer to work with such people and assist them to invest in these developments, to take a leap of faith and invest their private enterprise dollars with government dollars for the benefit of Tasmania as a whole.

Mr Farrell - It was a three course meal, wasn't it?

Mr FINCH - It was just a buffet.

The Government is lucky it has an additional \$564 million compared with what was projected in the mid-year review of last year's budget, published just before the caretaker period before the March election. There is \$564 million extra. The Budget also benefits from a stronger local economy with some of Tasmania's own revenue sources as distinct from the GST money. It is debatable whether the state Government can take credit for all that, although I am sure it will.

The GBEs seem to be going well, with Hydro Tasmania paying \$124 million more to the Government in tax equivalence and dividends over the next three years than previously expected. I think we find ourselves in this Budget in a pretty good space, so let us hope the financial luck holds.

We were talking about the West Tamar Highway and the road that goes through to the East Tamar Highway. I point out to the member for Windermere that the mobile phone coverage on the East Tamar Highway is not good. Your phone drops out. Tourists - business people particularly - need to stay connected with their businesses while on holiday. If we do not have good mobile coverage, we are going to be frowned upon. It is not going to be a good situation. I have a friend who is with Optus. He has not had good coverage over many years and he is very frustrated. We need to have that connectivity, which is something we need to look at.

Mr Dean - Telstra has a plan for a number of other towers through the area. I am not sure where they are.

Mr FINCH - I will highlight that. I have a lot of trouble. It is a good opportunity for me to conduct a bit of business within a 30-minute trip.

Ms Rattray - Before the member resumes his seat -

Mr FINCH - Is it going to be in the Budget? In my electorate?

Ms Rattray - It is. By interjection, I indicated earlier that I did not believe my trip with the minister had been very valuable in getting works undertaken. I hope that is not the case. Thank you for bringing that up.

Mr FINCH - In this age of conviviality I am sure that strong consideration will be given to somebody like the long-suffering member for Rosevears.

[4.45 p.m.]

Ms SIEJKA (Pembroke) - Mr President, before I begin my response to the 2018-19 state Budget, I thank members for providing their insights on how this Budget will impact on their individual electorates and the communities they represent.

It is important to recognise that the true value of our Chamber is in hearing the varied representations from around the state because they enable us to gain a fuller understanding of the issues and concerns across wider Tasmania as we continue our debate. It is quite a challenge to consider all the information before us in such a short time frame, and to fully reflect on the contents.

I have examined government budgets in both state and federal budget lock-ups. It is usually a case of finding what is missing, rather than the significance of what is obvious.

Like other members, I was present when the Treasurer delivered the 2018-19 Tasmanian state Budget. Since then, I have had inquiries and comments from members of my community and stakeholders across a number of areas. Many of these related to election commitments and details unknown; people wanted information on whether a budget allocation had been made for their concerns and, in some cases, were unaware that their much asked-for request had been granted earlier in the year or during the election, but not yet communicated to them.

Transparency is a vital component of all the work done by government. It leads to accountability and good governance, and gives our constituents faith that we are acting in their best interests. We know open government is the best approach to governance. We know that there is a positive relationship between transparency and improved outcomes, and yet this Government continues to act in a way that is both counterproductive and undermines accountability and transparency expectations.

As a public institution, it is expected that a government exists to serve the community and that it should therefore be open to and expect public scrutiny; it should not withhold information. Openness, it seems, does not come naturally to this Government. It should be transparent, participatory and collaborative. What we have seen with this Budget, however, is that this Government is comfortable with misleading Tasmanians, and it is certainly comfortable with not providing our community with all the available information on election commitments and policy announcements. When it comes -

Mrs Hiscutt - If you would like to supply me with that list, I will look at it for you.

Ms SIEJKA - I am talking primarily about before the election.

Mrs Hiscutt - The Government has committed to fund all election commitments.

Ms SIEJKA - When it comes to elections, voters should feel confident they are informed and have access to all the relevant and required information before they cast their vote. The deliberate

withholding of information and the suppression of vital policy and associated expenditure is unacceptable. This only damages transparency, erodes government integrity and fails to meet the expectations of Tasmanians, who want their government to act with purpose, honesty and in a way that reflects community interests.

While I acknowledge there are many aspects of the Budget that some Tasmanians will be satisfied with, it is important to bring attention to the many commitments and policy gaps, and perhaps have a discussion about the fact that this Government's priorities are not right. During a time of global economic prosperity we should be looking after our most vulnerable, our most disadvantaged and our most at-risk. We should be investing in our communities and in our people. A healthy and strong population would, after all, ensure growth in the rest of Tasmania's sectors.

