



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 12 September 2023

REVISED EDITION

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Tuesday 12 September 2023

The President, **Mr Farrell**, took the Chair at 11.00 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

[11.04 a.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I have an answer to question No. 24 on the Notice Paper for the member for Rumney.

The process of getting these answers was to Ambulance Tasmania, of course, and some of the information as I explain through is just not feasible for them to obtain.

24. PARAMEDIC WORKFORCE

Ms LOVELL asked the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Mrs Hiscutt -

In relation to employment of the paramedic workforce in Tasmania, can the Government advise:

- (1)
 - (a) In each of the last three years, how many graduate paramedic program placements (12-month course) were offered; and
 - (b) how many suitable applicants applied for these roles?
- (2)
 - (a) In each of the last three years, how many offers of employment were made to graduates on completion of their practical placement; and
 - (b) of those offers how many were:
 - (i) permanent;
 - (ii) fixed term; and
 - (iii) casual?
- (3) Of the total paramedic workforce, how many paramedics are currently employed on fixed-term or casual contracts compared to permanent employment?
- (4) Of the total paramedic workforce, how many paramedics are currently not working due to:
 - (a) workers compensation claims; and
 - (b) leave (for a continuous period of more than four weeks)?

- (5) In the last 12 months, how many shifts each week has the Sorell station been called to the Mornington station to be on standby?
- (6) (a) In the last 12 months, how many calls for backup response have been fulfilled by each station; and
 (b) of those not fulfilled, what is the reason for not fulfilling?
- (7) In the last 12 months:
 - (a) how many shifts had ambulances staffed by a singular paramedic; and
 - (b) how many shifts had ambulances staffed with a singular paramedic and patient transport worker?
- (8) In the last 12 months, for each ambulance station, how many day and night shifts have they been closed?
- (9) In the last 12 months, how many shifts have been uncovered at each ambulance station?
- (10) (a) In the last 12 months, how many deaths have occurred in an ambulance that has been ramped?
 (b) what is the category of the patient on the ramp and the amount of time they were ramped for?
- (11) (a) In the last 12 months, how many Transfer of Care (TOC) shifts have been offered each day; and
 (b) in which locations and how many of the shifts were filled/unfilled?
- (12) In the last 12 months, how many shifts of 12 hours or more in duration were completed by paramedics at each station?
- (13) (a) How many paramedics (including graduate placements) were employed by Ambulance Tasmania as at 27 February 2022; and
 (b) how many were employed as at 1 March 2023?

Mrs HISCUTT replied -

- (1) In the 2020 Graduate Recruitment Campaign, 56 applicants were deemed suitable for appointment, with 25 graduates appointed over two intakes: 13 graduates commenced on March 2021 (Course 2021A), and 12 commenced in August 2021 (Course 2021B).

In the 2021 Graduate Recruitment Campaign, 41 applicants were deemed suitable for appointment, with 37 graduates appointed over three intakes: 18 in November 2021 (Course 2021C), 16 in February 2022 (Course 2022A), and three in May 2022 (Course 2022B).

As outlined above, the total graduates that commenced with Ambulance Tasmania between March 2021 and May 2022 was 62.

A graduate course commenced on 5 June 2023, which is Course 2023A, comprising 23 graduates.

- (2) As at 22 May 2023, the status of graduates is summarised here.

Of the 25 graduates that commenced with Ambulance Tasmania in Course 2021A and 2021B, seven are employed in permanent positions, 11 in fixed-term positions and four in casual positions. Three individuals separated from the organisation.

Of the 37 Graduates that commenced with Ambulance Tasmania in Course 2021C, 2022A and 2022B, three are employed in permanent positions, 30 are employed in fixed-term contracts, and four individuals separated from the organisation.

A process of offering permanent positions to those individuals in fixed-term positions is taking place as part of the conversion of COVID-19 positions to permanent.

- (3) On 24 March 2023, the number of paramedics employed on a fixed-term/casual basis was 94, with 366 employed on a permanent basis. This does not include paramedics employed in supervisor, management and educational positions.

Forty-Five paramedic positions, including 12 intensive care paramedics positions, were created under COVID-19 funding arrangements and these positions will now be permanently funded and filled.

- (4) (a) Fourteen paramedics are currently on workers compensation and are unable to work.
- (b) As of 16 May 2023, there are 48 paramedics on leave for four weeks or more, including leave without pay. This includes extended sick leave, maternity leave, long service leave, and other leave types.
- (5) Standby points are employed to provide cover over primary response areas as part of a dynamic deployment model. This approach ensures the timeliest response to incidences.
- (6) (a) The provision of backup is dynamic, with resources despatched to a case as indicated and redirected to other cases based on community need. Ambulance Tasmania cannot readily track backup, but can track resource numbers despatched to individual cases.
- (b) If backup is required, it is provided. Backup is despatched as clinically indicated. Backup may be cancelled upon assessment of patient needs by paramedics and backup may be delayed if resources are not immediately available.
- (7) (a) Ambulance Tasmania cannot readily provide this information. Just remember this comes from the Ambulance department. This requires manually sorting through all daily muster sheets for a 12-month period. Ambulance Tasmania does employ paramedics in single responder rolls, including the Critical Response Unit in the

north-west and north, where an intensive care paramedic is deployed in a light fleet vehicle.

In the three geographical regions, community paramedics and extended care paramedics are deployed as single responders to provide care to patients who ring Triple Zero and are assessed to be of lower acuity.

- (b) In the last 12 months, from 23 March 2022 to the 24 March 2023, there were 27 shifts staffed with a paramedic and a patient transport officer.
- (8) This information is also not readily available as it is captured on paper-based muster sheets, which indicate redeployment of crews to stations with unfilled shifts and standby arrangements.
- (9) Ambulance Tasmania seeks to fill all shifts through the use of casual staff and the offering of overtime shifts. Where shifts cannot be filled, crews may be deployed to stations and standby arrangements may be put in place to ensure coverage of primary response areas. On 1 November 2022, Ambulance Tasmania introduced the 'Daily Desk', a function that manages daily staffing issues on a statewide basis. The Daily Desk has enabled increased focus on the capture and reporting of unfilled shifts across Ambulance Tasmania. Prior to this time, rosters and vacancy management was done within each region and was fragmented. Bringing together reliable absence data for those regions will take several weeks to achieve, due to the need for manual data review.

The following table provides the number of unfilled shifts by regions and stations, for the period 1 November 2022 to 26 March 2023, from a total of 19 710 rostered shifts over the same period:

Ambulance Tasmania – Unfilled Shifts (1 November 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Southern Region	Unfilled Shifts
New Norfolk	120
Hobart	256
Mornington	123
Bridgewater	171
Kingston	46
Glenorchy	133
Sorell	86
Huonville	86
Claremont	0
Dodges Ferry	73
Bicheno	4
Bruny Island	0
Nubeena	7
Oatlands	9
Ouse	1
Swansea	4
Triabunna	14

Northern Region	Unfilled Shifts
Launceston	129
Mowbray	91
George Town	10
Beaconsfield	9
Campbell Town	4
Deloraine	8
St Helens	7
Bridport	0
Longford	18
Miena	6
Scamander	2
Scottsdale	5
Critical Response Unit	22
North West Region	Unfilled Shifts
Latrobe	220
Wattle Hill	125
Devonport	101
Ulverstone	26
Burnie	88
Wynyard	33
Sheffield	13
Smithton	21
Queenstown	13
Zeehan	3
Strahan	39
Critical Response Unit	55

- (10) There have been no deaths in ambulances where paramedic crews are at hospitals and subject to Transfer of Care delays. Patients do not remain in ambulances on arrival at emergency departments.
- (11) Transfer of Care shifts commenced on 20 July 2022, at the Royal Hobart Hospital, to facilitate release of paramedic crews during times of high demand when patient care could not be transferred to hospital staff. The shifts were introduced following consultation with the Health and Community Services Union, with a set of guiding principles determined.
- (12) All paramedic night shifts at career (paramedic only) and double branch stations (paramedic rostered on day and night shifts with volunteer support) are rostered as 14-hour shifts, as per the Ambulance Tasmania award agreed to with the union. Critical Response Unit (CRU) paramedics operate on a 12-hour day and night shift roster. The CRU currently operates in the north and north-west regions, with the CRUs operating out of Burnie, Devonport and Launceston.
- (13) (a) There were 462 paramedics employed; this does not include paramedics employed in supervisor, management and educational positions; and

- (b) There were 460 paramedics employed. This does not include paramedics employed in supervisory, management and educational positions.

I hope that has answered all the questions there.

TABLED PAPER

Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts - Continuing Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

[11.15 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I have the honour to present the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts No. 18 of 2023 Report - Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Continuing Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Preparation for the Return to School in February 2022.

Report received and printed.

Mr President, I move -

That consideration of the report and its noting be made an order of the day.

Motion agreed to.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mr PRESIDENT - I welcome and thank very much the Young Leaders of Tasmania for their patience during the formal part of our session. That is where we go through our opening business and answers to questions. You might have noticed that one member had asked the Leader of Government Business a question with 13 elements and that is why it did take a bit of time; but it is all to be well informed and get answers from the Government. They provided an extensive answer.

We will move on now to our special interest matters. You are here because the member for Pembroke is going to talk about you in the special interest matter that he is raising today, the first one up, and I am sure all members will be making you welcome to the Legislative Council today.

Members - Hear, hear.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

Young Leaders of Tasmania

[11.17 a.m.]

Mr EDMUNDS (Pembroke) - Mr President, thank you for that introduction and for explaining the scenario we are in in a far less sarcastic way than I might have if I were up here having to do it myself.

Mr PRESIDENT - Never.

Mr EDMUNDS - I speak to you today in welcoming members of YLOT, Young Leaders of Tasmania, a fantastic not-for-profit organisation that supports young people living with disabilities whilst also empowering young Tasmanians to participate and show leadership in their communities.

The program equips Tasmanian students in years 6 to 12 with the skills to support those with disabilities by buddying them up with other students living with a disability from local support schools whilst also helping these young people develop their leadership skills through mentoring and supporting those living with disability.

What began as a pilot program in 2017 with students from the Southern Support School in Howrah quickly expanded to involve 27 young leaders, and today the program includes students - as we have here today - from Bellerive Primary, Howrah Primary, Clarence High, MacKillop College and The Friends' School.

Keren Franks, who is here in the gallery, was inspired to start the program after seeing how her daughter Bella, who is at the other end of the Chamber and who lives with a disability, was positively influenced by the leadership qualities of the students who surrounded her. Keren, together with her husband Ron and board members Mathew Blunt and others, have grown the organisation with a focus of good governance being a core of all they do, including the involvement of young people in decision-making. It truly does provide opportunities for young people to display leadership in ways they may not otherwise.

To me, the best thing about the impacts of YLOT is the feedback from students who have participated in the program. One Year 11 participant said:

Thank you for giving us not only such a valuable opportunity, but for allowing us to grow, to connect, to empathise and to be part of something which is so much greater than ourselves... This Program has reiterated how important it is for us to be mindful of the language we use, to challenge and re-evaluate our assumptions regarding disability, to recognise and address the inequalities that are entrenched in our society. I believe that YLOT can assist in improving the lives of people with disability.

Another Year 6 participant said: 'YLOT has taught me to see a person's ability and not their disability.'

It is wonderful to see the inclusion that YLOT has fostered and the connections it has been able to create between children who may not ordinarily interact in a school or a social setting.

The value of the program is obviously difficult to measure. It is not typically about numbers, but rather the lasting impact and anecdotal evidence of changing perceptions and creating awareness.

I do not wish to embarrass her, but one of the participants today, Evie, has been such a great young leader with my own child who has a disability, especially through junior soccer this season and his involvement which has been led by Evie's whole family. Her mum is the coach and husband, team manager and the way that whole family, through Evie, has welcomed him in and made him part of the group, has been brilliant to watch and is testimony not only to the families and schools but also to how the program has enhanced the value of everybody who participates in a school or other environment.

I will share feedback from one last student, who said the following:

I thank YLOT for the opportunities I have been exposed to as part of my involvement since Grade 6 in this organisation. I am now advocating for more inclusive learning and accessible facilities at my college and have gone on to become a Commissioner of Children and Young People Ambassador, advocating for my peers with a disability to influence politicians and decision makers.

Those words are of Mila Skingle, first a YLOT participant in Grade 6 in 2018 and now a YLOT employee. She is also a winner of the Tasmanian Young Achiever Awards Service to Disability Sector Award and a YLOT youth advisor. Part of that would have started five years ago in this program.

YLOT began in my electorate of Pembroke, where it still is based today. Further to this, there has been strong interest and proven demand for a program in the north-west and north of the state, which YLOT commenced with the North West Support School in 2018, thanks to a dedicated volunteer.

The program ran successfully in Burnie and Devonport until the onset of the pandemic. Unfortunately, with the previous volunteer no longer available and funding restraints for the north-west program, it had to be suspended.

YLOT remains committed to growing the program statewide and being able to resource a dedicated north-west initiative. They are hopeful future funding opportunities enable success in the north-west.

The Tasmanian Government does fund YLOT with \$75 000 per annum, provided through the Department of Communities from 2018 onwards for a period of three years. The funding was renewed in 2021 through the Department of Premier and Cabinet for a further three years, but is due to expire on 30 June 2024. It is our view it is imperative for the continuation of the school program this funding continue and, obviously, we will be working with the Government to do so. I hope we can work together collaboratively to allow for an expansion of the program.

Mr President, for a wrap-up, and I think we have a large patient group this morning, I thank the other members in the Chamber and, of course, the kids here as well. That was my attempt at a joke.

Before I finish, I reiterate my support and thanks to everyone involved in YLOT, particularly with what has been organised today. I ask those present today to consider the value of a program like this, not just for young people with a disability but for students from years 6 to 12 in what they too have gained from being able to participate in this program.

I also thank Keren and other adult guests who have come today to represent YLOT and the students, the staff in this building and Jimmy, my electorate officer, for pulling together this morning's morning tea.

Thank you, Mr President and everyone else, for listening.

Mr PRESIDENT - Thank you, to the member for Pembroke. I would like to mention now we are all more aware of what you do, I am sure all members will agree with me the work you do is wonderful and thank you for the positive impact you make on other people's lives.

Members - Hear, hear.

United Nations Special Rapporteur on Toxics and Human Rights

[11.24 a.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Well said and thank you, member for Pembroke, for bringing to our attention the YLOT program; it is a lovely program to hear about. Congratulations to all the kids and adults involved.

It is a pleasure to rise and draw this Chamber's attention to a unique event which took place within this parliament on Wednesday, 30 August. An all-day symposium was held on that date at which the guest of honour was the United Nations Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights, Dr Marcos Orellana. Dr Orellana is an expert in international law and law on human rights and the environment. With his extensive experience working with civil society worldwide on issues concerning global environmental justice, the UN Special Rapporteur Dr Orellana's mandate is to support governments and business to develop environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and waste.

During his visit to Hobart, Dr Orellana was accompanied by Ms Halida Nasic Friberg, a Human Rights Officer in the United Nations Sustainable Development Section in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights - high-powered guests for Hobart and for our parliament to host.

During the daylong symposium, which I had the honour to briefly participate in, the discussion explored pesticide regulatory frameworks and human rights relating to drinking water safety. Also discussed was the challenge and potential solutions to pesticide contamination and longevity in Tasmania. A further topic covered was the potential serious health impacts, such as neurodegenerative disorders and concerns over potential determining factors, to mention a few.

The symposium provided Special Rapporteur Dr Orellana and Ms Friberg the opportunity to hear from 24 local experts about heavy metals, pesticides, plastics and their presence in, and impact on, our waterways. Additionally, Dr Orellana and Ms Friberg heard from a range of local politicians and met with senior state bureaucrats. Just last week, Dr Orellana released his end-of-mission statement on his visit to Australia, in which he observed the following, and I quote:

There is a deep disconnect or distance between the government and community narratives concerning toxics. Where the government sees efforts towards stronger regulations to address the risks of chemicals and pollution, communities and civil society denounce the capture of the State for the benefit of mining, oil, gas, agrochemical and other corporate interests.

He further commented:

There can be no doubt that access to environmental information is critical to environmental decision-making and public participation. I am troubled to learn about significant delays in the processing of requests for environmental information under freedom of information laws. The issue of costs imposed on public interest organizations also stifles access to information.

Draconian restrictions on the right to protest in several states are also very troubling. Peaceful protests are a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of assembly, and they enable citizens to mobilise their concerns and make them visible to public authorities.

However, Dr Orellana was also optimistic, noting this, and I quote:

But momentum towards a federal Human Rights Act is growing. Human Rights Acts have been passed in Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland. These developments are auspicious and set the stage for the incorporation of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in the Australian legal order.

Special Rapporteur Dr Orellana will ultimately present a full report to the Human Rights Council in September 2024, reporting on his visit here. This fascinating and high-powered and highly topical symposium was not magicked out of thin air. It occurred because upon hearing of the Special Rapporteur Dr Orellana's Australian visit, Dr Alison Bleaney of the National Toxics Network and community group Safe Water for Hobart issued Dr Orellana with an invitation to visit Hobart as part of his national tour. With lightning speed, the kernel of an idea of holding a meeting with Dr Orellana sprouted wings and before you could say special rapporteur, a professionally organised symposium materialised. Pooling the talents of a myriad of local medical, scientific, legal, media and community expertise, the key organisers pulled off this impressive feat.

Specifically, I acknowledge and thank Dr Alison Bleaney, Dr Fiona Beer, Dr Lisa-ann Gershwin and the University of Tasmania's media school's Dr Claire Konkes for their work and the efforts to present this impressive and informative daylong event. The efforts of local Tasmanian medical professionals, scientists and community representatives to bring the UN Special Rapporteur on toxins and human rights to Hobart to discuss how a wealthy society such

as Tasmania is impacted by toxins in our environment, as well as the responsibility and opportunities to do something about it, should be acknowledged and recognised as the significant public service that it was. I congratulate and thank all organisers and participants involved in the symposium.

Furneaux Maritime History Association - *Lady Jillian* Project

[11.30 a.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - My special interest offering today is a project that is being undertaken by the Furneaux Maritime History Association (FMHA). I have had the pleasure of supporting the association in their endeavour to establish a permanent, purpose-built premises for the maritime history museum at Lady Barron. I have also supported them in their successful application for deductible gift recipient status with the Australian Taxation Office, because they are in the process of bringing back the *Lady Jillian* to Flinders Island.

I will share a bit of history about the *Lady Jillian*. She was built in Port Adelaide in 1948. After a stint with her original owner, she was sold to the Flinders Strait Shipping Company, where she served as a freight and livestock carrier for around 30 years, before being sold to Les Dick, who continued to use her as a trader. His plans to restore her and ultimately use her as a tourist charter vessel unfortunately did not eventuate. Her current owner is Eastern Line Shipping, operated by Les's son Warren. Following some negotiations by this very active group, FMHA, Warren has offered the *Lady Jillian* as a gift to the Furneaux community.

Now, the mission begins to bring *Lady Jillian* back to the island and that is going to be no mean feat; it is going to take a lot of effort and quite a bit of money. The plan is, on behalf of the community, to retrieve her from Port Leslie and tow her to Lady Barron, where they plan to haul her out of the water backwards at a slipway, onto a hardstand of land which they intend to acquire from Parks in the near future - and that is a key part of this. Once there, they will restore her and eventually use her as a museum to exhibit the artefacts in the restored cabins and quarters, with a functioning gallery and a theatre and meeting room in the restored cargo hold. It will be a sight to behold when all that happens.

The very proactive committee, with president Ronald Wise, junior vice-president Sharon Blythe, secretary Peter Rhodes and treasurer Parn Rhodes, has lodged a formal submission with the state Government via the Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, and the Treasurer, Michael Ferguson. The eight-page submission includes the formal request from FMHA president Nick Barratt, and sets out the plans to recover the *Lady Jillian* via loading her on a dumb barge - although I am sure it is a useful barge! - and towing her across in style. That would be something to see, I am sure.