This Budget is investing large amounts of money into public infrastructure, which is important, but it is doing so at the expense of the many Tasmanians who are struggling every day with the cost of living - Tasmanians who are unable to find affordable housing and who are homeless and living in public places like the showgrounds. A budget should not be 'either/or'. A balance needs to be achieved between growth and development, and helping Tasmanians, propping them up, when they need a hand. It is time the Government realised that ignoring these problems does not make them disappear. It does not mean they do not exist. More than just infrastructure needs funding.

The Treasurer has produced an underlying deficit of \$96.7 million for 2017-18, while trying to convince Tasmanians there is a surplus. Mr Gutwein is picking and choosing figures that put the Government in a favourable light, without exposing all areas. How can the Government expect to address our budget issues if it is not transparent about our financial situation? Our credit rating remains at Aa2, the lowest in the nation. It has not recovered since it dropped to this rating in 2016 under Mr Gutwein.

In Moody's credit rating agency analysis of Tasmania for 2018-19, it was clear a near-record investment in infrastructure had offset a forecast of revenue growth. The report said, 'This will delay the return to a surplus until 2021, compared to a return to fiscal balance in 2020, as previously forecast in the 2018 budget. Over the four years to 2022, the state projects an average deficit of 1.9, based on net lending or borrowing as a percentage of revenue'.

It is important to ensure our young Tasmanians have access to education up to year 12 in their communities, but it is important to ensure this is done in a viable way that has positive outcomes for young people. We have seen significant funds in this Budget go towards infrastructure to extend all Tasmanian government high schools to year 12 by 2022, despite the Government having independent research that shows this investment may have very little outcome. In 2016 the Government funded an independent review into years 9 to 12 in Tasmania. The final report by the Australian Council for Education Research found -

the introduction of Extension High Schools in the government sector, as a way of broadening curriculum offerings and to therefore improve the attendance, retention and attainment of students living in regional and rural locations, is a resource intensive option, that may have low impact.

According to the Government there are 688 students studying in 38 high schools. This means on average only 18 students are studying in years 11 and 12 at each school extended. It should be noted some of these students would have transitioned through the college system, and these cannot all be attributed to the high school extension. While it is expected schools in rural and regional

areas will have fewer students, it is difficult to comprehend how this is viable for schools in urban areas. It is one thing for students to be at school, and another for them to be in a setting where they can achieve and reach their potential.

The Australian Education Union has said that, despite the Government's announcement in this Budget for more teachers and teaching assistants, there remains a large gap in our schools, which need more support staff, including school psychologists, social workers and speech and language therapists. Teachers, principals and support staff are seeing more students with complex needs who desperately need additional professional support to meet their needs. Students experiencing issues such as trauma, mental illness and family breakdown struggle to engage and focus at school. The Government has failed, in this Budget, to provide this support to students and relieve the teachers struggling to deal with increasingly complex cases in their classrooms. These are all important considerations when examining the Government's investments in education and reports on outcomes.

As a former TasTAFE Board member, I am pleased to see positive news relating to that organisation. A trade and water centre is needed to keep Tasmania's plumbing, plastics and power-related apprentices and trainees learning in an environment that meets today's industry needs. A number of industry bodies support this development, including the Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry Training Board, of which I was also a board member.

This continued engagement of these industry bodies will help to ensure the centre is built to meet the needs of the sector. I will be watching the implementation of the centre very closely, as there is more to the success of a centre than a 'build it and they will come' mentality.

The Young Leaders program is a worthy recipient of funding in this Budget. The Young Leaders program is based in Pembroke and has provided valuable learning opportunities for young people connecting with peers living with disability. Young people attending the Southern Support School in Bellerive benefit greatly from this program, as do students from other schools in the area who may not otherwise interact with each other.

Other budget commitments to note are some that members of the Pembroke community will watch closely - the funding of the Tasman Highway off-ramps into Rosny and establishment of the Bellerive-Hobart ferry. It is essential to ensure these initiatives are monitored very closely to ensure community expectations are met. Also within Pembroke, the Clarence Senior Citizens Centre in Alma Street received much-needed and overdue funds for redevelopment of the centre -

Mr Dean - On the ferry situation, what parking will be made available on the Bellerive side? Will it be free parking? That is really the crucial point. Where Victoria has railway stations, there is free parking for patrons. Will that happen?

Ms SIEJKA - That is one of concerns the community has raised with me. I believe in the establishment stage they will be looking at a reset exercise to see what the best approach is. I know that is one of the community's primary concerns.

Mrs Hiscutt - Are you going to put that to the Estimates committee?

Ms SIEJKA - Yes. I am sure it will be considered, but it is certainly something that has come to me.

Mr Dean - People from the eastern shore have already raised this. They will use it, but they want to make sure there is decent parking. They have to drive a distance to get there.

Ms SIEJKA - Of course. Currently there are very limited parking opportunities, let alone all-day parking. That has been the main correspondence I have received to date. I will be asking that question in Estimates.

The Clarence Seniors Citizens Centre received money for its heritage-listed building. It is an integral part of the local community and provides an important wellbeing role in reducing social isolation and providing engaging activities for older people to enjoy. There is much more we could be doing to support older people in our community, particularly when it comes to elder abuse.

It is really positive to see that Business East has received a \$100 000 grant from the Government so that it is able to continue its important work in servicing small businesses and industry on the eastern shore. It is a very small amount, but this is a grassroots organisation that does much for a very large area on the eastern shore. I know it will be grateful. I provided Business East with advice and support in its quest for financial support. I am sure it will use these funds to benefit its many members. I look forward to hearing the debate progress and hearing from other members on their reflections on the Budget.

[4:57 p.m.]

Mr PRESIDENT - Members, I wonder whether many of you are watching your television screens. There are not many members here, so if they want to have a word, it is best they come here rather than leave it to the few who have been here for the majority of the day.

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, we can talk about budgets and all the rest. We have our issues and concerns and so on, but generally this Budget is quite a good one. Of course there are some issues. The people I have mixed with in my community are positive about it. They see it as moving things forward. They relate it to employment, to businesses and how they are doing. There is that air that this Budget is moving forward.

It is interesting that during the election campaign the Government made a number of statements about policing and so on. Most of that is covered in the Budget. One of those things was removing the workers compensation step-down provisions for police. For anybody injured at work in the line of duty, there will be no step-down parts to their payment - they will receive similar payments right through their working life. That is how I understand it.

That should not only apply to police. It ought to apply to anybody in the public service who is injured while at work and in the line of duty. In my opinion, it should happen with the fire service and State Emergency Service personnel, nurses and teachers.

Ms Forrest - Have you done a costing on that?

Mr DEAN - It is a huge cost, but if somebody is injured in the line of duty, doing the work they are employed to do, they are entitled to a similar salary they would otherwise receive until the end of their working life. There is a limit to be placed on that. Why should a family be impacted negatively because their loved one - their husband, wife or partner - is injured at work? If it is done for police, this is great. Of course I support the police, and this is what this Government has done. The key deliverable is referred to; it is indicated it will be supported. I do not have any problems with it.

The Government also said it is going to consolidate police powers of arrest. I have often said in this place that police powers of arrest currently are covered in myriad acts of parliament - probably hundreds - where police have to go and have a certain power of arrest in certain circumstances. To consolidate powers of arrest into one act would be an absolute godsend to police. It is good some of these things are being done.

The other one is in the key deliverables document, Table 8.1, which refers to the crack down by the police on antisocial driving and the use of drones. Criminals are using drones. Police are making some provisions to move in that direction. One of the things referred to here is that this funding will assist in the Government's commitment to crack down on antisocial driving to ensure police can capture vehicles used in late-night hooning, drag nights and mini bikes used in urban areas. That will be absolutely wonderful. If you go to Ravenswood or Rocherlea, it is amazing to hear the incredible number of complaints about unlawful use of motorcycles and mini bikes and kids without helmets. The hooning really has become intolerable; it is going on so much and all over the place - and not only in areas away from the city blocks. It will be great if drones are used in those circumstances and can pick up many of these offenders. That would certainly be welcomed.

The Government has allocated \$300 000 over four years to implement a number of initiatives designed to reduce shoplifting from Tasmanian businesses. As I keep saying here, one of the ways we can start to crack down on shoplifting is not to refer to it as 'shoplifting' but as stealing because that is exactly what it is. How many people do you talk who say it is just a bit of shoplifting? You turn around and say it was not shoplifting, it was stealing. They see shoplifting as less serious.

Mr Finch - People take advantage of electronic checking by not using the walk-through checkout with the person serving them. Instead they put things in their own bag and then tick some other things off. I am not saying they consider it a game, but they see it as an easy opportunity to get an advantage over the stores, yet that is stealing.