The original plan was to tow her over and haul her out on inflatable rollers, but this is not going to happen. They have to have a trailer specially made to put *Lady Jillian* on to bring her across and out. That is going to be at a significant cost and we have already undertaken some fundraising and they have some funds in the bank, but there is some way to go. It will not be long until you will be able to purchase a T-shirt or a floppy hat, and they are also going to use a number of other initiatives. There will also be an opportunity to purchase a plaque - and I am looking straight at the member for Windermere. I feel sure he will be wanting a plaque with his name on it, as I will be looking forward to having a plaque with my name on it to support this fantastic fundraising effort. I look forward to any opportunity that I might have in

the future to promote this fantastic initiative. It is a terrific project and it is led by some wonderful people who are very enthusiastic. *Lady Jillian* is heading to the Furneaux Group.

Robert Beech-Jones - Appointment to the High Court

[11.35 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, my office recently received a call from a gentleman who used to teach at Hellyer College in Burnie for a number of years - probably including the time I was there, too. He also fondly remembers the famous green carpet, but the reason for his call was not to talk about the carpet. This was some weeks ago, to bring my attention to an ex-Hellyer College student who grew up in my electorate had just been appointed to serve on the highest court in the land, the High Court of Australia, and has made history by being the first Tasmanian to do so.

I am sure many of the members here would have read about this significant appointment. Robert Beech-Jones, now Justice Robert Beech-Jones, grew up as the youngest of four boys in the mining town of Savage River on the north-west coast. His father had a management role at the Savage River Mine, which at the time boasted the world's longest pipeline of some 80 kilometres, constructed to connect the town's magnetite iron ore mine with its pelletising plant at Port Latta. The family also had a brief stint in Montreal, Canada, from 1975 to 1977.

Justice Beech-Jones attended Wynyard Primary School and Wynyard High School until 1981 and then went to the Hellyer Matriculation College, as it was known then. He then won a scholarship to study law at the Australian National University in Canberra, graduating with honours in 1988. He currently sits on the New South Wales Supreme Court as a judge of appeal and Chief Judge at Common Law, but still considers himself a Tasmanian.

As reported in local media, Justice Beech-Jones was admitted to the New South Wales Bar in 1992 and has had an illustrious career focusing primarily in the areas of commercial law, regulatory enforcement, white collar crime and administrative law. Justice Beech-Jones also did a lot of community legal work in his early days at the Bar and his fellow judges acknowledge his warm collegiate style and no-fuss attitude. In 2006, he was appointed as a silk, the informal term for Senior Counsels, who are barristers who have demonstrated outstanding skills as advocates and advisers in the administration of justice. They work on particularly complex or difficult cases.

Justice Beech-Jones acted for the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, including in the trial against the former directors of James Hardy, and was counsel assisting in the Royal Commission on the HIH collapse. He also acted for Mamdouh Habib, who was a former Guantanamo Bay detainee who sued the federal government. He has also written a number of important judgments in sexual assault cases and acted for Christina Rich in one of the biggest sexual assault cases in Australian history.

It was in 2012 that Justice Beech-Jones became a judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, and in 2021 he was appointed as Chief Judge of the Common Law Division and a judge of appeal. He was described at the time of this appointment as being a man of great intellectual ability and integrity by the then New South Wales attorney-general, Mark Speakman. Justice Beech-Jones describes the appointment as being an exciting opportunity

and a great challenge, noting this was a time when the court had transitioned to delivering civil and criminal proceedings remotely during COVID-19.

Reading through various articles about Justice Beech-Jones, it is clear he is widely regarded and respected by his colleagues. He has been described as being a passionate defender of human rights, a genuine asset and a delightful man with a fine sense of humour. He is also recognised for having excellent writing skills, having contributed numerous articles to the Australian Institute of Administrative Law Forum, although perhaps not at the same level as his famous wife, Australian playwright Suzie Miller, with whom he has two children.

Growing up in Tasmania, Beech-Jones developed a keen interest in, and some have described it as an obsession for, Australian Rules Football. He has maintained his connection with the game into adulthood and coached at his son's junior AFL club. He also developed a keen interest in marathon running and completed half marathons, and participated in Sydney's iconic City2Surf.

Outside of sporting interests, he also has been described as having a dazzling mathematical ability and he has a bachelor of science to complement his law qualifications. The following words are taken from a speech delivered at his Supreme Court of New South Wales swearing-in ceremony in 2012, where he described his childhood and going to school in Wynyard:

It was a good place to live and the people there looked out for each other. The high school had committed teachers and the AFL and basketball games at lunchtime were played at State of Origin level intensity, mixed with an amount of sledging that Steve Waugh would be proud of. It was good practice for the bar.

He goes on:

As town names go, Savage River always excites interest, but having lived there I can tell you that is where the excitement ended.

For me the major highlight was the arrival of the town's first only Space Invaders machine. Savage River was a good place to study.

I am sure we will all agree that Justice Beech-Jones, a product of small-town upbringing and a public school education, brings a wide breadth of experience and character qualities that will hold him in good stead as he takes on this new role as High Court Judge.

His appointment will take effect on 6 November 2023. I sincerely congratulate Justice Beech-Jones, a boy from the country who has not forgotten his roots, living and growing up in one of the best places on the planet. I am sure I speak for all Tasmanians when I say it is about time we have a Tasmanian sitting in the highest court of the land.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr PRESIDENT - I welcome to the Reserve Lisa Patterson, the Electorate Officer for the member of Rosevears, who has the joy and pleasure of working with such a fine local

member. I suggest if you need some tips on how to get an audience for your special interest topic, you should probably talk to the member for Pembroke.

School Lunch Project

[11.41 a.m.]

Ms PALMER (Rosevears - Minister for Community Services and Development) - Young Darcy does not like onions. Evelyn tells me she is allergic to broccoli. Lauren simply asked me to come back another day so that we could do some colouring in. These were my lunch buddies at Beaconsfield Primary School, who I had the pleasure of chatting to a couple of weeks ago while sharing our sweet-and-sour chicken in the prep classroom as part of the school lunch pilot project.

I wanted to have lunch at Beaconsfield so that I could learn and hear firsthand about the project that delivered almost 79 000 healthy lunches to our young Tasmanians in 2022. Led by the fantastic team at School Food Matters, the school lunch pilot program is a project that aims to determine the feasibility, benefits and challenges of providing nutritious cooked school lunches to students in Tasmanian government schools.

Expanding on an earlier pilot program that was held in three Tasmanian schools in 2020, since 2021 when the School Lunch Project commenced, the Tasmanian Government has committed \$2.27 million to provide cooked lunches to students at government schools.

During 2022, 15 schools started providing lunches and soon this doubled to 30 schools participating at the start of this year. Of the 30 schools, 15 were located in the south, six in the north of the state and nine on the north-west coast.

The team at School Food Matters have played an enormous role in the pilot project by collaborating with the participating schools and ensuring that the menu is guided by dietician advice and almost 75 per cent of the produce is locally sourced.

The local farming uptake has been incredibly positive and this has seen Tasmanian produce utilised to prepare these nutritious meals to our students. Some examples of this produce and where it has been sourced from are: we have mince and meat from Cape Grim; chicken from Nichols; bread rolls from Hennessy's Bakery; curry paste from Island Curries; yoghurt from Westhaven, and fruit and vegetables that have been supplied by Island Fresh.

How fantastic it is we have so many locally owned businesses being a part of such a fabulous program for our young children to enjoy.

Beaconsfield Primary School is lucky to have a superb kitchen to prepare these meals which are then collected by the older students to take back to the classrooms to enjoy.

Schools can decide whether they wish to prepare meals on site or, alternatively, these can be pre-prepared by Loaves and Fishes Tasmania. Serving sizes have been worked out for each age group; however, having a second serving is always an option if requested.

In 2022, 80 per cent of students were eating the lunches every day that they were available. Beaconsfield Primary School runs its program over two days, split between the

younger and older students. Over these two days, more than 180 students receive these hot lunches.

An interim report was produced by the University of Tasmania in 2022 highlighting the School Lunch Project and how beneficial it is for students, staff and parents. That final report will be completed in March of next year, will draw on data from all 30 participating schools and will include outcomes such as school attendance and food procurement.

Informal feedback from schools to date suggests that students are coming to school more regularly now that lunches are provided, and that students are finding it easier to concentrate. Additionally, funding has been provided to continue this program until June 2024, after the final report has been received to inform our consideration of future directions.

When speaking to Sam Rathmell from School Food Matters Inc, Sam said the excitement from students was delightful on hot lunch days, with everyone intrigued as to what might be served for lunch. This conversation actually begins earlier in the week, with the anticipation building daily for lunch day, and that cannot come quickly enough for some children. Meeting the newly appointed Beaconsfield Primary School principal, Daisy Stephens, it was great to get an insight on how the project has also brought students and teachers closer together while sharing a meal, also hearing about how many students are learning how to use a knife and fork and then being able to enjoy the food that is delivered to them. Mrs Stephens told me, and I quote:

The School Lunch Project here at Beaconsfield Primary School is an enjoyable part of our week. Students are provided with a hot lunch that they enjoy sitting alongside their peers to eat. The lunches provoke rich conversation, not only about the contents of their meals but also a time to reflect on their week. We are looking forward to including additional meals into the service to help school staff model eating nutritious food. It has also provided valuable learning opportunities for students setting up their tables for eating, using utensils and cleaning up after their meal. We are seeing more focused and settled students on days that a hot lunch is consumed.

I also bumped into Paul, who was the groundsman, and Paul mentioned that he could even see a change in the students' behaviour when it was hot lunch days. He also mentioned that the students seemed to be more settled due to having a nutritious meal throughout the day. He also commented that there was less rubbish around the grounds. Paul thought the program was fantastic and it was great to now be able to use this produce that has been planted and grown by students in the community garden next door, at the Beaconsfield Neighbourhood House.

I conclude by thanking the amazing volunteers in the canteen and school kitchen who help put these meals together for students each week. I must say, they are extremely lucky to have these people. This program is not just about having lunch; it is about learning about the food we eat and where it comes from - and most importantly, the life skills of preparing a meal and the etiquette in which we enjoy a meal together, whether that be with our family or our friends. This project is a fantastic addition to our schools and it is creating beautiful conversations. I thank the Beaconsfield Primary School students for having me to lunch.

Great Eastern Wine Week 2023

Ms HOWLETT (Prosser) - Last Friday evening, I was delighted to represent the Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, at the launch of the 2023 Great Eastern Wine Week at Mayfield at Little Swanport. What began as a boutique weekend celebration nine years ago has grown to a glorious 10-day celebration and showcases Tasmanian east coast wines, wineries, produce and our attractions. This year's Great Eastern Wine Week spans 14 wineries and 220 kilometres of coastline from St Helens to Buckland.

This festival is a celebration of the people and the products that have made The East Coast Wine Trail one of the greatest wine-tasting experiences. It is a fantastic opportunity to sample some of the best wines Tasmania has to offer, accompanied by mouth-watering, locally sourced and produced foods. It is also an opportunity to meet and connect with east coast wine producers, the people who have poured their heart and soul into their products and who have worked so hard to make the industry what it is today.

The rapid growth of the Tasmanian wine sector in recent years has led to the establishment of Tasmanian wine trails as major attractions, with about 230 vineyards and around 2500 hectares under vine across Tasmania.

Last year, Tasmania exported just under \$5 million worth of wine to international markets. We have seen a 53 per cent increase in the amount of wine leaving our shores for Japan, and a 178 per cent increase to Singapore. I think our former Premier, Mr Will Hodgman, may have had something to do with that. The Tasmanian wine industry is one of our state's economic success stories, and Tasmania has gained an international reputation for being one of the top wine regions.

The Tasmanian east coast is home to an array of world-class wineries that produce some of the best cool-climate wines, as well as being home to many passionate and very experienced wine makers.

The Great Eastern Wine Week gives people the opportunity to partake in a wide range of events and activities up and down the east coast. Drink wine, eat and generally have a wonderful time in the best region of our state.

Some of the events on the schedule across the 10 days include:

- Bottomless brunch at The Branch in Swansea;
- Sip and shuck sessions hosted by Melshell Oysters and the Bend Vineyard that pairs wine with delicious golden oysters;
- A gourmet bangers and mash dinner, hosted by Hurly Burly Wines - something that would be a total indulgence for lovers of red wine, I am sure;
- A wild feast on the beach at Mayfield Estate vineyard, where seasonal produce will be cooked over open fires and washed down with Mayfield wines; and
- An east coast degustation delight at Craigie Knowe Vineyard.

I strongly encourage all members of this house to have a look at the Great Eastern Wine Week program and try and attend one of the many events scheduled.

I congratulate Glenn Travers and all the members of the East Coast Wine Trail Association for organising the 10 days of wine experiences that make up the Great Eastern Wine Week. I also thank Bruce and Jo Dunbabin for hosting last Friday evening. I also acknowledge and thank those who have contributed to this year's festival, particularly the wine producers whose fabulous products are the reason why this week goes ahead.

Finally, the next time you are trying to decide what glass of wine to purchase at a restaurant or what bottle to take to a party, I encourage you to grab a bottle of east coast wine. You will not be disappointed.

MOTION

Noting - Salmon Tasmania and Deloitte Access Economics Report

[11.53 a.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council -

- (1) Notes the economic analysis provided by the Deloitte Access Economics report dated 2020 regarding the Tasmanian salmon industry; and
- (2) Acknowledges that the Tasmanian salmon industry is a vital social and economic contributor to the Tasmanian community.

I am pleased to be able to move the motion standing in my name, and I do so following a day in the office where you get to thoroughly go through the information that comes in. When you are away from your office, you get a lot of information and when I opened up my mail, as you do, I found a report from Salmon Tasmania. I was gradually going through the report and I read that Tasmania grows 90 per cent of Australia's salmon, and 83 per cent of our farmed salmon is consumed in Australia. That certainly draws your attention to read further, and that is what I did - I continued to read the information that was provided. It is always interesting to have the opportunity to talk about various issues in the parliament. And so, I took the opportunity to place the noting of the economic analysis provided by Deloitte Access Economics, in conjunction with Salmon Tasmania, on the Notice Paper and to acknowledge the Tasmanian salmon industry's contribution to the community. I will go through some of the aspects that were provided in this report. I acknowledge that placing this notice of motion on the Notice Paper has generated quite a bit of discussion in the community, and it is a good thing. It is good to be able to have these types of discussions. Not everyone agrees with everything; but this is an opportunity that I took to have a look at the salmon industry in our state.

I do not have the length of the coastline on the east coast that I had previously as the member for Apsley, but I still have some aspects of the salmon industry in the McIntyre electorate, though more land-based than water-based.

The salmon industry in Australia is the most valuable seafood sector, worth \$1.3 billion. It is the largest primary industry in Tasmania. It is Tasmania's largest agriculture/aquaculture exporter, and is Australia's most valuable seafood production sector. I had a look at the graph that is on the bottom of page 3 of the report and it shows you that the source is Deloitte Access Economics. It goes on to talk about economics and policy; consulting; the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, and the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, so it is well-credentialled work.

As I said, the industry is the most valuable seafood sector and, interestingly, the industry predominantly supports local economies and jobs in regional Tasmania. I have already indicated that three or four of those land-based activities are in the McIntyre electorate. Some 87 per cent of all economic activity supported by the industry occurs in the regions and 89 per cent of direct salmon jobs are in regional areas.

In 2022, the industry contributed \$770 million to the Tasmanian economy and supported 5103 full-time equivalent jobs around the state - a significant number. Salmon industry jobs reportedly pay 56 per cent more than the average Tasmanian job. I suggest that for people who are looking for work, that it is a well-paid position, although I know it is hard work as well. Given these numbers, many of us will know or even be related to some of those workers already, because that figure of 5103 full-time equivalent jobs is significant.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr PRESIDENT - I might take a brief moment of your time to welcome to the Chamber today students from Forest Primary School. They are Year 6 students, and Forest is in the aptly named member for Murchison's electorate. She has taken getting an audience to a new level - they have 'Forest' written on the back of their shirt, even though it is missing an 'r'.

Ms Forrest - We will accept that when they are from Forest.

Mr PRESIDENT - I am informed by the member that Yvonne Stone, who is -

Ms Forrest - No, that was Redpa, not Forest.

Mr PRESIDENT - Okay, it has nothing to do with Forest. At the moment we are noting the motion brought on the member for McIntyre, who is having her debate on this and then other members will get the opportunity to work through it. That will be what we do for most of the morning. Welcome to the Legislative Council Chamber and I am sure all members will join in me in welcoming you to the Tasmanian parliament today.

Members - Hear, hear.

Ms RATTRAY - Lovely to see quite a lot of school students coming into the parliament.

Ms Forrest - Coming such a long way.

Ms RATTRAY - Coming such a long way. As we know, it is the people's parliament. Congratulations to those who have travelled all that way and given them this opportunity.

The salmon industry is approximately double the size of the fruit and vegetable industry - again, quite a surprising number when you think about the focus we have on the fruit and vegetable industry and sector in Tasmania. It is 38 per cent larger than the red meat processing industry. I found that an interesting statistic given that most of us who travel our roads quite regularly will know about the transport of red meat around the state. Certainly, as you drive around you see many cattle, not only in paddocks but on trucks heading to whatever their destination may be.

The salmon industry represents one-fifth of the entire Tasmanian agricultural, forestry and fishing industry - again, a significant statistic. The economic contribution of the Tasmanian industry includes the value of its exports and the flow-on benefit across Tasmania from the jobs and families it supports, to the provision of nutritious food. Only last week in a committee I was a part of, we were having a discussion on fishing and one of the members was eating salmon at the time. As we know, it is often a working lunch in this place. I said how appropriate we were speaking about the fishing industry and here was one of the members having salmon for lunch. This economic contribution does not consider the auxiliary job figures supported by the industry - for example, people working in service industries, local health and education facilities needed to support salmon workers and their families.

As I indicated earlier, I do have, in the McIntyre electorate, a number of land-based activities that support the salmon industry in Tasmania. There is the Bridport Hatchery, the Springfield Hatchery and then there is Mountain Stream and Mathinna. One of the more recent opportunities I had is with Petuna Aquaculture, where it has opened the doors to a new state-of-the-art recirculation aquaculture system facility at its hatchery in Cressy. This has injected \$13 million into Tasmania's aquaculture industry and is removing the company's reliance on flow-through hatchery technology for its salmon stock. The information I have received says that Cressy would enable Petuna to further improve its environmental and sustainability credentials using world-leading technology to recirculate up to 99 per cent of the water its fish are living in, through mechanical and biological filters. You have to congratulate the industry for being proactive and looking at ways to get some environmental and sustainability credentials with their world-leading technology. I certainly acknowledge the work they have done in that. The new hatchery system uses less than 5 per cent of the water of traditional systems and would allow the company to grow its salmon to a larger size on land, reducing the time they need to be at sea. That would have to be a very positive outcome, because we know there are concerns in the community on salmon farming in particular areas in the sea. Again, all credit to Petuna Aquaculture for the work they are doing in this area.

It goes on to say that:

Cressy is an integral project for Petuna, demonstrating the commitment to continuing improvement in environmental sustainability with 100 per cent of the waste planned to be used on a neighbouring farm.

The development includes a construction of a third recirculation aquaculture system at the Cressy Hatchery and transitioning to the site to full RAS and eliminating reliance on the traditional flow-through system, providing a controlled environment for the fish to thrive.

We have visited that particular site. I am not sure how many members were part of that at Cressy. A number of us have been to that facility. We do have quite a few. The member for Elwick is nodding his head. It was an impressive set-up at the time and it even elevated the opportunity for it to be more environmentally sound and sustainable. I congratulate them on the work they have been doing in that area.

I was provided with this useful map this morning, but there are quite a few land-based activities around the state. It is interesting when we have a look at the number of land-based salmon hatcheries happening and some of them are hatcheries that are co-recirculating or have a mixed arrangement. I appreciated that being provided. It was sitting on my desk when I arrived this morning. It is always useful information when we get time to be able to read it.

The employment opportunities for people in our regional communities is important. Over the time I have been here, we have seen the demise of a number of activities, particularly in the immediate area I call home, around that north-east region. We have had a reduced timber industry and lost the vegetable processing plant in Scottsdale. All of that was relocated to Ulverstone. We also lost the milk-processing factory. That has all gone to the north-west coast now. To be able to have some of these employment opportunities for those people who continue to want to stay in the communities they have often called home for generations is very much appreciated.

From knowing people who work in the industry, it is not easy work because those fish grow to quite a considerable size and have to be hauled out of those hatcheries when they are ready to be taken off to market. It is a hard yakka job.

I was impressed with the amount of staff training, which is important in any employment we have now. It says here 55 000 hours, equating to around \$8.5 million from the salmon industry, has been put into training of staff. It is important to have that knowledge and understanding of the industry you are in.

A lot of tags - nothing prepared as it has been a busy weekend in my electorate. I do not know about other people, but the weekends go fairly quickly when you only get a day and a bit. That training has led to a number of awards that the industry has received more recently. For the second year in a row, Tassal has taken out two awards at the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Sustainable Seafood Awards. The awards recognise organisations and individuals who make significant contributions towards responsible aquaculture and sustainable fishing practices. That is what training, personal development and knowing the industry delivers.

I will highlight just one person here, Jody Mulholland from Proserpine in Queensland, who was awarded an ASC Young Person in Aquaculture Award for her work in sustainability management. That was in other areas that Tassal has an interest in. Again, there is opportunity for the industry to be heavily involved in the industry themselves.

Some of the areas that people work in were quite interesting, such as food processing and packaging. You have to be careful when you are packaging produce like salmon. There are hatchery technicians and freshwater managers, so, again, you have people who work in those hatcheries. I have already highlighted some of those in the McIntyre electorate. We also have farm workers and marine operators, and I have been out on the west coast. We have done a trip to the west coast and we have also done a trip to Huon. We had that opportunity when that

was with the previous owner. The former member for Huon facilitated the trip to Huon Aquaculture and I found that very interesting. I am not sure that I could work on the water as a lot of people do, but they do a good job.

Another area is environmental and marine science - again, a very important component of the industry when you talk about research and development. Veterinarians and fish health technicians - now, that would be an interesting area to put your focus and attention to; and, of course, no business runs without very efficient office staff, managers and leadership teams.

It is an industry where you can have opportunity, but there are also all of those layers of aspects that come with it. It is indicated in this paperwork that \$681 million has been invested in research and development in the past 10 years. The Tasmanian salmon industry invested more than \$75 million in research and development in 2022 alone. Over those 10 years it amounts to \$681 million. That is a significant amount of research and development for an industry that will need to continue to evolve and address any of those environmental and sustainability issues that are faced. By doing that, they support local businesses through consumables and wages, and all of those things that make a business.

It was also interesting to have some indication of some of the other work that the salmon industry does relating to major whale rescue missions in 2020 and 2022. I was unaware that they had spent significant time and effort saving more than 150 whales. That is something that we do not hear much about.

Ms Forrest - It was well covered in the media. They were widely commended for their efforts.

Ms RATTRAY - I was not aware until I read this document. Others may well have been aware. I thought that was an interesting thing; they are out on the water and they would see issues with that. Sometimes there is some coverage and I do not always see where they are and I did not have the knowledge that it was supported by the salmon industry representative. I congratulate them on that. There is plenty of opportunity, like there is with most larger industries, to provide grants and support various sporting clubs.

I noticed that the Huon Valley has been very well supported, but that is not unexpected.

Another area that I wanted to touch on was the former Ridley mill at Westbury, which has recently had a change of ownership, but they are still doing fish food.

The member for Huon might talk about the big day at the Huon where around 1200 went for the launch, or the minister might talk about that. That was a good turnout.

There have been some takeovers of the Ridley mill at Westbury in the industrial area. It has been taken over by the Skretting company, but they are going to continue to provide the nutritional and feed solutions to services to the salmon industry, which they have been doing for 20 years. They are keenly focused on working with the industry to achieve continual product improvements through research and innovation, as well as in the reduction of carbon emissions.

I note that BioMar has a facility at Wesley Vale and they are also one of the leading suppliers of high-performance fish feed to the aquaculture industry worldwide. I know that the Skretting mill, the former Ridley's -

Mrs Hiscutt - Is that the one we visited on that tour?

Ms RATTRAY - Yes. There was an announcement in about June 2021 and it took a while for the sale to be completed. It was announced then that Ridley's would be selling and Skretting would purchase that. I believe Skretting is a Dutch company and has a high reputation for the supply of nutritional feed solutions and services to salmon industry.

They have a purpose-built vessel and they deliver product to customers in regional Queensland and New Zealand. That demonstrates the company's long-term commitment to the production of high-quality feed for the local industry, as well as the export market. I am sure they might have a base in Cambridge in the south as well. Perhaps that is where they do the distribution; I am not entirely sure about that. I know BioMar have a relationship with De Bruyn's Transport, which is one of their transport operators and has been for many years. The work that happens to put a piece of salmon on somebody's plate is certainly significant and stretches right across the Tasmanian community, and when you look at the fact that 90 per cent of the product that supplies the Australian market comes from Tasmania, with 83 per cent of it consumed in our country, it is pretty impressive.

It matters; where people have diverse views it will always generate some discussion in the community. That can only be what I consider for the better as to not have these discussions is not necessarily productive. I am sure there will be some matters that will be raised

I have not touched on any of the issues around the Maugean skate; it is not my area and others may take the opportunity to talk about what happens in their immediate patch. I certainly listened with interest as I drove home on Thursday evening, and one of the newer elected members of the parliament was on the radio, or as some of our former members would say in this place, they were on the wireless, and there was certainly some discussion on that. Again, any discussion is worth that opportunity.

At this point in time, I will continue to listen to any other offerings that may come forward. I sincerely thank those people who have made some contact in regard to this notice of motion. It was a terrific opportunity to talk about an industry that generates \$1.36 billion in Tasmania, 5103 jobs and is the largest primary industry in the state - not to be dismissed in any way. We know there are a lot of Tasmanians who rely on this industry. I am interested to hear other people's offerings, which may well be of a contrary view to mine, but I just encourage people. I re-read the motion this morning. There might be someone who thinks they cannot support this for any reason in the Chamber, and I thought, 'notes the economic analysis provided by Deloitte Access Economics report dated 2020, regarding the Tasmanian salmon industry'. I am just noting it and we know Deloitte Access is a reputable company that does this work for companies and governments. Yes, they partnered with the Tasmanian salmon industry, Salmon Tasmania. The second part of the motion, 'acknowledges the Tasmanian salmon industry is a vital social and economic contributor to the Tasmanian community', it is pretty clear from the statistics and the dollar figures connected to the industry - that is right, yes. It is not a cost-benefit analysis, I acknowledge that and never indicated in my motion it was. I will leave it there and will be interested to listen to other members' contributions. They are eager, Mr President, out of their seats already!

Recognition of Visitors

Mr PRESIDENT - I welcome to the Gallery a second group from the wonderful school at Forest, which is in the member for Murchison's electorate. We are currently noting a motion brought on by the member for McIntyre, and the member for Murchison is going to have her chance to tell us what she thinks about it. All members in the Chamber will get the same opportunity if they so wish.

On behalf of all members, welcome to the Legislative Council and enjoy your tour of the Tasmanian parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

[12.25 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, it is a pleasure to welcome the students from Forest Primary School here to hear some of the things we talk about, because the decisions we make in this place directly impact them as young people moving to the future. The things we do talk about, particularly where we are passing laws - which is not the case with this motion, just noting the proposal being put forward by another member, but what we do and what we stand for is also important from your perspective. It is great to have you here.

The motion states the Legislative Council notes the economic analysis provided by the Deloitte Access Economics report dated 2020 regarding the Tasmanian salmon industry and acknowledges that the Tasmanian salmon industry is a vital social and economic contributor to the Tasmanian community, and to quote from the report that is subject to this motion:

Salmon Tasmania has partnered with Deloitte for the first combined comprehensive and independent analysis of the industry's economic and social contribution to the Tasmanian community.

1. The Tasmanian salmon industry:
 - is the largest primary industry in Tasmania.
 - is Tasmania's largest agriculture/aquaculture exporter.
 - is Tasmania's most valuable seafood production sector.
2. Tasmania's salmon industry is Australia's most valuable seafood sector, worth \$1.36 billion.
3. The industry predominately supports local economies and jobs in regional Tasmania. 87 per cent of all economic activity supported by the industry occurs in the regions. 89% of the direct salmon jobs are in regional areas.
4. In 2022, the industry contributed \$770 million to the Tasmanian economy and supported 5,103 full time equivalent jobs around the state. Salmon industry jobs pay 56% more than the average Tasmanian job.

5. The industry is Tasmania's largest agricultural/aquaculture exporter in Tasmania and accounted for 86% of Tasmania's total seafood production by value in 2020-21.
6. The industry is approximately double the size of the fruit and vegetable (horticulture) sector in Tasmania and 38% larger than the red meat processing industry. The salmon industry represents one-fifth of the entire Tasmanian agriculture, forestry and fishing industry.
7. The economic contribution of the salmon industry includes the value of its exports and the flow-on benefits across Tasmania from the jobs and families it supports, to the provision of nutritious food. This economic contribution does not consider the auxiliary jobs figures supported by the industry - for example people working in service industries, local health and education facilities needed to support salmon workers and their families.

In the limited time we had to prepare for this motion and seeking to make a considered contribution, I tried to access some of the relevant source documents referred to in this report and it was not easy to find, particularly the Deloitte Access Economics report itself. It probably sat behind a pay wall where I was looking for it.

Ms Webb - It was never publicly released.

Ms FORREST - I thank the member for McIntyre's office though. She did manage to source a copy and sent it through yesterday. I have not had time to read all of that in its entirety. It is not huge, but it is bigger than the time I had available, particularly when I have to drive down and spend five hours on the road. Some of the source documents went to dead links. It was a bit hard to follow them through and then you ended up circling back to this report all the time, which was a little unhelpful in preparing, but there we are.

We were provided with a copy of *The Tasmanian salmon industry: a vital social and economic contributor* report - that is the report the member for McIntyre is noting in this motion - and we were also provided with a link to that through her office, which was helpful to take us straight to that.

I am always cautious about taking at face value glossy brochures or reports with more pitches than detail to validate claims made. I want to understand the rigour or otherwise behind this report. This report concluded - I will call it 'Salmon Tasmania's report' for brevity because it is quite a long title - Salmon Tasmania reported that *The Tasmanian salmon industry: a vital social and economic contributor* makes several over-estimations - sorry, I have missed the page.

When I was doing my research, I also found a detailed analysis of this report that was done by the Tasmanian Independent Science Council, which was done by respected economist, Dr Graeme Wells. I wish to quote from that report to give context to my following comments. This is from that report, which is available as well, which members would have, I am sure, probably seen. It is called *Fact Check of Salmon Tasmania's Report: The Tasmanian Salmon Industry: a vital social and economic contributor*. The report states:

The *Tasmanian Salmon Industry: a vital social economic contributor* (... "the Salmon Tasmania report"), published by Salmon Tasmania provides "the first combined, comprehensive and independent analysis of the industry's economic and social contribution to the Tasmanian community". However, [this] ... report makes a number of overestimations and misrepresentations of economic and social benefits provided by the Tasmanian salmon industry. The Tasmanian Independent Science Council has conducted a fact check of Salmon Tasmania's report, drawing on evidence from the Deloitte and the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) reports that provided the basis for Salmon Tasmania's economic and social benefit calculations.

The report concluded that:

Salmon Tasmania's report *The Tasmanian Salmon Industry: a vital and social economic contributor* makes several overestimations and misrepresentations of the benefits the industry brings to the Tasmanian economy and wider community. This fact check has found that the report's claims to wages and the relative importance of the industry are overstated. Other claims, such as investment in research and development, are difficult to verify.

Increased output from the salmon producers has not led to a consummate increase in employment, a trend that is likely to continue as automation of the industry continues to advance. Importantly, the Salmon Tasmania report is based on an economic impact assessment, rather than a cost benefit analysis, ...

The member for McIntyre referred to that in her closing remarks.

Ms Rattray - I did acknowledge that.

Ms FORREST - I did say that.

... which means that it does not account for the social or environmental impacts of the industry. It does not take into consideration the environmental costs, loss of amenity, subsidies paid by governments, or the appropriate return to local communities for the use of public waters, as required by a full cost benefit analysis.

That was their conclusion. I want to go through some of the points in the report and comment on them.

The Independent Science Council Report made four key findings, which I will refer to and expand on the conclusions reached in the independent analysis. The key findings are:

One, Salmon Tasmania's claim that the salmon industry represents one-fifth of the entire agriculture, forestry and fishing industry is grossly exaggerated. When measured on a like-for-like basis, the figure is likely to be about 6 or 7 per cent.

Two, output as measured by gross value added, in the three salmon producers - Tassal, Huon Aquaculture and Petuna - has increased significantly, reflecting the overall growth, automation, temporary build-up of biomass that was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Three, the Salmon Tasmania report is based on an economic impact assessment rather than a cost-benefit analysis. This means that it does not account for the social or environmental impacts of the industry, which also means that some results in the Salmon Tasmania report are not directly comparable with the 2018-19 IMAS report.

Four, Salmon Tasmania claims that industry jobs pay 56 per cent more than the average Tasmanian job. Although it is difficult to directly compare wage data, it is likely that wages in the broader salmon industry are almost the same as the average Tasmanian wage, if both direct and indirect employment in the industry is considered. If the comparison is only the wages paid directly by the three salmon producers, then wages are higher than the average wage in Tasmania. However, on a like-for-like basis, this difference is likely to be significantly less than 56 per cent.

I will speak to these as they relate to the data provided in the Salmon Tasmania report, which I referred to in my opening comments.

The report from the Independent Science Council's first key finding, and I will read it again so we can focus the comments, says:

Salmon Tasmania's claim that the salmon industry represents one-fifth of the entire agriculture, forestry and fishing industry is grossly exaggerated. When measured on a like-for-like basis, the figure is likely to be around 6-7%.

That was that finding. This figure is markedly different from that in the statement in the report that is subject to this motion, where it suggests a figure of 20 per cent.

Point 6 of the Salmon Tasmania report states that the salmon industry is approximately double the size of the fruit and vegetable and horticultural sector in Tasmania, and 38 per cent larger than the red meat processing industry.

The salmon industry represents one-fifth of the entire Tasmanian agriculture, forestry and fishing industry.

As noted in an opinion piece recently published in the *Mercury* by economist and author of the Independent Science Council report, as I have mentioned, Dr Graeme Wells:

In the claim that the industry represents one-fifth of the entire Tasmanian agriculture, forestry and fishing industry, it is important to compare industries on a like-for-like basis. According to the Bureau of Statistics data for 2020-21, value added in the Tasmanian agriculture, forestry and fishing industry was \$471 million.

The report itself notes value added by salmon producers was \$426.9 million.

The comparison of those two figures suggests that the salmon industry share is more like about 9 per cent, not 20 per cent, as claimed by Salmon

Tasmania. Even that overstates the case, as the salmon industry includes fish processing, which is included in the manufacturing industry by the Bureau of Statistics.

On a like-for-like basis, the salmon industry probably accounts for about 6-7 per cent of Tasmanian agriculture, forestry and fishing Industry, not 20 per cent.

Finding 2 of the Independent Science Council, just to remind members what that one is:

Output (as measured by Gross Value Added) in the three salmon producers - Tassal, Huon Aquaculture and Petuna - has increased significantly, reflecting the overall growth, automation and temporary build-up of biomass that was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

That partly explains why the salmon industry output has grown, and no-one is disputing that. However, as noted in the report from the Independent Science Council, and I go back to that report:

Economic contribution is conceptually different to value added. Economic contribution refers to the monetary value of the final output of the salmon industry. By construction it is a much larger number than the GVA (as it ignores the cost of inputs) which is why industries are keen to emphasise this measure.

He made an example of the Bell Bay smelter in his previous comments related to this finding. He made the point about the Bell Bay smelter, saying its economic contribution is large, but after subtracting the cost of electricity and imported alumina, its GVA is relatively small.

The Salmon Tasmania report states:

This economic contribution does not consider the auxiliary job figures reported by the industry - for example people working in the service industries, local health and education facilities needed to support salmon workers and their families.

It also notes:

The economic benefits generated for other businesses in the region are in addition to the direct *and indirect* benefits included in the report.

These statements reflect the fact that not only the first-round indirect effects are included in the Deloitte analysis, unlike the IMAS report which also included second round indirect effects ...

My point here is that we need to be focusing on like-for-like if we are going to be relying on the rigour of documents being put out. It does not matter what industry or sector it is, if we are going to make claims about comparators, we need to compare like with like.

We go to the third finding of the Independent Science Council. I will requote that one:

The Salmon Tasmania report is based on economic impact assessment, rather than a cost-benefit-analysis. This means that it does not account for the social or environmental impacts of the industry, and also means that some results in the Salmon Tasmania report are not directly comparable with the 2018-19 IMAS report.

Before commenting more fully on this point, I reiterate point 7 of the Tasmanian Salmon report noting that it states:

The economic contribution of a salmon industry includes the value of its exports, and the flow-on benefits across Tasmania from the jobs and families it supports, to the provision of nutritious food. This economic contribution does not consider the auxiliary jobs figures supported by the industry - for example people working in service industries, local health and educational facilities needed to support salmon workers and their families.

The Independent Science Council makes a number of relevant points regarding this, and I will quote from their report. There is a bit of length to this as I do not want to be taken out of context. This report notes:

An EIA [economic impact assessment] reports the effect of an industry on economic activity and employment. A CBA [cost-benefit analysis] asks whether the activity under question is socially desirable. A CBA would take into account environmental costs, the opportunity costs of resources used, and so on.

Further, it goes on:

Salmon Tasmania's report is somewhat misleading in that it dresses up an EIS with extraneous material to make it look a bit more like a CBA, but in no way should it be interpreted as such. It makes no mention of environmental costs, loss of amenity, correctly defined, or subsidies paid by governments.

The approach taken by Deloitte differs from the most recent assessment of the Tasmanian salmon industry by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS). The IMAS report draws on a computable general equilibrium model (CGE), which is a standard tool for an EIA. Maintaining one of these models is an expensive exercise, which is why it is the preserve of large consultancies.

Economists debate the structure of CGE models, but it is standard for consulting firms. Importantly, results from CGE models and EIA approaches are always presented ignoring the width of the confidence bands which measure the uncertainty around the reported estimates. When it gets down to highly disaggregated results at the Local Government Area (LGA) level, the confidence bands must be very wide indeed. This matters when, as in this report, model estimates compared to data from other sources.

I go back to that comparing like with like. With regard to estimating gross value, the Independent Science Council had this to say:

Gross value added (GVA) measures the difference between the sales value of output minus the cost of inputs purchased by other entities. GVA is the sum of the return to the labour hired by the firm, and gross profits to its owner. The sum of GVA for all entities in Tasmania is Gross State Product (or GDP if it were referring to Australia-wide measure). GVA is the preferred measure when comparing the 'contribution' of various industries to the State economy because different industries vary in their dependence on purchased inputs.

We go back to the Bell Bay aluminium smelter. He notes about that:

The Bell Bay aluminum smelter, for instance, has a large input cost (imported alumina and electricity) but value added is relatively small when compared to total output.

This measure of 'Gross Profits' is inclusive of depreciation, interest payments and taxes. Deducting these and other minor items from 'gross Operating Surplus' gives an amount available for distribution to owners.

The economic impact of the Tasmanian salmon industry can be decomposed into direct and indirect effects. The direct effect measures just the activities of the three salmon producers. In a standard CGE approach, the indirect component of GVA arises when:

- a. Suppliers to the salmon producers generate value on their own account and so on through the production chain, and
- b. Households (who now have higher incomes because of increased employment) spend their higher incomes, generating even more value added as these work through the economy.

As mentioned earlier, the Deloitte report is a 'contributions analysis, rather than the CGE approach often used for an impact assessment ... Instead, the indirect effect is analysed by means of a survey of suppliers to the three producing firms, generating data for the indirect effect (a). Details of the survey instrument or response rate are not provided. The underlying Deloitte report, however, does give a two-stage breakdown with the indirect component limited to point (a) above.

Direct GVA for the Tasmanian salmon industry is listed as \$426.9 million, and indirect gross value added as \$343.1 million. Bearing in mind that the IMAS employment data are for persons employed, while Deloitte's are for FTE, employment data are not strictly comparable. However, the increase in overall employment is consistent with the overall increase in GVA.

...

Direct GVA from the three producers has grown rapidly, partly reflecting inventory accumulation during the Covid-19 period. The employment and labour productivity data are puzzling.