Mr DEAN - It is straight-out stealing; there is no doubt about that. I wonder how much of it occurs through exit points where you do your own scanning. I should imagine it is fairly rife. Most stores have people there watching, but they cannot watch all of the customers.

Mr Finch - One to about a dozen.

Mr DEAN - I think there are eight checkouts at Coles near the Kmart at Newstead. How could one person standing at the back identify everything being put through each register? I imagine quite a bit of that is going on - sadly, because it is a great way to get through.

Mr Finch - The problem is that we have to try to eliminate putting temptation in front of people. That is where you start to test people too much. If you give them the opportunity to pocket something that is not rightfully theirs, I think there is blame shared because you have to try to eliminate circumstance where people are tempted to break the law.

Mr DEAN - I do not disagree with what the member is saying. If the opportunity is there, people will take advantage of it. You are right - the retailers should be doing more to ensure opportunity for theft is decreased. In this Budget, the Government is making money available to retailers to put CCTV and monitoring stations throughout their premises. A good move but, once again, when these retailers and businesses have that in place, they need to advertise that very clearly and educate people they are under video surveillance.

It is probably not fair in a lot of respects not to tell people. They need to know, and it is fair that it is made clear to people that in such premises, their every move is being videoed. That will have a great benefit to them and to the rest of us because honest people pay for those people stealing from shops and premises. We pay for it. Businesses will tell you they have a certain mark-up to cover property taken without payment. It is a good move on the part of the Government to provide an interest-free loan and provide some money to these businesses.

Richard Townsend sent out a document about the Budget to all of us in this place. He has been around for a long time and understands budgets. He speaks quite highly of the budget, as do a lot of other people. The other position relates to Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association. The TFGA put out two documents, which I have here. One document reads, 'excellent budget for agriculture'. I do not know if the member for Montgomery mentioned them but I will quickly because both documents are only short. The first one reads -

The State's peak farming organisation has congratulated the new Minister for Primary Industries Sarah Courtney on an excellent budget for agriculture. Tasmanian Farmer And Grazers Association (TFGA) CEO Peter Skillern said that the strength of the budget's contribution to agriculture further highlighted the Minister's commitment to the sector. 'The raft of initiatives announced today will not only support agriculture but ensure its sustainability and assist the growth of regional communities,' Mr Skillern said. 'It is particularly pleasing to see additional funding for Rural Business Tasmania (RBT) to support them in their vital counselling services. We look forward to working with the Minister as these initiatives are rolled out.'

My father always used to say that if farmers and the agricultural area are doing well, the state is doing well. It is really a true saying.

Mr Finch - Particularly Launceston.

Mr DEAN - They come in and buy from Launceston.

Mr Finch - Launceston is and always has been a hub for the rural community and the rural economy. Launceston has always been a great central point for commerce and business.

Mr DEAN - It has. The second letter from the TFGA says -

The State's peak farming organisation has welcomed the energy initiatives announced in yesterday's State Budget. Tasmanian Farmer and Grazers Association (TFGA) CEO, Peter Skillern, said that it was pleasing to see the On-Farm Energy and Irrigation Audit Program funded in the budget's Forward Estimates. 'The \$10 million 12-month extension of the energy rebate program for commercial and industry businesses coming off contract was also a welcome addition to the government's energy plan', Mr Skillern said. 'Our thanks to Energy Minister, Guy Barnett, for these valuable initiatives that will assist Tasmanian agriculture to remain profitable and sustainable as we work towards growing the value of the sector to \$10 billion a year by 2050.'

Talking about energy and energy rebates and support to the rural sector, look at the energy now being created through the solar panels and so on. I am not sure when the grandfathering clause closes, but it must be fairly close. It was a five-year grandfather clause so it either finishes later this year or early next year. Will the Government negotiate a better feed-in tariff for people who have solar panels? Or will they be left with what is 8 cents per kilowatt - that is, down from 28 cents to about 8 cents - when that grandfather clause concludes. Will the Government look at that with a view to at least providing a fair and reasonable feed-in tariff price to people?

I received - and other members might have as well - a newsletter from Tasman Management Services. It is an interesting newsletter titled *In Support of Progress*; and there are a couple of points I wanted to quote from it. This comes from issue 1818, the article reads -

It is always easy to nit-pick at the edges, but for my money it was a good budget. So, an accolade for the Treasurer. Further it has been received well within Tasmanian community and by various commentators, and is providing a further boost in confidence. Criticism, such as it is, is muted.

and I think it is; I have not heard too much criticism at all -

Labor, it seems, is reticent to offer an alternative, saying in part that it is too difficult to forecast the future GST outcomes. That is not a good reason to not do so. If Labor has different priorities they should at least be stated. The Greens have labelled it a 'blokey' budget because of the emphasis on infrastructure. IS that the best they can do? It makes one wonder whether they would ever criticise a budget as being too 'girly'. I suspect not!

Ms Forrest - It would be good to have gender budgeting included in the process.

Mr DEAN - It goes on -

While endorsing the document, I note it as being essentially an income and expenditure document, with more income enabling more expenditure. Which is not, and should not be seen to be, the b-all and end-all of government management.

The real risk to the budget is that with at least the perception that money is being sloshed around, the temptation will be for government departments to find ways to spend the money rather than to save it. Big ticket items and hobby-horses could well be the order of the day, and this is not a good practice.

Many are the examples of large licks of money being spent on items which have simply not been delivered, and which have led to an increase in costs to the taxpayer and/or the users of the service (e.g. the three electricity GBE's).

This is where the real issue lies going forward. If one was to spend the money more effectively and efficiently, then in fact cost savings could be made. And that is where the Treasurer should concentrate his efforts moving forward.

If any member does not have this newsletter and is interested in it, I am happy to make it available to them as a public document.

In her speech at the opening of Parliament this year, Her Excellency said that the economy is doing well at present and that there is an air of confidence out about businesses, and work available to those who want it. Sadly, there are many who believe that the world owes them a living and a roof over their head. The tent thing, as far as I am concerned, was a farce. I think it was done to deliberately highlight an issue some people believe the state currently has. We must work on these people to try to change their attitude. The only place we can turn this around, in my opinion, is in the schools, where we need to do a lot more work.

I want to briefly mention the Beacon Foundation. I take great pleasure in saying this program began in my electorate, at the Brooks High School at Rocherlea, perhaps the lowest socio-economic area in this state. It was then called the first 'No Dole' school scheme in the state. It was a great initiative, but I am not quite sure what has happened with the program now insofar as there are any statistics on how well it is working. The students sign up to a charter that identifies they will be gaining employment - that is their direction and nobody will be on the dole, on Centrelink benefits.

Mr Armstrong - Didn't the Beacon Foundation build those homes in St Helens out of containers, which was on the ABC?

Mr Farrell - Mike Parr bought one recently, didn't he?

Mr DEAN - Did he?

Interestingly, we talk about jobs and how jobs have increased. I referred in my reply to Her Excellency's Speech to the fact that the number of jobseekers receiving allowances has increased in this state from nearly 12 000 in 2012 to 16 000 in 2018. If you look at the statistics relative to Tasmanians receiving a payment from the federal government, 417 023 payments are received by Tasmanians. Some receive more than one payment, so that skews that figure to some degree. When you take into consideration our population, which is about 520 000, or thereabouts now, even with those receiving more than one handout, the proportion of government handouts is extremely high in this state. The source of that is the ABS's Household Income and Wealth, Australia, 2015-16 summary of results.

I accept we have an ageing population proportionately greater than for the rest of the country. With the changes we have seen to superannuation over the past decade, there will be changes to aged pensioners over time, but it will take many years to see the real benefits of this to self-funded retirees. Julian Amos mentions, and this is also in that previous document, that the Tasmanian Government has to come to terms with the age issue. We are an ageing state and we have to be able to provide for those people and therefore we need to focus strongly on it from now on.

Going back to that document, I refer to one other and fairly important point. In reference to waste -

A recent announcement that China would no longer take waste material from Australia has caused consternation in certain civic circles. I am surprised that we have not done more in Australia to treat our own waste, and this decision is a wake-up call. Maybe it is not a step too far for the Tasmanian Government to devote some resources, maybe in conjunction with the University, to find a better solution to this problem.

It is something we need to really look at. I am not quite sure how much longer we will have waste treatment or waste outlets in place to move it out of the state. Is it going to come to an end? It is clearly a matter the Government, or the state, needs to take a good look at to see whether they can come up with some other uses. We cannot sit back and hope it will not happen.

A number of issues related to superannuation and the unfunded liability were mentioned. Well-known economist Saul Eslake said last Friday that this is an issue that has to be worked on with strategies in place, but he did say it was manageable.