I will come back to that in a minute, Mr President. Key finding 4 in the report of the Independent Science Council states:

Salmon Tasmania claims that industry jobs pay 56% more than the average Tasmanian job. Although it is difficult to directly compare wage data, it is likely the wages in the broader salmon industry are almost the same as the average Tasmanian wage, if both direct and indirect employment by the industry is considered. If the comparator is only the wage paid directly by the three salmon producers, then wages are higher than the average wage in Tasmania; however, on a like-for-like basis, this difference is likely to be significantly less than 56%. ... The Deloitte study that underpins the Salmon Tasmania report is an economic impact assessment (EIA). An EIA is conceptually different to a cost benefit analysis (CBA).

As I referred to in my earlier comments.

Referring to the employment matters and the claims there, the Independent Science Council notes:

Direct employment by the three producers has risen by just 16.7%, implying an increase in labour productivity of 59%. In addition to inventory accumulation, increasing automation has limited direct employment growth. On the other hand, labour productivity in industry supplying the producers has actually fallen by nearly 20%. This result is consistent with indirect low wages ... If the trend in these data, that output is growing much faster than direct employment, continues, salmon producers are unlikely to be a regional employment 'growth engine'. Conversely, falling labour productivity in firms supplying the industry holds out little prospect for higher wages for their employees.

Deloitte Economic Analysis 2023 *Socioeconomic contribution of the Tasmanian salmon industry, Salmon Tasmania*, table 3.1 notes that no adjustment has been made for inflation in comparing gross value added in the two periods. IMAS employment data are for persons, while Deloitte's are for FTE. However, this difference is, if anything, likely to understate the measured decline in labour productivity. The report contains tables to illustrate those figures.

Mr President, I do not dispute that employment in our regions where many of those directly and indirectly employed are based is very important to our regions, and the opportunities for employment across a range of skill sets - some obviously higher paid than others. However, we also need to factor in the impacts that are not considered in this report. Compare apples with apples, or fish with fish, if we are to claim this industry is the vital contributor that this motion suggests to the social and economic wellbeing of the state. Particularly in my electorate, when I was recently doorknocking, this matter was number two on the list of matters that people wanted to raise with me. Many people are deeply hesitant about the expansion of salmon farming into many parts of our state, particularly along the north-west coast. Others can speak about areas in their electorate if they wish. But I was

staggered - well, not really staggered, I was surprised - by the consistent approach. First was the stadium, second was the finfish farming, the third was the Voice. That was the order of topics at the doors.

Mr President, the critically endangered Maugean skate in Macquarie Harbour has seen many experts and concerned citizens call for a severe reduction, if not a complete cessation, of salmon farming in Macquarie Harbour. While salmon farming is not the only contributing factor here to the challenges faced by the Maugean skate, it does play a role and should be considered in part of the solution.

In my view, this is a time when the precautionary principle should be taken, not an adaptive management approach. Extinct animals, or fish, have no chance if adaption waits until the system sees how they adapt rather than taking a precautionary approach when we know the Maugean skate is critically endangered. If this is not a time when the precautionary approach should be taken rather than adaptive management, then I do not know what is.

As I mentioned, there are very few people along the north-west coast who want to see expansion of salmon farming into the waters of Bass Strait. This is especially the case as we have seen the recovery of the Bass Strait area along the north-west only in very recent years, particularly from Penguin west, as the waters recover from years of pollution that has been poured into that ocean. From Australian Paper, the black liquid used to get let out every afternoon, usually under the cover of darkness. The Tioxide paint pigment factory and the acid plant - those of us who lived along that coast, saw what it did, and the fish were gone.

Now, we are seeing a significant amount of fish come back into that body of water. You only have to go past the Wynyard Wharf in the new fantastic Yacht Club there to see people showing off their big catches. This is something that we have not seen until very recent times. The people of the north-west, particularly around this area, are very concerned to think that we have just cleaned it up; let us not put any more pressure on it while it continues that recovery. The same can be said of Macquarie Harbour.

The social licence of these companies is not a reality with many in our community. That is the sad and tragic reality in many respects, particularly so now that all three producers are foreign-owned. We know some of the history of some of the foreign-owned businesses and that their corporate record is anything but glowing. Their industry finances and economic contribution have become even more opaque since they have become internationally owned companies. That is a matter of great concern to myself and to many others.

As I said, I do not dispute the industry is regulated, it absolutely should be; but as we know, this is not always resolved in sustainable industry practices in the past. If you are not sure about that, just check out Macquarie Harbour. I know there have been significant changes there, but the harbour was trashed. I know the regime has changed a little bit since then, but we cannot allow anything like that, anything near that, to go on again, knowing the critically endangered nature of the Maugean skate.

Returning to a sixth point made by the Tasmanian Salmon report, as follows:

The salmon industry is approximately double the size of the fruit and vegetable (horticulture) sector in Tasmania and 38 per cent larger than the red meat processing industry. The salmon industry represents one-fifth [or

20 per cent] of the entire Tasmanian agriculture, forestry and fishing industry.

I will go back to this fact-checking report from the Independent Science Council, which states that this comparison is somewhat meaningless. They say:

Comparisons with other Tasmanian industries, of the sort provided in the report, are not particularly meaningful. They don't compare like-with-like in terms of stages of production. For example, the approximate comparator for red meat processing is salmon processing...

So, not the whole salmon industry; it is the processing side of it. To go back to the report:

Or, if one wanted to include the whole salmon industry, one could compare it with red meat production and processing. Even so, it is not clear why such a comparison tells us anything about the social value of the industry. In any event, the claim that the salmon industry represents one-fifth of the entire agriculture, forestry and fishing industry is grossly exaggerated. When measured on a like-for-like basis, the figure is likely to be around 6-7%.

Understanding the ABS industry classification is important.

To quote the Australia and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) industry classification used by the ABS:

The Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Division (A) includes units mainly engaged in growing crops, raising animals, growing and harvesting timber and harvesting fish and other animals from farms or their natural habitats.

The report quotes the ANZSIC classification again:

The Manufacturing Division includes units mainly engaged in the physical or chemical transformation of materials, substances or components into new products (except agriculture and construction).

The materials, substances or components transformed by units in this division are raw materials that are products of agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining or products of other manufacturing units. Included is fresh fish packaging.

According to ABS data for 2020-21, GVA [or gross value added] in the agriculture, forestry and fishing (AFF) industry is \$471 million. Direct GVA in the salmon industry is \$426.9 million. A direct comparison of these two figures suggests that the salmon industry's share of AFF is 9%, not 20%, as claimed by Salmon Tasmania.

Even that overstates the case, as the salmon industry defined as the three producers includes fish processing which would be included in the ABS manufacturing industry.

On a like-for-like basis, the salmon industry probably accounts for around 6-7% of the Tasmanian AFF industry, not 20 per cent.

The ABS data referred to is 'total factor' incomes which understates GVA in each industry as it excludes taxes on inputs minus subsidies.

For agriculture, forestry and fishing, this means that 'total factor incomes' understate its GVA slightly.

In support of its claim, Salmon Tasmania refers to a report on the red meat processing industry. The relevance of this reference is unclear.

The claim made in the fourth point of this report is that it is difficult to evaluate that claim. I do not know if the member for McIntyre is able to provide any detail on that, but those claims - if we are going to be noting a report that makes these claims, we should be able to back it up with a meaningful like-for-like comparison.

I ask this accordingly - according to the report of the Independent Science Council, and I quote:

It is difficult to evaluate Salmon Tasmania's claims that jobs in the salmon industry pay up to 73.9% more than the average job in regional Tasmania, and 56% more than the average Tasmanian job. The Deloitte report provides some context for the latter claim.

Data in table 3.1 of the Deloitte report does provide some detail, as I noted earlier, and this is referred to in the report by the Independent Science Council.

The last column provides an estimate of average wages in Tasmania, obtained by the ABS data. When measured in terms of full-time jobs for the salmon industry as a whole, wages are **roughly the same** as the average Tasmanian job. From the first column it appears that the average wage in the three salmon companies is higher than the Tasmanian average, reflecting higher labour productivity there. Even with the inclusion of 'add-ons' in the former figure, as detailed in the footnote below, many overstate the difference between direct industry wages and the state-wide average.

In the report from the Independent Science Council, they go on to say:

Note that concept of labour income used in Deloitte's model corresponds to compensation of employees, as defined in the Australian National Accounts. As such, it includes employer contributions to superannuation, holiday pay and other worker benefits.

By contrast, the ABS average weekly earnings figures do not include these add-ons, so that figures are not directly comparable.

With regard to the contribution of taxes and government payments, this report states:

It is not clear where this refers to just the three salmon producers or to the broader industry including indirect activity - however, it is more likely to be the former.

The Salmon Tasmania report further notes:

The economic activity of the 5,103 FTE jobs that the industry creates provides the following benefits to Tasmania.

It is noted on page 5 of that report where it states that the Tasmanian salmon industry supports 5103 fulltime equivalent jobs across Tasmania:

In 2022, Salmon Tasmania members invested more than 55,000 hours and \$8.5 million in training their staff.

I note the member for McIntyre referred to this also. Investment in staff training should be considered in light of the number of employees. With the 55 000 hours in relation to the 5103 FTE employees, on average around 11 hours per employee per annum is not particularly large, given the -

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

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Salmon Industry - Appropriate Return to Community

Ms PALMER (Rosevears - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr President, I wanted to have the opportunity in the interest of clarifying my response to the questions the member for Nelson raised last Thursday, 7 September, about whether any consultation had taken or is taking place with regard to determining an appropriate return to the community from the salmon industry. I am advising as follows: the Government, through the salmon industry implementation plan, has committed to consult on an appropriate return from the salmon industry to the Tasmanian community. Consultation is yet to commence. That was the clarification I wanted to make.

What the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania has released publicly under the Right to Information Act 2009 is information relating to an independent Tasmanian salmonoid marine farming socio-economic assessment. This work relates primarily to return to community and would be considered as part of the implementation of an appropriate return to the Tasmanian community.

There was another question from the member for Nelson in relation to full cost recovery and whether the modelling that sits behind the setting of those figures is available in the public domain. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment has not released a model, as such, for full cost recovery. There is an existing government policy relating to cost recovery and that is set out in the Department of Treasury and Finance's costing, fees and charges guidelines and has been in place since 2006. That is the model that is being followed. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania also has an existing pricing policy. The Treasury guidelines provide the fees and charges should be set at a level which

ensures the full cost of providing goods or a service can be recovered at an appropriate level. This policy approach is essentially the same as applied by the Australian Government and other states and territories.

Agricultural Shows - Distribution of Grants

Ms PALMER (Rosevears - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - I also have additional information relating to the question for the member for McIntyre on the Agricultural Show Development Grants Program 2023-24. The Agricultural Show Development Grants Program is administered by DPAC and it is at arm's length from government. The 2023-24 program was oversubscribed with a total of 16 applications requesting funding of \$338 192. The assessment panel considered these applications and determined the funding recommendations. The assessment panel recommended that 12 applications be funded through the program, with five applications approved subject to conditions. Four applications were deemed to be ineligible projects or were not recommended for funding due to the quality of the proposal. Unsuccessful applicants were contacted by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, with appropriate contact details if they wish to discuss their unsuccessful application and/or to appeal a decision.

QUESTIONS

Salmon Industry - Appropriate Return to Community

Ms WEBB question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Ms PALMER

[2.34 p.m.]

I thank the minister for providing the clarification for the questions last week. I appreciate that very much and acknowledge they were also sent through to me yesterday, directly, so I would have them at an earliest opportunity. Much appreciated.

To follow up, I wanted to clarify in relation to the report that the minister referred to that has been released on RTI. I want to clarify that was the RTI disclosure that was made on 24 April this year, No. RTI 056 on the NRE Tasmania website, and to clarify that there is actually no detail at all about the report in that disclosure that was made. It is a series of emails referring to it, but all the pages in which the content of that report is covered are all redacted. Just to clarify, although you mentioned that report has been released under RTI, no detail of it actually has been. To clarify, will that report be made public, and if so, at what stage in the process going forward?

ANSWER

I believe it is the RTI you are referring to on 24 April but I do not have that information to confirm that with great certainty. I believe it is what you are referring to. I understand that under the RTI, the terms of reference and the correspondence, I think you are talking about emails?

Ms Webb - There are no terms of reference.

Ms PALMER - This is the information that I have been given: that under the RTI, the terms of reference in the correspondence regarding this report have been released. The decision to release redacted information was made by an authorised officer under the Right to Information Act and I have no role to play in that process. I can confirm that the Government, through the salmon industry implementation plan, has committed to consult on an appropriate return from the salmon industry to the Tasmanian community. With regard to the second part of your question, we will release information related to this work as part of our consultation on the appropriate return to the community at the appropriate time.

Ms Webb - No terms of reference in this RTI, just so you know, Minister.

Marinus Link - Funding

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

With regard to the grants from the Australian Government for the 2023-24 year and the 2024-26 listed in the budget papers for 2023-24 Volume 1 on page 106 for Battery of the Nation (Tarraleah) and Project Marinus (grants for the two years totalling \$42.2 million and \$41.1 million respectively):

- (1) What is the total of grants received to date in the current year for each project?
- (2) How much has been spent in the current year to date for each project?
- (3) How much spending is yet to occur and which amounts have been contracted or otherwise committed for each project?

ANSWER

I thank the member for her question.

- (1) Project Marinus (including Marinus Link and NWTD: 2018-19, \$50 million; 2021-22, zero; 2022-23, \$5 million; 2023-24, \$30 million. That has an asterisk next to it, which I will explain. There are two with asterisks, I will come back to that. That was a total of \$85 million.

Battery of the Nation (Tarraleah), 2018-19, zero; 2021-22, \$9.8 million; 2022-23, zero; 2023-24, \$13 million, and the total was \$22.8 million. For the figures in 2023-24 with an asterisk next to it, as I indicated, the note says that the money was receipted in August 2023 (financial year 2023-24), but was expected in financial year 2022-23 per the allocation in the State Budget papers.

- (2) Marinus Link: Marinus Link Pty Ltd advises the total spend to date for the current financial year, as at 31 July 2023 is: 2024 financial year spend to date, at 31 July 2023, total is \$4.9 million.

North West Transmission Developments: Tasmanian Networks Pty Ltd advises the total spend to date for the current financial year, as at 31 July 2023, is: 2024 financial year spend to date, 31 July 2023, is \$1.0 million.

Tarraleah hydro scheme redevelopment program: Hydro Tasmania advises that expenditure this financial year (financial year 2023-24) through July and August 2023 on the upgrade works program for Tarraleah is \$5.5 million.

- (3) Project Marinus: With regard to spending yet to occur, the below table captures expenditure to date on the Project Marinus scopes and the expected expenditure to the end of the design and approval phase (nominally December 2024). With the Marinus Link Pty Ltd, D&A (meaning design and approvals) phase spend to date, as at 31 July 2023, is \$128.0 million and the funding committed to be spent is \$62.5 million, so the total is \$190.5 million.

The North West Transmission Developments spend to date, as at 31 July 2023, is \$34.2 million and the funding committed yet to be spent is \$19.3 million, with a total \$53.5 million. The total on the D&A phase to 31 July 2023 is \$162.2 million, the funding committed to be spent in total is \$81.8 million and the total is \$244 million.

Tarraleah: the next lot of figures represent expenditure to date on the Tarraleah pre-final investment decision phase (which largely includes business case and design and approvals components), and upgrade works phase (which are capital works on the headpond and conveyance associated with the power station and which will be needed regardless of whether it is fully redeveloped or renewed). The figures also provide the expected expenditure to complete these phases.

Upgrade works program: the actual costs as at the end of July 2023 is \$22.2 million. The total remaining costs to be incurred on the project made up of commitments and costs to date, the forecast is \$75.8 million and the estimate at completion total equals the actuals plus forecast, which is \$98 million.

The pre-FID activity: actual costs at the end of July 2023 is \$21.5 million and the total remaining costs to be incurred on the project, made up of commitments and costs to complete, is \$53.5 million; the estimated completions are \$75.0 million.

The total capital expenditure actuals to the end of 2023 is \$43.7 million, the forecast is \$129.3 million and the estimate to completion is \$173.0 million.

Electoral Disclosure and Funding Bill 2022 - Progress

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

[2.44 p.m.]

In an interview on ABC Radio on Monday 11 September 2023, Government minister Mr Michael Ferguson was asked when the Government would pass its political donations legislation. Mr Ferguson replied:

You would have to ask the Legislative Council Leader of the Government but it is certainly on the Notice Paper. It is available for debate.

Leader, given that the Electoral Disclosure and Funding Bill 2022 has been on the Notice Paper in this place since November last year, can you please update the Chamber on when the Government intends to progress this important piece of legislation?

ANSWER

Yes, we have already started, but I cannot remember the exact date. I have done the second reading speech already. As legislation comes through from the other place, priority is with legislation. I believe as the election will not be until 2025, there is no hurry with this particular bill. Having said that, I hope members might be ready to go on Thursday.

Personal Explanation Member for Nelson - Term of Reference

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - I have questions to ask, but before that I wanted to correct a comment I made in response to the minister earlier around the RTI released on the NRE website. There are two sets of documents there and one of them does have a term of reference, it is a sentence long. I had not recognised it as a term of reference, because it just says 'do a report', essentially. I apologise for suggesting it was not there; I had overlooked it because it was so brief. It is there and thank you for allowing me to correct that.

Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania - Funding

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

[2.46 p.m.]

With reference to the undertaking made by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Roger Jaensch MP, to the Legislative Council Estimates Committee B on Thursday 8 June 2023 to seek advice on whether the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania is in fact the only statutory body in Tasmania not specifically funded for a finance officer, can the Government please:

- (1) Detail whether that promised advice was sought and received, and if so, when it was received, and also detail the content of that advice;
- (2) State whether there are current discussions underway regarding providing the necessary funding for the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania to secure a Chief Financial Officer; and
- (3) Detail what steps have been undertaken, including any consultation with ALCT, to ensure this statutory organisation can meet its financial reporting obligations?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for her question.

Last year, the minister asked the former Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment to provide advice on ALCT's financial position and budget requirements, taking into account issues raised by the Tasmanian Audit Office. Following this, the Government provided ALCT with additional funding of \$30 000 to support ALCT to address administrative requirements identified by the Tasmanian Audit Office.

In June 2023, the minister asked the Department of Premier and Cabinet to provide updated advice on ALCT's financial position, taking into account the Tasmanian Audit Office's report of 2023.

The minister has been advised by the department that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to funding for statutory bodies. It has also been noted the minister has been advised if a grant deed is required by a statutory body, it must take into account any requirements under legislation. Specifically, for ALCT, section 20 of the Aboriginal Lands Act 1995 states:

20. Staff

- (1) The Council may employ such persons as it considers necessary to enable it to perform its functions.
- (2) Subject to any relevant award, industrial agreement or enterprise agreement, the terms and conditions of persons employed under subsection (1) are as determined by the Council.

Given this, the ALCT grant deed does not specify how ALCT should direct their funding.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet is currently finalising a grant deed of \$369 000 for 2023-2024 financial year, which includes an additional \$55 000 on top of the usual allocation of \$314 000. The Government also provided \$600 000 to ALCT earlier this year, to support a comprehensive interpretation project at Wybalenna on Flinders Island.

The minister can also confirm that the Government is currently considering a request from ALCT to fund a Chief Financial Officer. In the meantime, the advice is Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania is working with ALCT to review and develop policies and procedures that will support administrative functions.

Once the Tasmanian Government's proposed amendments to the Aboriginal Lands Act 1995 have passed both Houses of Parliament, the implications of the reforms on ALCT's operational requirements will be better understood, which will inform future permanent funding arrangements.

Cochlear Implants - Follow-up to Previous Questions

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

[2.50 p.m.]

I just want to chase up a question without notice from 1 September; it is also an issue raised on 22 August. On numerous occasions since, I have tried, through the media, to get an answer, so I would like to place it on record.

Faults in programming of cochlear implants in Adelaide have led to long-term developmental issues in children. In announcing the findings from a review, the South Australian Health minister said it could have national implications with similar mistakes made in Queensland. Can the Government confirm one way or another whether children in this state are not exposed to these faults? Is a similar review to the one in Adelaide required here in Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr President, that is one that I have been chasing up, but it is similar to some more intricate questions that have to go outside the ministerial department. I remind members that there is no requirement in the Standing Orders providing members with a right to receive responses to questions without notice within 24 hours; but in the spirit of giving as much information as possible to members, I will always do best endeavours to provide information as soon as practically possible.