I have spoken to the Treasurer about a number of issues around Retirement Benefits Fund - RBF - superannuation. It is recognised that the legislation needs to be amended to get it right. This is possibly being done as we speak.

I also talked to the Treasurer quite a lot as a Retired Police Association member. I want to relate an issue that occurred with two widows. I know there are widowers with the same or similar problems. It is extremely difficult for people, once their partner passes on, to convince RBF they are entitled to the pension their husband or wife worked hard for.

In one case a couple had been together for 40 or 50 years, and it took the widow months and months to get through to RBF that she was entitled to the pension. In the meantime RBF told this elderly lady she should line up at Centrelink and get money from there to get by in the meantime. She did not have enough money to get herself by. She was then told that if she did receive money from Centrelink and then her pension, they would back pay her and she could then repay Centrelink its money. Unbelievable. That lady had a breakdown and had to receive medical treatment as a result of the treatment she received through the RBF process.

There was an identical case later. It is horrendous. When RBF were spoken to about this by the Retired Police Association and asked why they were doing this, they said they had to ensure everything was right, because it was possible for people to receive payment when they are not entitled to it, and they needed to be very careful about the way they managed it.

When the RBF was asked how many times it had happened over the last 50 or 60 years that people had thought they were entitled to a pension, received it and were not entitled to it and how many fraudulent claims had been made, they said none. Not one.

I am pleased the Treasurer in this instance is looking at this closely, and I understand there will be some changes to legislation. RBF needs to find a better way to handle this. It has to stand up and be counted here.

I am not sure how much money is in the Budget to sufficiently staff the Ombudsman's Office and to provide it with the support it needs to carry out its functions. The best way to explain the situation is that on 20 July 2017 I applied to the Department of Health and Human Services for documents under Right to Information legislation. As expected, I was refused. As you can do, I appealed the process back to DHHS. You have the opportunity to come back a second time. I knew it was a waste of time but I had to do it under the process. Of course, it came back - they said no, we will not release it for whatever reasons and you now have 20 days to appeal to the Ombudsman's Office. You are given a time. Twenty days to appeal to the Ombudsman's Office.

On the same day - 9 August 2017 - I appealed to the Ombudsman's office for the information I wanted because you are required to that under the act. On 4 May 2018, 200-plus days later, I followed my application up with the Ombudsman and this is the response I received -

Thanks for chasing this up. I apologise for the delay. A preliminary decision has been written and is currently with the Ombudsman for sign off. Once that has been done, a copy will be sent to the department for comment and we will notify your office.

Due to resource shortages (I'm the only staff member processing RTIs for the Ombudsman) we are quite limited in getting a decision prepared in a timely manner. Our average number of days to close the matter is around 366. This matter has currently been open for 253 days. We are well aware that this is unacceptable and frustrating. It also limits effective democracy by a decision not being held to account or scrutinised in an efficient manner.

I will raise the matter with the Ombudsman and hope we can get some movement on it. In the meantime, if your office, or Mr Dean, have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

It is signed. I do not want to identify the signatory of the letter.

I still have not received any correspondence back, so it is well and truly over 300 days now. I do not criticise the Ombudsman or the only officer available to action an appeal, but I criticise the system. The under-resourcing and appalling circumstances give rise to a situation that can only be described as unacceptable. It must be changed. It infringes our right to service our constituents and do our job. It is an unacceptable situation and it cannot continue in this way.

It lacks common sense. It is not the first time the Ombudsman has told us he is really struggling to keep up with his work. We will have a chance in Estimates again this year to question the Ombudsman on a number of these things. If the Ombudsman's Office cannot be resourced to do its job in the way it ought, a number of its functions should be removed from it and placed somewhere else.

Ms Forrest - You would only have to resource the other place then.

Mr DEAN - I do not know what other places there are. I suspect there would be some within the public service somewhere that could take some of the functions of the Ombudsman's Office without any further resources. That could be done quickly and probably in a way that would be more acceptable to people wanting a job done, whatever that might be.

Mr Valentine - The public service is a lean, mean machine these days.

Mr DEAN - It is, you are right. We have had many redundancies.

The document I have been wanting will have no meaning at all. It will have no benefit to me whatsoever. At the time it was quite a critical document. I needed the information back then, but now it is of no value. The Ombudsman has been put through a lot of work for nothing. That is what happened in this case. The process is just silly.

I am going to flip-flop all over the place, and I do not apologise for that. Some things have been said and others have not.

Mr Valentine - You are out of control.

Mr DEAN - Yes, you are right - I am out of control.