The member's guide sets out the usual process for handling of questions without notice. Members should provide my office at least 24 hours in advance of the question being asked in the Legislative Council, which has happened. Upon receipt of an email containing a question, it is then emailed at the earliest opportunity to the appropriate ministerial office with a request for a response by midday the next sitting day; and we pushed that pretty hard.

The ministerial office then sends the question to the agency secretariat for a prepared response - so it goes outside; then the secretariat identifies the appropriate area within the agency - so then it goes somewhere else. The response is prepared and forwarded to the minister's office and it is checked to make sure it is right before it is sent back to my office. So, a response received back within 24 hours assumes that all those processes have taken place and that there is available staff to do so. We try our best.

MOTION

Noting - Salmon Tasmania and Deloitte Access Economics Report

Resumed from above (page 34).

[2.53 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I was getting toward the end of my contribution but at the time when the adjournment occurred, I was speaking about the discussion and claims in the Salmon Tasmania report about the investment in staff training and

the number of hours and the contribution. Staff training is obviously important, particularly when employees are working in some quite hazardous situations.

I might have said this, but just to put it back into context, the 55 000 hours of staff training in relation to 5103 FTE employees, on average around 11 hours per employee per annum, is not particularly large given the hazards involved with many of the on-water jobs.

The Salmon Tasmania report also contains other unverified claims, such as that the industry invested over \$7 million into research and development in 2022, which cannot be independently verified. There may be ways that it can be done, but it certainly was not easy to do through the information available in the report. Page 6 of the Salmon Tasmania report talks about research and development, and it says:

The Tasmanian salmon industry invested more than \$75 million into research and development in 2022. In the ten years to 2022, the industry invested a total of \$681 million.

On page 8 there are references to the breadth and scope of the research that I believe are undertaken by very credible organisations and scientists from the CSIRO, IMAS and others. This is not criticising their work at all. Neither are my comments criticising Deloitte Access Economics. It is simply making an assessment about a report that we are tabling, and trying to unpick some of the facts that are put there as facts.

Mr President, those include some of the research that has been undertaken by credible organisations including CSIRO, IMAS and others. They have looked into sea surface temperature tracking conducted in Tasmania's south-east with CSIRO, for several years. This program has been so successful there are plans to extend it across the state to move with changing weather and sea current patterns. These are very important bodies of work that do not just apply necessarily to the salmon farming industry; it can be any fishery or marine-based activity.

Another one is world-leading biogeochemical modelling that monitors water flows, nutrients and temperatures around the state and has shared the benefits with the broader community, working alongside researchers at IMAS and CSIRO. Again, this is very important work with the changes in climate we are seeing at the moment, the warming of our oceans, and the weather patterns we are now seeing around the world, that are quite frightening in parts.

There has been ongoing investment into pen technology so that our marine farms can withstand more exposed and offshore locations, as well as technical improvements to help circulate cooler bottom waters during the times of water temperature fluctuations to build further resistance into their operations. That research is very important for the ongoing survival of the industry, because if temperatures continue to rise in our oceans, these fish may not have time to adapt to those changes. There has been \$10 million invested in world-leading wildlife-excluding pens, which has significantly decreased our interactions with seals while keeping people safe. I do not think I need to remind people of a certain constituent of mine who lost his cool over the relocation of seals and got some action from the Government by taking fairly drastic actions at a certain set of traffic lights on the north-west coast to stop that terrible practice of relocation.

Fish breeding programs have resulted in temperature tolerance traits and improved genetics to ensure we are breeding future stocks of strong, healthy and resilient fish. That is important research; but it is in the industry's best interests to do that, otherwise they would not have an industry in the future. The science is not lying about what is happening in our oceans.

Sophisticated data and real-time forecasting management tools have been used to prepare for changes in weather responding to modifications to diets, and different husbandry practices. My previous comment relates to that point as well.

Real-time environmental monitoring and water quality programs help us to adapt to changing weather patterns and to understand the systems that support the production of the world-renowned and high-quality product we farm here in Tasmania.

Those last few are essential for the industry's survival, with everything we know about what is happening in the climate and in our oceans.

Mr President, as I stated, I do not doubt this work is being done or that it is worthwhile and important; it is absolutely important and worthwhile. It has been done by eminent scientists and organisations that I respect. The issue I am raising here is the unverified claim that the industry invested \$75 million into research and development in 2022. It does not appear easy to independently identify.

The report from the Independent Science Council made the following observation on this point, and I quote:

Many other claims by the Salmon Tasmania or Deloitte reports, for example that the industry invested over \$75 million into research and development in 2022, cannot be independently verified. Important considerations such as the scope of the industry or source of the funds are not detailed. However, it is likely that much of the claimed \$75 million includes research funded by taxpayers through government agencies, such as CSIRO and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) or independent research bodies such as IMAS. As such, these amount should be considered a direct industry subsidy.

I am just making the point that if you claim that the industry has spent that amount of money, unless you can verify the incoming and outgoing, it is a claim that is made that is not verified. I am sure I will be corrected on a lot of this in the replies, and I hope I am.

In addition, if we consider the fees currently paid by the industry - and I know the member for Nelson was asking questions about this previously - it is \$3.1 million. After considering other international jurisdictions, these are poorly designed and do not reflect the cost borne by taxpayers or costs to the Tasmanian environment.

It seems like an age ago now, but those who were in the finfish inquiry will know there was a point raised with the committee in looking at other jurisdictions where the licence fees and other related costs are significantly higher, reflecting the environmental impact of such an industry. The degree of taxpayer support through the various research agencies remains unclear. It is not easily or clearly identified in the Salmon Tasmania report.

Many support the call for an independent comprehensive review which identifies an appropriate return to the Tasmanian community, rather than just rely on a report such as this that does fall short of being open and transparent in some areas or at least backing the claims. When I went to the links I could not find that information there. We only had a weekend to do this. It only came on the Notice Paper last week and we had the weekend to prepare.

It seems my reticence to blindly accept the claims of a glossy brochure have been somewhat well-founded, though I guess there will be others who will dispute that. If this industry is to be truly open and transparent and actually achieve a real social licence to operate in our state, we should expect better and more verifiable claims in the reports, particularly if we have to note them in this place.

The member for McIntyre moved the motion alluded to in her closing comments and asks us to note The Tasmanian Salmon Industry: a Vital Social and Economic Contributor report and note the economic analysis provided by the Deloitte Access Economics report dated 2022.

Ms Rattray - Note the report and acknowledge.

Ms FORREST - Yes, that is the first part and I will come to that. In further consideration of this report, there are claims to reflect the analysis of the Deloitte Access Economics report regarding the Tasmanian salmon industry. It does not appear to accurately reflect some of the claims made, and that is the point I will be making throughout my contribution. I am happy to be shown there are verifiable claims in all of this. I am not sure we will have time today to do that in terms of the ability to get all that information. What was circulated to support this debate was the salmon report.

Some will suggest this is just using different views of economists. That is a healthy thing. Some have tested the views of scientists and lawyers and many others, but we should test and verify scientific findings that we can test and verify economic modelling and make sure we compare like for like. If you are going to make a claim, you need to do it like-for-like and ensure the data you are using is the same data that has been reported.

As I have noted, a number of claims contained in this Salmon Tasmania report are difficult if not impossible to verify. This makes an acceptance of the motion a little challenging on the basis of that, especially when many of the claims do not appear to compare like with like. Regardless of this, I do note the positive actions taken by the industry representatives, the workers, outlined on pages 6 and 7 of the Salmon Tasmania report which describes community support and activity including, and I quote from the Salmon Tasmania report:

Two major whale rescue missions in 2020 and 2022, saving more than 150 whales.

That was an amazing achievement. These pilot whales beached off Macquarie Point and because you have skilled marine operators out in that area who deal with fish all the time - not pilot whales, I might add - but they do deal with fish and have the equipment and the gear. They are trained in looking after marine animals and did provide a good and supportive service to a very remote location in our state which saw a number of whales return to the sea, which is a positive outcome. I did speak about that in the parliament at the time and commended them on that because it was an important contribution they made whilst maintaining their own business.

The significant marine rescuers are boaters, fishers, divers and surfers, and we all know that anyone in the area, whether they are a witness to or are made aware of a marine disaster, it is all hands to the tiller. We have seen the tragic disappearance of a fisherperson off the north-west coast this week who still has not been found, which is really tragic. We do not expect them to or maybe we do, but if any of us were in that circumstance, we would hope whoever was available and had the necessary skills would help with that search and rescue effort.

Sponsoring the Stay Afloat program dedicated to improving the mental health and wellness of the Tasmanian seafood industry is a really important program in any business, and supporting the Working on Water - WoW - program to introduce students from years 9 and 10 to a wide range of career opportunities available on, in and around the marine environment.

One of the claims essentially made about the higher salaries of these workers is there are more highly paid positions in this sector. I am not questioning that, and encouraging students to look at all the options is really important because it is the old thing - if you don't see it, you can't be it or you can't be it if you don't see it. Exposing our young people to a range of skills and opportunities is really important and I do commend them for that.

I certainly do not dispute the importance of employment in our regional areas. I do not dispute the dedication of the workers undertaking their work, whether it be at sea, in the laboratory, the hatchery, in a processing plant, as part of the distribution network or other aspects of the industry, both direct and indirect. I do believe the reports tabled here for debate should be fully considered and tested where fairly bold claims are made. I have not been able to do that to my satisfaction in the time available.

Point 2 in the member for McIntyre's motion she referred to asked us to acknowledge that the Tasmanian salmon industry is a vital social and economic contributor to the Tasmanian community. It is difficult to confirm in the sense that, how does it really compare to other industries when you are not strictly comparing like with like? It is an important sector, I am not disputing that. All of our agricultural or aquaculture and horticulture activities are important contributors. We are a very rural state. We have a lot of land, we have a lot of water - not compared to the big island to the north, but we do. We have some of the most fertile soils in the nation. Obviously, it is all very important and my comments certainly do not reflect on Deloitte Access Economics. I am just trying to understand what sits behind this motion and whether the claims being made are factual. It has been difficult to ascertain that, but I will listen to other members' contributions. Without the real clarity on the claims made, I find myself in a position where it is difficult to support the motion as it stands. I make those comments before I take my seat.

[3.08 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I rise to speak on this motion brought for debate by the member for McIntyre. Thank you for doing that. As the member for Murchison pointed out and I think you referenced yourself, member for McIntyre, we have had a short time to contemplate it over the weekend. I will do my best to reflect on it as fully as I can.

I will state from the outset, much as I recognise the positive intent the member for McIntyre had in bringing this motion, it is not one I am comfortable to support at this point because I do not believe it presents us with a balanced proposition reflective of the true impact of the salmon industry in this state.

I will speak to each of the two points of the motion and as part of that, along the way I am going to reflect on relevant aspects of the finfish inquiry, which we reported in this place in May 2022. In chairing that inquiry, I had the opportunity to consider matters relating to this industry in close detail, including industry claims, concerns raised in relation to the industry and, importantly, the regulatory role of government. Overall, my view remains this is an industry that will pursue its corporate interests vigorously, as we would expect, and it must be situated within a regulatory structure that clearly prioritises the Tasmanian community's best interests, including guaranteeing the best social, economic and environmental outcomes for our state.

I do not believe that is what we have in place, currently. We are still seeing clear evidence of policy and regulatory capture in relation to this industry, and that concerns me.

Let me begin with an extract from the Chair's Foreword of the finfish inquiry report, which I believe remains relevant to the overall view of the industry. Here, it relates and provides context for my reflections later on (2) of the motion. The foreword reads in part:

The fin fish farming industry (the Industry) is unique in terms of farmed food production in Tasmania as its operations are conducted largely in and around our public waterways.

What started as a small boutique and low-tech industry has grown and developed into a substantial presence, with significant innovation and technological development.

Challenges have arisen alongside that growth, as the State Government has been an enthusiastic promoter and supporter of the Industry. The efforts to effectively regulate the Industry and keep pace with the protection and stewardship of shared public waterways has been a challenge. The experience in Macquarie Harbour has previously prompted regulatory reform of the industry.

Representations to the inquiry indicated very different views were held by Government, industry and community stakeholders on the impacts of the Industry on our state.

Evidence received by the inquiry demonstrated a general community disquiet and discontent at the lack of opportunity for community input regarding the place of the Industry in our state's shared environment, local communities and economic profile. While Government progresses plans for expansion of fin fish farming, it is apparent community confidence in the regulation of the industry is reducing.

It is clear that if Tasmania is to embrace and benefit most from a thriving industry, all actions taken in regard to its regulation should aim to proactively improve public confidence and build the social licence of finfish farming.

Key to achieving this will be ensuring transparency and accountability are at the forefront of Government efforts. Evidence indicates the community would appreciate knowing comprehensive consideration has been given to

social, cultural, recreational and natural values and is at the heart of planning, regulation, promotion and growth of the Industry in this state.

A high level of concern was evident in many submissions in relation to environmental harm caused by the Industry, the proposed expansion of the Industry and the adequacy of the current regulatory framework.

As I said, I believe this remains an accurate comment on the industry and is reflective of the mixed regard in which the industry is held in the Tasmanian, and indeed, Australian and international communities.

I note recommendation 17 from the finfish inquiry, which was this:

To establish a framework, with criteria, for the consideration and weighting of economic, social and environmental factors in the assessment and approval of marine farming development plans.

That is a recommendation I do not believe has been adequately progressed but remains quite relevant here.

That brings me to consider the motion in some more detail. Point (1) asks us to note the economic analysis provided by the Deloitte Access Economics report dated 2020, regarding the Tasmanian salmon industry.

There is a possibility for some confusion here over which report or reports we are noting. There is the Salmon Tasmania report, which is called *The Tasmanian salmon industry: a vital social and economic contributor*, published mid-2023, though perhaps it is more of a promotional brochure than a report.

This brochure was apparently based on the Deloitte Access Economics report, which I believe was titled *Socio-economic contribution of the Tasmanian salmon industry*. It is my understanding that was produced in April 2023. The Deloitte report, as others have noted, is a private piece of work commissioned by Salmon Tasmania and is not a public document, nor are its terms of reference or data sources. However, I believe it is based on a survey of the three salmon producers in Tasmania and of their suppliers. The details of that survey design and the data collected under it are not public.

Given the Deloitte report has not been made public, I presume we are not being asked to note it as it is a private report. I imagine most members do not have access to it. I imagine what we are noting, and I think it has been clarified by the member for McIntyre, is in fact the Salmon Tasmania document that was produced.

It is worth clarifying here on the record that Salmon Tasmania is a public relations entity, created and funded by the three salmon farming operators in Tasmania - Tassal, Huon Aquaculture and Petuna. I looked to the Salmon Tasmania website to find further detail to be able to describe that entity. However, on the 'About Us' page of the website, what I found was a promotional description of the industry, broadly, but no information about the governance or the staffing or the set-up of Salmon Tasmania as an organisation, which is disappointing.

Another relevant report, while we are noting reports, that I wanted to point to because it also has come into play in producing the Salmon Tasmania document, is an IMAS report that

was produced, I believe, in 2018-19 that was titled *Salmonid aquaculture production*, and it related to elements of the Tasmanian salmon farming industry. As has been noted and mentioned in question time today, work commissioned by the state Government, from IMAS again, is underway to look at the Tasmanian salmonid aquaculture socio-economic situation, to make an assessment of that in order to inform models for the reassessment of return to the Tasmanian community when it comes to that industry, and the revising and reconsideration of that area. As we have established earlier today in the Chamber, that work is underway, it is not public as yet. There is an expectation that there would be public consultation on that model being developed to ascertain an appropriate return to the Tasmanian community from this industry.

I will look forward to seeing that work come forward. Ideally, we will see that report that IMAS is undertaking for the state Government to inform that. It would be preferable - and in the interests of transparency and accountability - it would be excellent to have that released fully as part of a consultation process with the public. Having looked at the RTI disclosure that has already come into the public domain in relation to that email chain, it does put a request to IMAS to produce an additional, and I quote here from the RTI disclosure, 'public-friendly version of the econ note completed by April 2023'.

The reply to that said that a draft would be supplied. I presume that the public-friendly version is something that might be released as part of consultation.

So, there is one further report, as we note reports, that I wanted to mention here and it has already been mentioned by the member for Murchison, and that is the report produced by the Tasmanian Independent Science Council, which is a fact check document essentially of the Salmon Tasmania brochure and the Deloitte report that sits behind it.

My understanding is that Dr Graeme Wells, who produced that fact check for the Independent Science Council, had access to the Deloitte report that sat behind the Salmon Tasmania brochure. The fact check document or report from the Independent Science Council assesses the brochure and draws on the underlying Deloitte report. I believe it also draws on the preceding background report - that *Salmonid aquaculture production* report from IMAS. It is looking at a suite of things that feed into the brochure document.

To put it on the record here, according to their website, the Tasmanian Independent Science Council is dedicated to science-based policy reform to ensure the long-term health of Tasmania's critical environments. This council is composed of scientists and relevant professionals who are a source of independent, non-government advice. Their stated goals on the website are to connect science to public policy, drive innovation in managing the use of Tasmania's terrestrial freshwater and marine ecosystems, and engage community, business and political leaders to find and implement solutions to the challenges of environmental stewardship in Tasmania.

That clarifies the various interrelated reports on this topic. In noting the Salmon Tasmania brochure, I will be making reference to the fact check document from the Independent Science Council throughout. Some of that will cover ground the member for Murchison has covered, but other areas will be brought into play as well.

As part of the summary in that Independent Science Council fact check document, I note that it says:

The Tasmanian Salmon Industry: a vital social and economic contributor (hereafter the Salmon Tasmania report) published by Salmon Tasmania, provides the first combined comprehensive and independent analysis of the industry's economic and social contribution to the Tasmanian community.

It goes on to say in the summary:

However, the Salmon Tasmania report makes a number of overestimations and misrepresentations of economic and social benefits provided by the Tasmanian salmon industry.

The key findings then are stated as:

1. Salmon Tasmania's claim that the salmon industry represents one-fifth of the entire agriculture, forestry and fishing industry is grossly exaggerated. When measured on a like-for-like basis the figure is likely to be around 6-7%.
2. Output as measured by Gross Value Added, in the three salmon producers - Tassal, Huon Aquaculture and Petuna - has increased significantly, reflecting the overall growth, automation and temporary build-up of biomass that was accelerated by the COVID pandemic.

I will talk a bit more about some more findings from that report later as we work through some other elements, but it is important to clarify. The member for McIntyre has carefully clarified this in her contribution, too, and it was also referred to by the member for Murchison. I want to include it in my contribution, for the record. We need to understand the nature of the report that we are noting. Page 3 of that Salmon Tasmania brochure says:

Salmon Tasmania has partnered with Deloitte for the first combined, comprehensive and independent analysis of the industry's economic and social contribution to the Tasmanian community.

This cannot be taken with any seriousness. There is nothing independent about an industry-owned public relations body commissioning and selectively publishing data from a report designed and paid for by that body. Nor can we, in all seriousness, understand this to be a comprehensive analysis, especially in the absence of the public availability of that Deloitte report that sits behind it, including its terms of reference, its surveying instruments, its data sources or its raw analysis.

What we do know is that the Deloitte study that underpins the Salmon Tasmania report is an economic impact assessment, an EIA.

An EIA is conceptually different to a cost-benefit analysis (CBA). An EIA reports the effect of an industry on economic activity and employment. A CBA asks whether the activity under question is socially desirable. A CBA would take into account environmental costs, the opportunity costs of resources used, and so on.

The Salmon Tasmania brochure, based on the Deloitte economic impact assessment, is somewhat misleading; and I am referring here to comments made in the Independent Science Council fact check report, which suggests it:

... dresses up an EIS [economic impact assessment] with extraneous material to make it look a bit more like a CBA [cost-benefit analysis], but in no way should it be interpreted as such. It makes no mention of environmental costs, loss of amenity ... or subsidies paid by governments.

Another key finding from that Independent Science Council fact check report was no. 3 - that the Salmon Tasmania report is based on an economic impact assessment rather than cost-benefit analysis. It does not account therefore for all those other matters that would be taken into account if we were to be asking the question, is this industry a socially desirable one for our state? I do not presume to know the answer to that. If we were to ask it, I believe that an independent cost-benefit analysis of the salmon industry in Tasmania has not recently been produced, as far as I am aware; and if it has, it has not been publicly released. This is a gap in our understanding of the industry and it should be rectified. This was discussed and recommended in the finfish inquiry and should have been a job the Government undertook to inform the development of the Salmon Plan which was released this year. I will talk more about that at a later point in the motion; but it is disappointing that we have this gap in our understanding and assessment of this industry.

I would like to pick up on some aspects of the Salmon Tasmania brochure. I will not do it too exhaustively. I know the member for McIntyre has gone through and pointed out various elements of it, and the member for Murchison has made some analysis of elements of it. I will pick up on a couple of the points which the Independent Science Council's fact check made particular note of.

One is in relation to comparisons with other Tasmanian industries. The point is made that comparisons with other Tasmanian industries in the brochure are not particularly meaningful in the way they are presented. They do not compare like with like, in terms of stages of production. For example, it says the appropriate comparator for red meat processing is salmon processing, not the whole salmon industry; or if one wanted to include the whole salmon industry, one would compare it with the red meat production and processing industries. Even so, it is not clear why such a comparison tells us anything about the social value of the industry either. Not only are we not necessarily comparing like to like, we are not really drawing a meaningful conclusion from the comparisons that we make.

The Independent Science Council report notes that the claim that the salmon industry represents one-fifth of the entire agriculture, forestry and fishing industry is grossly exaggerated. When measured on a like-for-like basis, the Independent Science Council asserts that the figure is more likely to be around 6 to 7 per cent. They lay out in detail, which I won't go into here, why that is the case. They look at classifications under the ABS industry classifications, and how that relates to these industries and this grouping of industries. It makes a distinction between the agriculture, forestry and fishing division under the ABS classification, and the manufacturing division under that same classification, and points to the fact that a direct comparison of the two figures is not appropriate. It points out the fact that according to ABS data for 2020-21, Gross Value Added in the agriculture, forestry and fishery industry is \$4710 million but direct GVA in the salmon industry is \$426.9 million. A direct comparison of those two figures suggests the salmon industry share of the agriculture, forestry and fishing

division is 9 per cent, not 20 per cent as claimed in the Salmon Tasmania brochure. It also notes that other inclusions, including processing, into the equations, have probably inflated it even more; so on a like-for-like basis, the salmon industry is probably only around that 6 to 7 per cent mark. I would be interested to hear a response to that from the industry, on the basis of the figures it used to arrive at the 20 per cent figure.

Mr President, exaggeration and inflation of the value of an industry using misleading comparisons certainly does not prompt us to have confidence in the integrity of this document, or of the intentions of the people who have produced it, and that is a shame. This is an industry that can stand on its own feet here, with accurate and transparent data presented to the community to form the basis of the conversations we have about its place in our state.

The next general area of the Salmon Tasmania brochure that I will make comment about relates to jobs in the industry. Looking back to the Legislative Council finfish inquiry, I note one of the findings - finding 150, that there are competing claims regarding the current and future employment numbers attributed to the Tasmanian finfish farming industry. Certainly, that appears to continue to be the case. Of particular note in the Salmon Tasmania document are the inflated claims it appears to be making about income in the salmon industry and salmon industry jobs in comparison to the Tasmanian average wage.

A key finding - no. 4 - from the fact check document:

4. Salmon Tasmania claims that the industry jobs pay 56% more than the average Tasmanian job. Although it is difficult to directly compare wage data, it is likely that wages in the broader salmon industry are almost the same as the average Tasmanian wage, if both direct and indirect employment by the industry is considered. If the comparator is only the wage paid directly by the three salmon producers, then wages are higher than the average wage in Tasmania. However, on a like-for-like basis, the difference is likely to be significantly less than 56%.

The Independent Science Council report notes that it is difficult to evaluate Salmon Tasmania's claims that jobs in the salmon industry pay up to 73.9 per cent more than the average job in regional Tasmania, with 56 per cent more than the average Tasmanian job. The Deloitte report apparently provides some context for that latter claim. The Independent Science Council report does a breakdown of that in a table on page 7, presenting the data. The table shows that when measured in terms of full-time jobs for the salmon industry as a whole, the wages are roughly the same as the average Tasmanian job; and that if we were to compare like for like, even those direct jobs from the salmon producers are comparable to other like wages.

In a media release that accompanied the Independent Science Council fact check report, Dr Graeme Wells, who produced that report, said:

'The salmon industry has previously made the grossly exaggerated claim that it employed 12,000 Tasmanians, at a time when it could be readily established that the producers themselves employed around 2,000 Tasmanians. It is a pity that the latest report from Salmon Tasmania has not been more careful in the claims it makes,' ...

'Now that all three salmon producers are under foreign ownership, industry finances and economic contributions have become even more opaque. Salmon Tasmania has missed an opportunity to provide the Tasmanian public with a transparent, holistic analysis that accounts for all social, economic and environmental costs and benefits of the industry,' said Dr Wells.

'We can all agree that the industry is an important employer, especially in regional areas. But trust in industry reporting requires accuracy, not exaggeration,' said Dr Wells.

I agree with Dr Wells's further comments in that media release, that while the industry is an important employer in regional areas, inaccuracy and exaggeration are not necessary, nor reputable, when it comes to assessing its value for the state.

There have always been questions over the impact of increased automation in this industry on the number of jobs provided, especially in the regions. While the Salmon Tasmania brochure on page 4 says that one in every four jobs are related to the salmon industry in regional areas, I will just clarify which regional areas they were. Sorry, that was in relation to the Huon Valley. They have not provided the source for that figure, nor what is captured by the term 'related to the salmon industry'. It has also been pointed out to me the Huon Valley Council website appears to indicate Huon Valley jobs in the salmon industry have decreased by 30 per cent over the past five years. I am not sure what has driven that decrease, if in fact that is reflective of a decrease. Perhaps the jobs have been centralised to Hobart, perhaps the jobs are being done by drive-in, drive-out workers rather than Huon Valley workers. When we are presented with figures like one in four, but without any understanding of exactly what is captured by that or what that data source is, it is difficult for us to assess.

I also note on page 4 a similar claim, that in Latrobe, Tasman and West Coast, 17 per cent of all jobs are related to the salmon industry. However, on Tasmania's west coast, I know if we look at the areas of Strahan, Zeehan, Rosebery, Tullah and Trial Harbour and use Census data, which is the most independent and accurate data available, agriculture accounts for 4.2 per cent of total employment. Again, with the source of the figure of 17 per cent for Latrobe, Tasman and West Coast, it is not clear where that is derived from, nor what is captured by that term 'related to the salmon industry'. I am not clear on why we would be grouping Latrobe, Tasman and the west coast, rather than looking at each as a distinct area for which an accurate figure could be provided. There would be other regional areas we could look to also, to have a distinct figure to understand best the unique situation.

We can understand why the salmon industry would wish to inflate the impression of its significance, especially in our regional areas, to try to lock in community and political support. But using data in misleading ways and cherry-picking data, while it is to be expected in industry propaganda, it is not an appropriate basis for government policies. What we do with this sort of document is important and how we regard it when it comes to government policy and decision-making is important. It is important to have transparent, accurate analysis of this kind of data so we can effectively understand and plan for the presence and the regulation of this industry in Tasmania. The Government must take responsibility for seeking or producing data and analysis of data that is independent of vested interests and transparently available for public scrutiny.

I also note when it comes to the issue of jobs in this industry, Salmon Tasmania has itself complained in the media. In a news.com article on 12 April 2023, the costs of production in Tasmania are 30 per cent higher than global costs, and they declared that jobs are a key contributor to that. The quote there in that article, from Salmon Tasmania, is this:

Costs of production in Australia are higher than our international competitors by around 30 per cent.

Labour costs are higher and add to this the cost of freight and fuel from Tasmania.

That was JBS CEO Henry Batista who was calling for less regulation and production costs and, apparently, making or referring to plans to potentially import labour, which is something we would feel concerned about in this state. Potentially, this industry would prefer to have it support local jobs and employment. Having commented on these concerns with regard to jobs, particularly the inflated claims by the industry in the document, I also wish to clearly acknowledge there are many Tasmanians that work in this industry, and its associated industries, who love their job and are happy to have the opportunities these jobs provide, particularly in regional areas.

We can have this industry and the jobs it provides as part of our state picture, and we can optimise the social, economic and environmental outcomes from it. But that will not occur until the Government stops what, too often, looks like obsequious capitulation to this industry and starts standing up for the best interests of the Tasmanian community.

Point 2 of the motion asks us to acknowledge the Tasmanian salmon industry is a vital social and economic contributor to the Tasmanian community. In a simple response to that, I would say that is overstated and it is difficult for us to assess, based on what we are presented with, to contemplate under this motion.

A social licence certainly cannot be claimed on the basis of misleading or overstated assertions or assertions that do not have transparency and accountability, or the ability to scrutinise, associated with them.

I do not believe that what point 2 asks us to acknowledge is a balanced picture of the industry and its place in this state.

One thing is for sure, the Tasmanian salmon industry is now a vital contributor to three multinational companies whose interests lie far away from our shores. In times past, there was a local affection for this industry, based on it being seen as a locally owned success story. There was a perception of a direct and positive connection between those who owned and were running the companies, and those who worked for them and the communities in which they operated.

We have moved well away from that now, although the industry is no doubt trying as hard as it can to hold on to any residual habitual local affection.

The situation now, however, is that the salmon industry is foreign-controlled and owned by multinational companies which have far from impeccable reputations. The member for Murchison referred to this in her contribution. I point out that one of these companies is an ex-

Japanese whaling company - Nissui, now half-owner of Petuna. One of these companies was found guilty of the biggest corruption scandal in world history in Brazil, JBS, now owner of Huon Aquaculture. Tassal owner Cooke Aquaculture's behaviour in Washington State in the USA led to open-net salmon farming being banned there after their operations, in the words of Hillary Franz, the State Commissioner of Public Lands, 'put our state's aquatic ecosystem at risk'.

In addition to issues with the international reputation of these companies, a further concern is now that all three salmon farming companies are foreign-owned, they have even less transparency around their financial situation. In the media release that accompanied the Independent Science Council fact check report, Dr Graeme Wells pointed to this:

Now that all three salmon producers are under foreign ownership, industry finances and economic contributions have become even more opaque. Salmon Tasmania has missed an opportunity to provide the Tasmanian public with a transparent, holistic analysis that accounts for all social, economic and environmental costs and benefits of the industry ...

I move on to speak about the aspect of economic contribution point 2 asks us to be acknowledging. The Legislative Council finfish inquiry report finding 149 was that there are questions raised regarding the direct economic returns generated by the finfish farming industry to both local communities and to the Tasmanian economy.

There was recommendation no. 54, which was this:

Undertake and publicly release an assessment of the economic benefit provided by the fin fish farming industry to local communities in which industry operations are based and to the state overall.

These are thoughtful findings and recommendations we brought forth from this inquiry. The reason to follow that recommendation is to provide and add into discussion about a social licence for this industry in this state. Without that independent verifiable assessment of economic benefit, it is very difficult for us to understand the place of the industry in this state.

Economic contribution, of course, can be contested. Certainly, when we see overstatements by industry of figures and when we see nothing provided necessarily to fill the void in terms of an independent assessment either from government or commissioned by government, from a totally separate non-industry entity, then we are left slightly at odds. Even if we do not contest the industry figures that are put forward, by international standards the economic benefit of this industry to this state is woefully in favour of the multinational owners and not the local Tasmanian community. It simply does not look like the Government is interested or willing to get the most benefit for our state and its people from the presence of this industry in our waterways. That is what I say when I look backwards.

I hope that looking forward, and given what we have heard about the work being undertaken by government about returns to the Tasmanian community, and consulting on that and models for it, hopefully when we look forward that might be a different scenario. At the moment, unlike many other jurisdictions globally, we are not seeing the returns to the Tasmanian people that we should achieve from this industry if we were following their example.

There are other options. We do not have to be pleading supplicants to this multinational-owned industry. The new Tasmanian Salmon Industry Plan was a wonderful opportunity to turn over a new leaf on this and stringently pursue the social, environmental and economic interests of our state in formulating this new plan. Unfortunately, on my assessment, this is not what has happened. I note that the Tasmanian Independent Science Council made several submissions throughout the consultation process on the Salmon Industry Plan and after the Tasmanian Government failed to incorporate any recommendations from that body into the salmon plan, the council did something that I think was a positive and constructive thing. It put forward its own plan B, an alternative vision for aquaculture in Tasmania. Rather than just gripe, it said, what could this look like if we were to follow some of the suggestions being made by the Independent Science Council?

The key points of that plan put forward by the Independent Science Council included: the rapid expansion and increased automation of the industry has not resulted in a proportional increase in employment. Regional communities will benefit greatly if substantial taxes and fees are levied and funds are distributed between the state and the regions.

Additional lease and/or production-based charges could be introduced to support a wide variety of social, economic and environmental initiatives in regional areas. That is a positive way to see an opportunity to better promote the economic interests of our regions and our state.

Another key point was clear policy, strong regulations and transparent reporting being needed to prevent environmental harm and maximise social and economic benefits. Again, a fairly straightforward statement but it is a recognition that it is not what is regarded as happening at the moment.

They also suggested the publication of annual reports on salmon production and impacts at state, regional and lease-specific levels being critical for transparency, particularly with foreign ownership being the context in which this industry is operating.

This was a positive contribution from the Independent Science Council. It provided for a presence in this state for the salmon industry while actively putting forward ideas for protecting the social, environmental and economic interests of our state. It demonstrates that there is not just one way we can deal with this industry in our state, and we can be thoughtful and creative and put our state's and our people's best interests at the forefront when we think about the way forward.

I note that arrangements for leases and fee structures, and levies and fee structures, and that sort of return from the industry is much talked about. Point (2) of this motion is quite relevant when we talk about the economic contribution to the Tasmanian community. I have referred to some of that already. Certainly, the Legislative Council finfish inquiry looked at this in detail. It had recommendation 40 to ensure appropriate returns to the Tasmanian community. That recommendation said it should commission an independent review of fee and levy structures for finfish farming, including a number of items.

It also put forward recommendation 41, which was to ensure that any review of fee and levy structures for finfish farming includes public consultation and an examination of other jurisdictions. I believe, from the way the minister has described it, that is the work that is being undertaken currently by the Government, and I look forward to seeing that play out in a positive way in times to come.

As I said earlier in my contribution, if the Government has commissioned from IMAS, as it would appear it has, work done on the socio-economic assessment of the salmon industry in the state, to underpin this work, it would be reasonable and appropriate for the Government to release that publicly as part of taking this forward. We do not want yet another example where we have an apparent piece of work done about this industry which stays behind the veil of secrecy. This industry and the analysis we do of it should be robust and transparent. It should be able to see the light of day and stand up to plenty of independent scrutiny and community and government discussion. Many of these reports stay hidden away and nothing about that builds confidence in this industry. Nothing about that delivers a social licence to this industry.

The other aspect of part (2) of this motion is acknowledging the social contribution of the industry. This is a difficult one, it is a mixed bag. It was interesting for me to look back in the context of the Legislative Council finfish inquiry, to what we heard about there and the sorts of the things that were brought to our attention. I note two findings from that report that are relevant in terms of social impact. Finding 146 from that report said:

There is an appreciation for the fin fish farming industry and associated benefits it provides to local communities, including employment, economic activity and support to local clubs, associations, schools.

It was very positive that we heard that clearly through that inquiry. Then, we also had finding 147, which said this:

There is a perception and concern from some community members that the fin fish farming industry 'purchases' social licence through contributions to local clubs, associations, schools.

It is an interesting flip side of similar observations. I note we also had finding 148, which said:

Individual community members reported experiencing social exclusion as a result of their non-affiliation with the fin fish farming industry.

I imagine that had we heard more from people involved in the finfish farming industry, we might have heard them report instances of social exclusion because of their employment or association with the industry. That cut both ways, in that sense, to be very fair.

That is reflective of the fact that communities do see social benefit flowing from this industry, but at other times they feel concerned about potential greenwashing, or social washing, community washing, of this industry through that support or largesse that is shown.

I note that the minister responsible, Ms Palmer, earlier this year publicly admitted that the industry had lost the confidence of the Tasmanian people. That was a direct statement made. I thought that was refreshing because it is important to note that is the case for some in the Tasmanian community and that we need to go forward in recognition of it. It is also a telling admission, to some extent. It prompts us to ask, what is Government doing to effectively restore that confidence if it has been lost? Also, what is industry doing to effectively restore that confidence if it has been lost?

We can assume that industry will behave as a corporate entity typically does, quite normally and predictably. It will supercharge its promotional activities. It will supercharge its appeals to the community for support and appeals to the political sphere for support. It will do things like produce glossy brochures, with really nice pictures in them, and favourable figures presented about its presence and impact. That is what a corporate entity or industry does.

It is even more important for us, here in this place, to think about what the Government is doing to effectively restore confidence for this industry. It is essential, having noted a loss of confidence from the community in relation to the industry, that this Government does not just go forward with business as usual, that there is a plan, not to fluff our way through it, obscure our way through, or even force our way through it. I am not suggesting that is happening, but we cannot do anything other than honestly and transparently discuss our way through it and make plans together that everybody can have confidence in.

When I think about the social, economic and environmental impact of the salmon industry in the state, something that I feel is relevant and which is not discussed enough, is the bearing it has on our tourism industry. I note that in the Legislative Council inquiry, we had a finding and a recommendation that related to this side of things that I think is under-discussed. Finding 181 was:

Concern was expressed that the fin fish farming industry impacts negatively on Tasmania's clean green image, tourism and brand.

Recommendation 66 from that inquiry was:

Conduct a review of the fin fish farming industry impact on and relationship with the Tasmanian tourism industry to inform the revised Salmon Industry Growth Plan.

We know that the tourism industry is, without a doubt, a vital social and economic contributor to our state. According to Tourism Tasmania, there are 19 400 people employed in tourism, which is about 10 times as many as in the salmon industry.

Ms Rattray - Ten times?

Ms WEBB - Well, if we only count the direct, yes, just short of 2000 -

Ms Rattray - My maths was not that good, Mr President, I could not work that out - 5000 and then 19 000.

Ms WEBB - It is not 5000 directly employed in the salmon industry. I do not believe that is the direct employment figure. Concerns are regularly raised that the environmental damage that the salmon industry is causing is threatening the tourism industry in our state. When we look to the west coast, in Strahan and its surrounds, the many tourism jobs there relying on the health of Macquarie Harbour far outnumber the jobs that are there in aquaculture. Now, it is not a competition between those two industries, but we do have to think about how industries interact and interplay in the state. The two industries are not mutually exclusive, but at this time, from my perspective, we have not sought to properly assess their impact on each other or the relative protections and supports that are provided to them. I still look to that

recommendation that came from the finfish inquiry and would hope to see it progressed, so we can better understand that.

Mr President, of crucial importance here, in our discussion and in the motion as it is stated, is the omission. It is an omission that is in the Deloitte report, I believe; it is an omission in the Salmon Tasmania brochure. It is an omission in the motion. That is, any acknowledgement of the environmental impact of this industry. We are talking about social, we are talking about economic, but we are not talking about environmental.

That, for me, is problematic when we know that this industry does have an environmental impact and the cost of that is borne by the state and by the people of Tasmania. I believe it is not possible to talk about social and economic without talking about environmental in respect to this industry. It is only through a genuine and comprehensive consideration of social, economic and environmental impacts that we can make an assessment of the value and the contribution that the salmon industry makes to this state. A great deal of evidence was certainly presented to the Legislative Council finfish inquiry on the matter of environmental impact - from the industry itself, from the scientific community and from the general public. There were some interesting thoughts on some possible ways forward to help think about an offset of environmental impact on this industry. I note recommendation 42 from the inquiry report states:

Apply environmental bonds to the fin fish farming industry to ensure sufficient funds for any remedial work required due to the operations of the industry.

That was a suggestion that had come through and that the inquiry had considered valuable. Recommendation 48 also talked about this:

Review the penalties and scope of liability in regulation of fin fish farming to reflect the serious environmental consequences that can arise from breaching regulations and to strengthen their deterrent effect.