Speed limits and emergencies - I took this matter up a long time ago. In the future new legislation will be brought in to protect emergency workers working on or close to roads with blue and red flashing lights. Currently there is no requirement for a speed limit to be imposed in those circumstances. Last year I went to the government about it because it needs to do something similar to what South Australia and Victoria have done it - introduce a speed limit when vehicles are passing any emergency vehicle when blue or red lights are flashing. I understand that will be done this year and I look forward to that.

There is money in the Budget to move bail and electronic devices forward. I am unsure how many times I have raised it in this place - many times. I will continue to raise it until something happens. Breaching bail conditions has been on the agenda for decades, and all we have ever done is give it lip-service. What money has been made available to provide for electronic monitoring? I understand there is money in the Budget. You might ask why this is so important. Why do we need to do anything about it? Let us just accept it and move on. We cannot do that, when you look at the figures of persons breaching bail conditions. In 2014-15, we had 2449; in 2015-16, we had 3518; in 2016-17, we had just a few short of that last figure, 3416. These figures include breaches of bail, breaches of bail conditions, failing to appear, contravening conditions of a notice, and Supreme Court warrants of arrest. That would be the tip of the iceberg. There would be many others infringing these rights and bail conditions who we have not caught up with. We know that only a small number are caught up with. You can imagine the numbers of people who are infringing bail conditions and getting away with it. The figures identify 10 breaches in the categories referred to every day of the year. This is a job for maybe eight or 10 police, permanently. The figures I referred to would be the tip of the iceberg. That is the reason we need to do something about this matter.

Electronic monitoring devices have been used around the world for many years. The Department of Justice continues to consider electronic monitoring as a condition of bail; it has now been considered for many years. It is time is for the procrastination to stop and for us to get on with it. I am aware a range of proposals for the reform of bail laws was released in January 2018, and one of the conditions referred to was electronic monitoring. I understand amendments are required to the Bail Act 1994 to provide for electronic monitoring. Where are we with these amendments? Clearly, it is something that the police would be looking forward to.

The pilot academy - I understand the Government has put a submission through to Qantas to locate a pilot academy in the north and the north-west of the state. I wish them well, and we all do, in that regard because what a boon it would for the state, particularly the north and north-west, to have the pilot academy here. They are talking about training 100 pilots annually, with a figure of up to 500. That figure might be a little rubbery. What a great thing it would be for the state to get that academy here. I am not sure what our chances are. I understand a decision will be made towards the end of this month. We are led to believe we are in a good position.

The northern gaol has been referred to. Progress has been made on the northern prison, with suitable greenfield sites currently being considered and with \$45 million, that is a part of a larger project, at least set aside at this time and in this Budget. Parochialism should not enter into the location, and locating it in the north should be the only thing of interest. Suffice it to say, the pulp mill site is available. There is nothing there. No doubt a decision will be made on its location shortly. Don Wing is very happy with the decision that has been made. He worked on this, members

might recall, for a long time. It was a part of a committee that looked at a gaol in the north of the state back in 1999. 'Correctional Services and Sentencing in Tasmania' was the heading of that select committee's report. The members of the committee were Mr Wing as the chair, Mr Squibb and Mr Parkinson. I have re-read the document, which is interesting and still quite up to date. The principles are still right; of course the statistics and figures need some changing now, but it is a good document.

I spoke to our previous president, Don Wing, about this matter and he left me with a few notes. I am going to read what he left me; I will paraphrase some of it. He regrets that previous governments did not make a similar decision at least two decades ago. That is how long ago it was, 1999 -

The issue of the prison was neglected by successive governments until in the late 1990s a coronial inquest into five deaths in custody was held and a Legislative Council select committee was formed to investigate correctional services and sentencing in Tasmania.

These inquiries caused considerable attention to be focused on the prison system in Tasmania, leading to the construction of the new prison at Risdon.

The select committee of this House presented its final report in November 1999. Whilst many of the facts set out in this report are dated, most of the principles are as applicable now as they were then.

A major recommendation in the report was that two new prisons should be constructed, one in the southern Tasmania and the other in the north, at a location reasonably accessible to relatives of prisoners from the north and north-west coast centres.

The committee further recommended that each facility and service in the Tasmanian prison system should be put out to a tender on the basis that the Tasmanian Corrective Services Division and private companies experienced in providing corrective services should be eligible to tender, and on the basis that at least one of the two new prisons remain under public management.