This recognised that considerable concerns were raised in relation to what was regarded as the inadequacy of environmental protections - the lack of teeth that we had in our regulatory regime to deter the industry from breaching the protections that were there under regulation.

I believe those two recommendations reflected that people would appreciate seeing some strengthening put into the consequences for the industry, in terms of the environment. Neither of those have been substantially picked up or progressed by the Government, to my knowledge, at this time, but I note concerns remain high.

In the Legislative Council finfish inquiry, we spent a lot of time considering the precautionary approach versus adaptive management, and I know that the member for Murchison referenced this in her contribution. Finding 136 notes:

Concerns were raised that the current monitoring and reporting framework is not sufficient to support an effective adaptive management approach in regulation of the fin fish farming industry.

Finding 140 states:

Concerns were raised that the application of an adaptive management approach may be compromised in situations where measures required to address environmental harm are in conflict with the fin fish farming industry's financial investment.

That is where we run up against protecting the environment versus the financial outcomes of the industry. That is a key concern.

I am not aware of the recommendations that related to a precautionary approach and adaptive management that were made in the inquiry's report. I am not aware that they have been meaningfully progressed, but I firmly believe that adaptive management is failing us. It has not been used appropriately or effectively in all instances in all farming operations around the state. The two situations to mention here in relation to that are the devastation of Long Bay on the Tasman Peninsula and the Maugean skate, which has been driven to near extinction in Macquarie Harbour. I note as context for any discussion about Long Bay, that recommendation 3 from the Legislative Council inquiry said:

Develop a plan, in consultation with industry, scientific and community stakeholders, to reduce inshore fin fish farming sites with priority given to ceasing operations in sensitive, sheltered and biodiverse areas.

This is an area that is so well understood by the Tasmanian community. There is broad agreement that finfish farming does not belong in shallow, inshore areas that are sensitive and where the biodiversity is being impacted. Long Bay is a prime example of that recommendation 3. It is shallow. It is sheltered. It is not suitable for open pen salmon farming. It is currently being decimated by water pollution, by persistent nuisance algal blooms, by damage to reef and seagrass habitats.

Long Bay would never be approved for open pen salmon farming if it was put through the approval process today. It was approved a long time ago, for what was then a very different industry in terms of scale and intensity. From memory, I believe it lay fallow for many years and was then brought back into operation in 2017-18, without having to undergo any updated approval process because it was within a 10-year window of having been left fallow. Now, we see it intensively stocked and with terrible impact on the marine environment and the public amenity of Long Bay.

It does not surprise me when we see reporting about polling being done. I believe there is Australia Institute polling on support for this recommendation 3 - to be making a plan to reduce inshore finfish farming sites - that shows nearly three in four Tasmanians supporting that proposition.

The Tasmanian Independent Science Council has authored a report on impacts of salmon farming in Long Bay, and it is very instructive. That report points to salmon waste being responsible for over 90 per cent of the excess nutrients discharged into Long Bay, which is leading to those nuisance algal blooms and reduced water quality. It shows that monitoring done by the EPA and IMAS and independent consultants shows that the environmental impacts of the Long Bay lease extend well beyond the 35-metre zone that is permitted under its environmental licence; so, it is breaking the licence conditions. The Independent Science Council urges the environmental licence for the Long Bay lease not to be renewed when it expires in November 2023.

The situation in Long Bay is just one example of the need to fully assess, analyse, document and weigh up the environmental impact of this industry. And, if we are to acknowledge its social and economic impact, environmental concerns are inextricably woven through that.

The other example I pointed to was that of the Maugean skate in Macquarie Harbour. It is another clear failure when it comes to adaptive management of salmon farming. The imminent extinction of that animal -

Sitting suspended from 4.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

MOTION

Noting - Salmon Tasmania and Deloitte Access Economics Report

Resumed from above.

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - I was speaking about the Maugean skate before the break. I was about to note the Australian Government conservation advice released last week on 6 September, and on page 2 in its summary it said this:

The primary threat to the species is degraded water quality, in particular substantially reduced levels of dissolved oxygen throughout Macquarie Harbour. There is a significant correlation between the reduction in dissolved oxygen levels and increases in salmonid aquaculture, due to the bacterial degradation of organic material introduced into the water column from fish-feed and fish-waste.

In the Australian Government conservation advice, the key urgent action identified is this:

Increasing the levels of dissolved oxygen in Macquarie Harbour via a reduction in salmonid aquaculture organic loads, and/or utilisation of mechanical/engineering environmental remediation technologies.

It is very clear the federal intervention comes at a critical moment when marine farming and environmental licences for finfish farming in Macquarie Harbour expire on 30 November 2023. Time is critical for this species. Early intervention is almost behind us. We need science-based management strategies implemented immediately with urgency.

Reductions in biomass made a number of years ago, after what had been a massive ramp-up, I might say, had caused the previous crisis in the harbour that the member for Murchison referred to. The reductions made since then have not done enough to improve the situation. Clearly, they need to go much further and not renew these licences to operate until the harbour has had a chance to recover, and the Maugean skate has had an opportunity to be saved from extinction. Urgent decisive action is needed, or this Government, and the salmon industry, will go down in history for having caused the extinction of a Tasmanian species.

If the Maugean skate is driven to extinction in Macquarie Harbour with salmon farming operations clearly identified as the key driver of that extinction, this industry will never again be able to lay claim to being sustainable, in my view. 'Sustainable' means that you can remediate the impact that has been caused. You cannot remediate extinction.

In the area of environmental impact, another aspect I want to touch on is the impact on our freshwater systems in this state. Again, in our Legislative Council finfish inquiry, this area was considered and I am going to note here recommendation 44 from that inquiry, which was:

Conduct an independent review of the impacts of current fin fish operations on inland waterways, including drinking water supplies and remediation costs borne by TasWater/State Government.

Recommendation 45, which was:

Require all new freshwater fin fish hatcheries/smolt production facilities to utilise Recirculating Aquaculture Systems.

Recommendation 46:

Publicly release monitoring data relating to the operation of freshwater fin fish operations.

Mr President, to my knowledge, some of these have been partially progressed in some sense, but others not.

Concerns continue to be raised about the impact of the salmon industry on our freshwater systems throughout the state. While we are introducing more recirculating aquaculture systems - RAS, which is very positive, we still have existing flow-through hatcheries continuing to be a problem in the state and no expressed intention to remove them all or change them over to RAS.

In recent times, to my knowledge, we have not had a comprehensive statewide assessment of the state of our rivers in Tasmania. Similarly, we know we have now gone 14 years without a State of the Environment Report. This Government has ignored the statutory requirement to produce a State of the Environment Report twice - in 2014 and again in 2019. Now, we apparently have one finally being progressed to be delivered next year.

The gap that is caused by this kind of failure by government to meet statutory responsibilities, to produce important scientific data and monitoring, contributes to the likelihood that environmental impacts and concerns relating to industries such as the salmon industry will not be appropriately understood, documented and acted on.

We currently have fresh public concerns being raised about potential public health disasters in our drinking water catchment areas, with possible links being identified with rising rates of motor neurone disease. The link between algal blooms and MND is becoming more discussed and examined, and we will be watching that keenly given our situation here, where Hobart's drinking water supply is affected by pollution from salmon hatcheries in the catchment areas, and by the now notorious Jenkins composting facility. That facility is a dumping ground located on a Derwent River tributary, where, among other waste, hundreds of thousands of

salmon corpses that routinely die in the salmon cages are left to rot in that facility, further polluting Hobart's drinking water. I also note, this summer there is a predicted super marine heatwave, which will almost certainly see potentially millions of caged salmon slowly suffocating to death. Their bodies will presumably need to be disposed of and perhaps dumped at this same site, by the side of our drinking water catchment, polluting it further. Not enough is being done to monitor, document and respond to the impact of the salmon industry on our freshwater systems in this state.

On the matter of environmental protection, we know that the Government is progressing a new set of environmental standards relating to this industry. However, I do note the Tasmanian Independent Science Council made a submission to the draft environmental standards when they were put out for comment, which expressed serious concerns that those drafts standards appear to provide less environmental protection and less clarity than the existing environmental licence conditions.

The Independent Science Council has also published a one-page summary outlining key issues related to this. The issues include significant extensions of allowable impact, extending from the 35-metre boundary at this present time to possibly 135 metres; key omissions, such as stocking densities, fallowing and dissolved nitrogen outputs; different standards for current and future operations. Multiple associated standards and guidelines that are being developed in similar time frames and the interplay together make it unclear how those various standards would now be applied by the EPA and other regulatory bodies. There is a lack of transparency, the Independent Science Council says, regarding the development of this standard, no regular public reporting period, and no opportunity for third-party appeals.

There is much more that could be said on matters relating to the environmental impact of the salmon industry, which is one reason I believe any balanced discussion of this industry cannot exclude consideration of environmental impact. Any credible and comprehensive cost-benefit analysis would include this as an essential element.

To conclude, we know the best interests of our state are not, and will not be in the future, served by sycophantic pandering by government and regulators to huge corporate interests. Those corporate interests will always have the upper hand over community interests when it comes to trying to influence government policy and the regulatory environment. Regular community members, for example, cannot afford \$4000 tickets to attend dinners with ministers and premiers. Nor can the community match the availability to the salmon industry, for example, of a cashed-up, slick public relations body to promote and lobby on behalf of that industry and produce documents such as this lovely brochure.

There should be no corporate industry in this state that receives government support at any costs. We are a state that should have the confidence, creativity and entrepreneurship matched with our outstanding natural assets to put us on the front foot when negotiating and setting the parameters for corporate investment in Tasmania. Too often it appears we counter our corporate interests and much too readily trade off protection of our environment and social values in the belief we will otherwise miss out on investments being made here and the opportunity for jobs and economic growth. However, we also know the powerhouse industries of our state such as tourism are based squarely on those self-same natural assets we are too readily trading away.

Any industry will want to promote its own interests and will seek to influence government policy and regulation, and shape community perceptions. Such is the nature of those industries. However, they at least should have the integrity to do so on the basis of factual, accurate, transparent information and data. That is not what I believe has been produced by the salmon industry in Tasmania in this brochure we have before us and as we are noting in the motion. This is not transparent. It cannot be verified as accurate and that is a shame.

I am not able to support the motion before us. I can note the economic analysis provided by Deloitte Access Economics' report dated 2020 regarding the Tasmanian salmon industry and the Salmon Tasmania brochure derived from it, but only with the clarification that the Deloitte document is not in the public domain and its full details are not able to be tested; that neither of those, the Deloitte background paper or the brochure produced by Salmon Tasmania, is a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of the industry's impact on the state, and both contain contested data and claims.

I can acknowledge the Tasmanian salmon industry is a social and economic contributor to Tasmania, as are many other key industries. However, the Tasmanian salmon industry is also a contentious industry in this state, especially in relation to the environmental damage it causes in public waterways and on coastlines. Given that, with the specific wording of this motion, I am not able to support it. I do appreciate the opportunity the member has provided for us to discuss this industry. Having more open and transparent discussion based on verifiable, accountable, open and transparent data is important and does help us potentially track a way forward, where we can reduce the level of contention that surrounds the industry in this state and deliver best outcomes, not just social or economic, but also environmental, all three, for our Tasmanian community.

[4.43 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I am noting the Tasmanian Salmon Industry report partnered with Deloitte. I look forward to these reports and the debating of these reports. I cannot wait until the Botanical Gardens annual report comes out; I am going to put that on there because I like that.

It is our right and it is proper to put these reports for noting on our Notice Paper.

Ms Forrest - Certified audited financial accounts are slightly different from this.

Ms Webb - It is not a government agency.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, but we have the right to put whatever we like on the Notice Paper. Salmon is the highest-value primary industry sector in Tasmania. When I read that, I took a bit of offence. Being an old spud farmer, and I say that respectfully to myself, I thought, spuds, potatoes, have to be the biggest, and had a bit of a look. The salmon industry is the highest-value primary industry sector in Tasmania at \$1.36 billion, as on page 3 of this report. I took a bit of liberty with the minister for agriculture and asked her adviser, how do spuds fit into this? Spuds do 450 tonnes of spuds, \$1000 per tonne. In 2020-21, there was \$165 million valued at \$429 million when processed. Spud farmers are not in the ballpark if it is \$1.36 billion for salmon.

Ms Rattray - You cannot manage without spuds.

Mrs HISCUTT - Salmon and spuds - what better can we do? It is Tasmania's largest aquaculture exporter. I cannot argue with that one. It is Australia's most valuable seafood production sector. It is an important social and economic contributor, supporting thousands of direct and indirect jobs right across the regions of Tasmania. All of this has been achieved through the hard work, dedication and passion of salmon aquaculture industry workers and they are supporting businesses.

I am still a bit annoyed about potatoes, but anyway.

There would not be many Tasmanian families who do not know someone who is working in the industry or one of those supporting sectors.

Take, for example, Peter and Una Rockcliff. With a passion for Tasmanian seafood, together they established Petuna. It was a family company whose history dates back to the 1940s. A strong operator in the wild fisheries sector, Petuna was also an early pioneer of aquaculture in Tasmania, having been involved since the 1980s. Now run by the New Zealand fishing company Sealord Group, Petuna's salmon and trout farming is still firmly grounded in Tasmania, with a workforce made up of 80 per cent of local employees, with 160 Tasmanians.

Their footprint in the north, west and south of the state is with major marine farms in Macquarie Harbour and Rowella on the Tamar River and the state-of-the-art hatchery facility at Cressy - this is the Tasmanian, in general, seafood industry - which we have been for a look at and the processing factory and distribution centre in Devonport.

Petuna just recently opened its third recirculating aquaculture hatchery system at Cressy, a \$13 million project. It is an integral part of their sustainability strategy. What is most outstanding is that 70 per cent of the total build was carried out by Tasmanian companies. This project is grounded in enhancing environmental outcomes, creating optimum conditions for young fish and replacing the company's resilience on flow-through hatchery systems for their salmonoid production for marine farm grow-out. Indeed, investments such as these demonstrate the industry's confidence in their product, its ability to continue to sustainably develop and its grounding here in Tasmania.

This strongly aligns with the direction set by government in its industry plan - a plan that is committed to the priority outcomes of sustainable industry, healthy ecosystems, prosperous communities and contemporary governance.

This plan demonstrates there is more we can do to improve environmental management outcomes, improve our legislation and regulatory frameworks, provide greater transparency and improve communications, and to deliver an appropriate return to the community from the salmon aquaculture industry.

Many of these priority actions directly reflect the Government's response to the Legislative Council's comprehensive inquiry into finfish farming in Tasmania. I acknowledge this body of work and the direction it provided government in the drafting of the plan and implementation program.

The Government backs the industry and supporting businesses. That has been made very clear by the Minister of Primary Industries, that there will be no rubberstamping of development proposals. Clear statutory planning processes apply to any existing new and

offshore farms. The Government will support planning proposals that have a positive social and economic effect and maintain or improve environmental and biosecurity performances.

The Government has committed to continuing community engagement forums. This will see regular and consistent engagement with the community and local government on the plan, implementation, broader aquaculture and marine resource management. Through these forums, we will continue to engage with and listen to stakeholders. The community can have certainty in these processes and that there will be an industry here supporting their families and regional communities long into the future.

Huon, Tassal and Petuna are all about employing Tasmanian people and giving back to their local communities directly and indirectly.

In regional locations such as Parramatta Creek, where Huon has a major processing facility, hundreds of Tasmanian workers are there, day in and day out, processing tonnes of salmon for daily consumption across Australia. The industry supports education outcomes, broader environmental outcomes, social and sporting clubs and provides on-water assistance and marine rescues. Huon is a major sponsor of the Southern Football League and contributes to the men's and the women's football clubs and that is on page 7 of this report. They contribute to nine men's football clubs and 14 women's football clubs across the southern region - pretty good.

In 2021-22, Tassal provided \$270 000 in direct community support. Petuna have donated more than \$750 000 worth of product to Foodbank Australia to help those most vulnerable. These are just some of the direct examples highlighted in the industry's report. Indirectly, there are examples of local cafes, such as the Port Huon Trading Post, who claim that aquaculture workers are some of their best customers, and we find their story further in on page 9. At lunchtime, aquaculture employees account for up to 70 per cent of their customers.

When you are a small business employing 14 staff, that consistency of support from big industry and workers is vital. There are so many small, medium and large businesses that support the salmon aquaculture industry, with many of these being located in regional communities. In the Huon Valley, one in every four jobs is related to the salmon industry. I am sure that the member for Huon might be able to talk about that a little bit.

Ms Webb - Give us the detail of what that means.

Mrs HISCUTT - Family-run businesses, such as Mitchell Plastic Welding, employ some 50 people in their local operations in Geeveston. This business is manufacturing state-of-the-art infrastructure for the aquaculture industry, and their story is on the next page. I have had a crack at plastic welding in my time and, if you are not very careful, it all just melts, so you have to be very careful. It is a specialised trade and this is specifically here, which is going to support the industry.

The certainty of business provided by the aquaculture industry has meant that Mitchell Plastic Welding can invest \$16 million into a purpose-built recycling and injection moulding facility in Brighton, making Tasmania home to one of a very few facilities of its kind in Australia. It is so important for industry to share these broader stories of the positive impact that it has on Tasmanian communities, and I congratulate them on the publication of this report.

The Government backs this industry. It is an industry that is economically successful, environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and well managed. It backs work and families. We must not lose sight of where we have come from since the salmon aquaculture industry started some 40 years ago. There have been many achievements to date led by government. We transferred responsibility for the environmental regulation of the industry to the independent EPA, including the requirement for new environmental licences, along with environmental monitoring. I am sure members here will remember when we did that bill and progressed it through the House to give the EPA independence.

We have brought greater transparency through publishing environmental, fish health, and other industry data on the salmon portal, as well as benchmarking the Tasmanian industry through the Tasmanian Salmon Industry Environmental Scorecard. We ensured all environmental licences and marine farming licences are publicly accessible. We introduced a zero-tolerance policy on marine farming debris and gave Marine and Safety Tasmania a formal role in safety enforcement around marine farms. We introduced licence conditions specific to marine farming equipment, developed online reporting tools for the public to use, and published relevant data on the salmon portal website.

We invested with industry into science and research and development through the world-class Tasmanian Institute for Marine and Antarctic Science (IMAS). We committed long-term funding and significant in-kind and intellectual support to the Blue Economy CRC that is paving the way for new offshore aquaculture. We are ensuring that Tasmania leads the way in the development of aquaculture in Commonwealth waters. Finally, and with the release of the Tasmanian Salmon Industry Plan, under the portfolio of the minister for Primary Industries - and I am sure we will all hear a bit more about that shortly - that was released on 1 May this year, the Government has reset the strategic framework to support the industry in the long term and to ensure that it continues to operate and support Tasmania and Tasmanians long into the future. I note the report.

[4.56 p.m.]

Mr EDMUNDS (Pembroke) - Mr President, thank you to the member for McIntyre for the motion. Thank you to other members and members of the community for their interest in this topic. We are fortunate in this Chamber that we have a minister who will be best placed to respond to a lot of the comments that we would all probably make during this debate.

I am a big supporter of this industry and the jobs that it creates for Tasmanians. I am on the record doing that when people in my community raise it and often then say, 'Well, if you have concerns, send them through'. Sometimes they send them through and sometimes they do not. I was at Home Hill for the launch of the Deloitte report which we are talking about today. I was not aware there were actually 1200 people in attendance, but it was certainly a massive event. It had everyone from executives to factory workers and office staff. I had some great conversations with different people involved in the industry, and if you asked where they were from, yes, there were a lot of people in the Huon who, with the event being at Home Hill, were there, but I met people from my electorate at that event who work in this industry, when you chat lining up for a coffee or fairy floss or a kids' ride.

There was a strong presence of elected members. I know we had the minister and Mr Street, and the member for Huon. From my own political party we had, from the other place, the member for Bass, Ms Finlay, and the member for Franklin, Mr Winter, as well as senators Brown and Bilyk. We are strong supporters of the industry and of the people, their

families and communities. We celebrate the innovation and technology that has been developed here in Tasmania and used all around the world. We engage with scientists, researchers, regulators and the companies themselves and love what this industry means for Tasmania.