The committee was unanimous in its recommendations. Following the presentation of the report, members of the committee appreciated the opportunity to have productive discussions with the honourable Peter Patmore as Attorney-General until he retired, but were not given the opportunity to have any discussions or input with his successor.

Regrettably, none of the aforesaid recommendations were accepted or implemented by the government of the day. The Attorney-General, the honourable Judy Jackson, said a northern prison would be considered at a later time.

Interestingly, during the course of construction of the new southern prison, it was found additional beds were required. Rather than having these constructed in the north, the government added this number to the new prison under construction at Risdon.

We are now finding it is almost at maximum and we need more beds in Risdon. That is how far it has moved on -

There are many reasons to support and commend the Government for its decision to construct a new prison in the north. Of particular importance is the fact that relatives of prisoners will have easier access to them. This is an important factor in rehabilitation for prisoners.

I encourage the Government to give earnest consideration to inviting private companies to participate in the tender process, for the reasons set out in detail in the select committee's report.

If you look around the country, Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland have privately run prisons. Those prisons run reasonably well. There is a lot of correspondence available on this matter; I have had some brought to my attention today. Private prisons currently operate in five jurisdictions in Australia: New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia.

If you look at the cost of prison services in this country, both the ACT and Tasmania are the two highest spenders on prisoners, and neither of these places have private prisons.

Next is Victoria which has the most private prisons, while the cheapest is the Northern Territory with no private prisons, so I am not quite sure what that is telling us.

We should be looking at private ownership of the second prison when it is built. We should not disregard this. I spoke to the general manager of privately run Fulham prison in Victoria only a short time ago. He said he is a little biased because he works in the private prison area, but said they do extremely well compared with the public system.

He said their contract is so hard, and that they have a quarterly set of about 35 benchmarks. Every quarter they must provide a report and be audited. If they do not meet those benchmarks, they can lose money.

He asked: Is this the same with publicly run prisons? Are they benchmarked? Do they lose money or anything at all if they do not meet those benchmarks? I do not think that is the case, but he said it is a very good operation and works well.

We should not rule out private prison ownership because if we did have one here, very clearly that would keep a focus on the public system. Probably over time efficiency gains would be made. I would be surprised if that were not the case with a private prison versus a public prison. It could work very well and should not be dismissed under any circumstances.

Mrs Hiscutt - Honourable member, this would be an opportune moment for you to adjourn the debate. Are you between subjects?

Mr DEAN - Absolutely. No, I am very happy to adjourn. I am finished with that part of it.

Debate adjourned.

**TAXATION RELATED LEGISLATION (HOUSING AVAILABILITY AND
PAYROLL RELIEF) BILL 2018 (No. 18)**

First Reading

Bill received from the House of Assembly and read the first time.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Orders

[5.43 p.m.]

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

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended in respect of this bill in order that the bill may pass through its remaining stages at such time as the Council may appoint.

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I want to speak briefly on this as a matter of principle. I am not going to oppose this motion. The Leader has taken a lot of effort to get us up to speed with the contents of this big bill. It is a complex piece of legislation and in the process of reading through the letter sent recently and seeking a briefing from Treasury, the Treasurer was very proactive in facilitating a briefing before it was even tabled downstairs, which I appreciated. It reiterated the very complex nature of this legislation which we will debate at a later time this week. I appreciate the efforts being made. It is unfortunate that we are in the situation where we are pressed for time with the end of the financial year upon us, and have to deal with such complex legislation in such a rushed way. I understand the election pushed out the sitting times and the Budget was then pushed out. I will not be opposing the motion on the basis of the efforts that have gone into this to try to make it work. I know there is a briefing on Thursday morning.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Second Reading - Order of the Day

[5.45 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for her comments on that bill because we have made quite a considerable effort to get it to this stage. Mr President, I move -

That the second reading of this bill be made an order of the day for tomorrow.

Motion agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Resolution Agreed

Mr PRESIDENT - The House of Assembly does agree to the following resolution communicated to it by the Legislative Council on 14 June 2018.

Resolved:

That the Legislative Council having appointed two Estimates committees reflecting the distribution of government ministers portfolio responsibilities, requests that the House of Assembly give leave to all ministers to appear before and give evidence to the relevant Council Estimates committee in relation to the budget Estimates and related documents.

S Hickey
Speaker
19 June 2018

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Council at its rising adjourn until 11 a.m. on Wednesday 20 June 2018.

Motion agreed to.

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

That the Council do now adjourn.

The Council adjourned at 5.47 p.m.