I congratulate Salmon Tasmania for the report and for their recent publication, *Smolt*. It is important for industry to be telling its story to Tasmanians, so that those who may not be directly involved can have an understanding of the value of the industry. It is important to know that we are dealing with an audited report. As the report says, and I know others have said this in the debate, salmon is Australia's most valuable seafood industry. It is a sector worth \$1.3 billion and Tasmania's largest primary industry, accounting for 86 per cent of the state's total seafood production. It is one of Tasmania's greatest success stories. It is a great product and is one that my family enjoys, particularly around the festive season, and I know many other Tasmanian families enjoy, too.

The Deloitte report found that Tasmanian salmon industry directly contributes \$770 million to the Tasmanian economy each year, whilst supporting 5100 full-time equivalent jobs, and that 91.3 per cent of salmon jobs are full-time.

It reports that ocean-based farming has a significantly lower carbon footprint than other forms of farming, including less than half of that of land-based protein. Ninety percent of salmon grown in Australia is grown in Tasmania and 83 per cent of that is consumed in this country.

The report also goes into detail about some of the work in the community, including the major whale rescue missions in 2020 and 2022 - saving more than 150 whales; the significant marine rescues of boaters, fishers, divers and surfers; and sponsorships of programs like Stay Afloat, which is looking after the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce, and the Working on Water program to open up possibilities for students in the concluding years of high school about the career opportunities that lie in this industry.

I also recently had the pleasure of joining the member for Huon and Mr Young, the member for Franklin, to visit Tassal's operations across the Huon. As we have heard a few times and the report notes, one in four jobs in the Huon in this instance is related to the salmon industry. I visited the feed centre just over the road here in Hobart before heading down to the Huon to the Rookwood Road hatchery, the Huonville processing centre and the Channel zone marine farms.

In anything where we are here to represent the Tasmanian community, it is good to get a firsthand look at the operations and to get a grasp of the value of those operations to the community. The industry provides jobs for locals; it is imbedded in the community. It is a foundation of the schools, of the community groups, the sporting clubs, the small businesses - as we have heard from the Leader - and people's sense of community and their sense of worth.

In my part of the world there are still people working in this industry through the supply chain, and I had that further illustrated to me that day at Home Hill. There is no doubt there is a lot of community interest in salmon operations in Tasmania. But I believe the salmon businesses - Tassal, Huon and Petuna - are open to working with all members of parliament and the community to view their operations firsthand and ask questions - curly or otherwise.

I encourage anyone with an interest in the business of salmon to seek one of those tours, meet the workers and ask the questions. The door, as I understand, is open.

Ms Webb - The data is not.

Mr EDMUNDS - In 2020, it was probably dangerous for people to do their own research when you put that phrase in the context of that year and the pandemic; but I did some postgraduate work during that time with the focus on the triple or quadruple bottom line. For what it is worth, I focussed on Tassal for my postgraduate studies at that time, which was an enjoyable thing to do. What that showed - and this is an audited report - is the value of this industry to this state. Issues will be flagged from time to time, but we can have confidence.

The salmon industry's economic activity supports our communities, especially - but not exclusively - those in rural and regional Tasmania. I note the comments about tourism in the context of salmon. On my honeymoon we did the cruise on the west coast, and the two most popular things on that cruise were to take photos of the salmon pens and to eat smoked salmon.

Ms Forrest - I thought Sarah Island was a real attraction.

Mr EDMUNDS - I do not think the cameras came out as much, though. I said at the time, and that was after I had been lucky enough to be overseas a bit, that I thought it was one of the best tourism experiences I had ever had. It was not an eyesore or a distraction on the tour. It was part of the entire package for that group, and it was a big group of people on the west coast.

We are committed to ensuring that the jobs and economic prosperity this industry brings to our regional community are strengthened.

As I said, this is a report done by an auditor who reviewed and verified the data. With that, Mr President, I note the report and support the motion.

[5.05 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, perhaps, like some of us in this place, I am at a bit of a loss as to the need for such a motion, especially when we could put up similar motions about the contribution of every aspect of Tasmanian society - including all of our industries, businesses of every kind and size, government departments, charities, schools, churches. NGOs, and, dare I say it, politicians and their parties. However, after listening to the member for McIntyre, I appreciate your bringing it to our attention and giving us a chance to explore it.

Ms Rattray - Last week we talked about the Matildas, and the week before that the CWA.

Mr GAFFNEY - I think we had some football team at some stage, as well.

However, if we look at the wording of the member's motion, it almost completely reflects the title of the report as the mantra that heads almost every page of the document.

The Tasmanian salmon industry - 'a vital, social and economic contributor', says the Tasmanian salmon industry. They would, wouldn't they? The question is, do we believe it?

Should we accept it on face value? Or, as the House of review, Mr President, we would naturally look a little deeper to see what is under the surface.

In short, as a statement, it is a meaningless and a wishful bit of copywriting. I could almost say the same of the report; or should we call it what it is: an advertorial paid for by foreign-owned entities almost as a sponsored insert, such as we might find in any newspaper?

I have heard it described as a puff piece for a highly commercial industry that is feeling a bit of heat due to the growing public concern and increasing public scrutiny into how it operates. Dare I suggest that as an industry, it could probably take a long, hard look at itself and instead of coming out all guns blazing through an aggressive cloud of spin and hubris, it could greatly benefit from some genuine and humble introspection to see where it can improve and where it can make changes to acknowledge and maintain the pristine Tasmanian environment in which the product is produced.

The current aggressive approach may win it a few battles but will naturally and irretrievably put many Tasmanians offside. I would like to think that the salmon industry can respond in such a way that gives it a sustainable future that enhances the environment. Like many primary industries, the fact that it is always done in a certain way does not mean that it has a right to maintain that status quo.

That is not to say that it needs to be shut down or punished, as the Tasmanian salmon industry has been developed by three Tasmanian-owned businesses over many years, with active government and regulatory support.

In my own electorate, we have seen the development of the highly successful Huon Aquaculture site at Parramatta Creek in Sassafras, one that processes all of Huon's fish output in a single facility and is a major employer in the area.

However, it is interesting to note that in just the last few years, the founding families of the Tasmanian salmon industry have sold the final parts of their businesses to overseas corporations. I have to wonder why, as I know these families are highly astute entrepreneurs. Has the growing scale of automation of these businesses naturally moved them into a more corporate structure?

Whilst Salmon Tasmania was once directly accountable to Tasmanian owners who were quite well known and highly respected in their communities, it is JBS, Cooke Aquaculture and Sealord that now own and operate the Tasmanian salmon industry. A foreign-owned corporate trifecta and, by default, the Tasmanian salmon industry is directly accountable to them and their shareholders.

Perhaps the member's motion may have been more accurate or better received if it had acknowledged that we have a foreign-owned salmon industry operating in Tasmania, with overt government support. Any money left in Tasmania is a cost of doing business as an on-cost to the corporate model. I assume the same would be true of their funding of Salmon Tasmania - although the owners may well be thinking that this is highly worthwhile expenditure, seeing as we are discussing its activity here in this Chamber. There is a big win for them on that point alone.

The motion has caught the attention of my constituents, who have sent me and other members their considered thoughts. I will share with you an excerpt of an email from a member of my electorate that strikes at the heart of the issue:

How can a report commissioned by the industry, in support of the industry, and paid for by the industry, be trusted as factual? How can it not be biased? Have the facts and figures within this report been independently fact checked? Sadly, this industry and Government continue to ignore the independent science on this matter. The pertinent observation gives me a segue into a well-known phrase popularised by Mark Twain. It is one that has a more elegant origin attributed to Eliza Gutch, who in an excerpt from a letter to an English newspaper in 1891, stated:

'It has been wittily remarked there are three kinds of falsehood: the first is a fib, the second is a downright lie and the third and most aggravated is statistics.'

I wonder if we might take a moment to reflect on the nature of Salmon Tasmania's phrasing in detailing the report, as to me it reads like a masterclass in marketing, a seemingly worthy tale about a misunderstood and benevolent entity that is trying to honestly make its case. I wonder where the report's narrative may naturally sit on Eliza's scale of falsehoods.

If we take her third, and most aggravated point, if we examine some of the quoted statistics in the report, it makes for interesting reading, especially if we look at other sources of similar data as a comparison. Whilst I am no statistician, I tend to place greater faith in published departmental data over that from a paid consultant's report that has been chewed over, digested and regurgitated into a beautifully presented manifesto.

Examples of data I will share with you are from our Department of Natural Resources and Environment, that has the latest Tasmanian agrifood scorecard for 2020-21 on its website, complete with some easily extrapolated datasets, presented in an open and unambiguous manner. In terms of the primary production of farmgate shoreline value on pages 4 and 5, the scorecard states the entire seafood industry output as \$1.18 billion, whereas for land-based agriculture the total figure is \$2.34 billion. We then look at the subsequent processed and packed value of these outputs; it sees seafood going to \$1.58 billion and land-based food going to \$4.04 billion. So, tell me again, which primary industry has the potential to add the most value to its output? There also seems to be some confusion in the Salmon Tasmania report as it states that in terms of export revenue, 'Salmon is Tasmania's largest aquaculture export'.

Going to page 14 of the agrifood scorecard, it plainly states that for agrifood exports, salmonids are worth \$148 million in international export value. An entirely worthy number, yet the same page states a figure of \$168 million for dairy and \$243 million for beef. So, once again, I have to question how the report is being devised and how the data has been interpreted and presented to us.

It brings me back to the Eliza's turn of phrase and maybe suggests that Salmon Tasmania's report has possibly been a little economical with the truth on these few points alone. Are they fibs, lies perhaps, or simply statistics that have been massaged to advance a certain perspective that is favourable to the clients who pay for it? Who knows. For me, this causes me to doubt and question the intent of everything within it. Whilst I am simply picking up on these

anomalies in the marketing spin, I am not the only one to question the approach as the Tasmanian Independent Science Council, or TISC, is one of the salmon's industry's more interesting challengers and has provided much learned commentary for us to consider.

I am sure many of us can recall the member for Nelson's special interest matter speech from last November, one that detailed the value and veracity of its approach to robust policy research with an emphasis on objective sustainability and better outcomes for all sides, not just one. The Independent Science Council has been a reasonable and measured voice in what is becoming an increasingly noisy field of public argument and disagreement in what may yet become the salmon wars. On behalf of the council, Dr Graeme Wells, a highly-respected economist, has drafted a nine-page analysis and discussion of the content and methodology of Salmon Tasmania's report entitled - and I know some of the other members have read some of this in, but for the flow of my speech, it would just be a few minutes - *Fact Check of Salmon Tasmania's report: The Tasmanian Salmon industry: a vital social and economic contributor*. He also adds this by-line to describe the context for his discussion.

This report by the Tasmanian Independent Science Council assesses Salmon Tasmania's recent publication on the social and economic impact of the Tasmanian salmon aquaculture industry. It draws on the underlying report to Salmon Tasmania by Deloitte, and the preceding background report 'Salmonid Aquaculture Production' published by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies.

Perhaps without going into the detail of the report, it is enough for me to say that he makes a reasoned and considered discussion of the report and in conclusion states:

Salmon Tasmania's report, *The Tasmanian Salmon industry: a vital social and economic contributor*, makes several overestimations and misrepresentations of the benefits the industry brings to the Tasmanian economy and wider community.

This fact check has found the report's claims to wages and the relative importance of the industry are overstated. Other claims such as investment in research and development are difficult to verify. Increased output from the salmon producers has not led to a commensurate increase in employment, a trend that is likely to continue as automation of the industry continues to advance.

Importantly, the Salmon Tasmania report is based on an economic impact assessment rather than a cost-benefit analysis, which means that it does not account for the social and environmental impacts of the industry. It does not take into consideration the environmental costs, loss of amenity, subsidies paid by governments or appropriate return to local communities for the use of public waters as required by a full cost-benefit analysis.

The assessment is salutary and again casts considerable doubt on the veracity of Salmon Tasmania's report. Does the report amount to a litany of fibs and falsehoods? I am not sure I can go quite that far as it does include comment from genuine stakeholders in the industry. Perhaps that is one of its strengths. Lived experience is hard to challenge and I wonder if it is

intentional as the provenance and authenticity that comes from that perspective can be seen to balance the other more ambiguous statements elsewhere in the initial pages of the report.

I have heard salmon farms described as the feedlots of the sea, as salmon are a farmed resource contained in a restrictive enclosure and fed intensely a proprietary diet. As the report states, there are two major fish feed manufacturers in Tasmania; one of them is BioMar Australia. This is a Danish company with its recently built facility at Wesley Vale within my own electorate that employs about 50 people and sells its feed overseas, as well as supplying Tasmania and interstate growers. This facility is quite large and gives a sense of the scale and influence of what is a multinational industry, perhaps part of the reason we are debating this issue here today. It has had a remarkable and relatively speedy journey into operation with significant remediation of the site before the new production facilities could be built. It is an important link in the chain for increasing productivity and opportunity in agribusiness in Tasmania.

Returning to my line of thought, like all feedlots, there are inputs such as feed, and outputs such as the product itself and waste. In land-based feedlots the main waste is manure, a valuable resource that can make a useful and traditional fertiliser for growing crops in a natural process of recycling the nutrients within it. In the case of salmon, as rapidly growing living creatures, they produce manure, too. It is what happens to this manure that is a very different process to that of beef cattle.

Salmon manure is invisible from the surface as it quietly sinks into the depths below the pens never to be seen again, apart from becoming a residual sediment as it rots down with no chance to recycle its nutrient value. The trouble is that for this manure to break down it needs oxygen to do so, and the manure will have a certain biological oxygen demand that has to come from the water it sinks into. The other point that comes from this is the release of nitrogen, a point raised in the Tasmanian Independent Science Council's response to the Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre, or CRC. The proposed area for trialling aquaculture in Commonwealth waters is the north-west off the coast of Burnie:

A single large pen, fully stocked with salmon, is not a trivial thing. For example, a 240 metre circumference 'fortress pen' similar to those currently being used off North Bruny could easily produce the equivalent dissolved inorganic nitrogen load as the entire city of Burnie (18 000-plus people).

As the member said, given Burnie's past history with marine pollution and current recovery, there is no desire to return to its past reputation of those dark times where industry overrides local concerns. No doubt we have all received a copy of the publication from the Tasman Peninsula Marine Protection Inc and the Tasmanian Alliance for Marine Protection Inc that give their interpretation of the Tasmanian finfish and aquaculture impact zones and highlighting their strong concerns with a variety of industry issues. With an increase in demand for primary industries that are respectful of environmental and social issues, these must be incorporated into industry policy and not simply brushed aside.

The use of Commonwealth waters is a new development and potentially puts the industry beyond the control of our state government and its regulators, whilst Tasmania would shoulder the impact of such developments. These issues place challenges for more contained environments like Macquarie Harbour with its varying layers of fresh, brackish and salt waters,

together with decades of interference in this historic dynamic from forestry, Hydro, mining and fish farming.

CSIRO has been researching this interplay for many years and it is a highly complex and changing dynamic in the harbour. It appears there are no obvious scientific solutions, other than to acknowledge that low levels of dissolved oxygen are an ongoing issue and fish farms may well be part of the problem.

We are all well aware of this Chamber's ongoing interest in the less than cuddly Maugean skate. We also acknowledge the honourable Tanya Plibersek's role as the federal Minister for the Environment and Water, and the fact she has just announced a \$2.1 million captive breeding initiative in an attempt to prevent the extinction of the skate. I have to ask, is this too little, too late as the population has halved since 2014? The suggestion there are less than 1000 left in the harbour, it is critically endangered and possibly one major event away from total extinction. The most significant threat which has been identified at this stage is salmon farming in the harbour. The recommendation is to severely restrict the tonnage of fish grown in a move Salmon Tasmania is opposing, for obvious reasons.

This also puts our state Government in a significant bind. The Government wants a flourishing primary industry to continue, but has to acknowledge the environmental issues that come with it and also accept the responsibility of its stewardship. The salmon industry has to be sustainable, and not just for the industry and its dependents. It relies on using a natural resource it only borrows from us and community, and its legacy will impact us all.

Like all good livestock industries, salmonoid farming is looking for fresh ground or water in which to expand to finish and fatten its livestock. This has caused great concern for me and for many in my electorate and across the north-west in the move to expand the fish feedlots into the pristine and open waters of the Bass Strait. These are waters which have benefited greatly from far-sighted initiatives within the dairy farming and livestock industries to properly manage and control the run-off of effluent and nutrients from farmland into watercourses, rivers and the Bass Strait. This has not been without pain or history, as significant investment and compromises have been made by individual farming businesses to make this happen.

It is the right thing to do. They know it. We know it and many are doing much more as farmers are the natural custodians of the land of the farm. The direct benefit is that we are seeing an active oyster finishing enterprise in the north-west that can safely operate in pristinely clean waters that were previously unusable due to unfettered run-off from farmland. This is a significant development in a locally owned primary industry that employs many people across the state and a wholly sustainable model that relies on pristine waters. The indirect benefit is to the farming industry and its products, as they can proudly claim they are doing their part in maintaining the environment in a sustainable way, whilst retaining nutrients on their land.

All primary industries that utilise natural resources have to have a symbiotic relationship within the environments in which they operate. There should ideally be no long-term damage or, at the very least, damage that can be put right and the natural environment restored and rehabilitated. I am not sure salmon farming has reached that point yet, despite its carefully crafted words mixed in with its impressive-sounding numbers. Can the salmon industry be described as a social and economic contributor? Maybe it can, but so can many others, as can mining, forestry, education, health care and social services support, most of which have no

need to shout about being vital, as we already know they are and what role they play in Tasmanian society.

Is it reasonable to describe the salmon industry as being vital? For its owners it is vital. I assume they have paid good money to buy the industry and they will expect a proportionate return. A return must provide a profit to its overseas owners and shareholders. Is there a guarantee the industry will do absolutely no harm to our natural environment as it farms the chicken of the sea? That I severely doubt. The rapidly rising price of salmon in the supermarket suggests there is plenty of profit there to work with to make it better, to mitigate harm; or are its new owners simply looking for even higher outputs, together with larger margins, increased fish tonnage and capital growth on their investment?

As one of the original pioneers for the Tasmanian aquaculture industry, Peter and Una Rockliff had a remarkable impact that includes advancing Tasmanian ocean trout into a novel and world-leading product, together with a processing industry that has developed to employ many people in my electorate. Perhaps the industry needs a new Peter and Una who can deliver a truly sustainable model that can resolve its environmental challenges.

Mr President, the industry perhaps also needs to reflect on its reputation and produce a product with a far stronger and sustainable environmental connection, and charge accordingly. Our dairy industry has proven that it can be done. There is an expectation with our mining industry that it be done. It has to be quality over quantity to better reflect the expectation of Tasmania's reputation of producing the highest quality food in a truly sustainable industry and protecting its environments.

Thinking back to Eliza's description of the three kinds of falsehood, I am not sure if this glossy manifesto with its soothing words, massaged spin and selected statistics quite has the provenance and authenticity that will wash with our Tasmanian community or in Australia as a whole. Trust has to be earned through demonstrable transparency and authentic community engagement. It can never be demanded as a right by outspoken advocacy and lobbying.

Mr President, perhaps a more open acknowledgement by the salmon industry of the challenges it is facing and how it will address them would suit far better as first steps as a foundation for sustainability in the long term. I am certain that our community would welcome a genuine and authentic collaborative effort to engage with us, in what can be a vital part of both its and our future.

Mr President, I note the motion, but I will not support the motion in its current guise.

[5.26 p.m.]

Ms PALMER (Rosevears - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr President, I begin by thanking the member, Ms Rattray, for her notice of motion.

Mr President, it was such an honour to be invited by Salmon Tasmania to the Huon Valley to a family day, to meet with the hundreds of families who make up the salmon industry. It was on the lawns of Home Hill Winery that the new CEO, Luke Martin, said:

Tasmania's salmon industry is proud of the contribution it makes to regional communities and the important role it plays as a major employer generating jobs and economic activity across the state. The economic analysis by

Deloitte Access Economics provides the first comprehensive assessment of the salmon industry's economic and social contribution to Tasmania and unequivocally demonstrates how important the sector is.

This Government recognises just how important the salmon industry is to our state; how important it is to our people and to our economy - and this is particularly the case for our regional communities.

Our vision for the industry, the foundation of our recently released Tasmania Salmon Industry Plan, is for a sustainable industry into the future, one that all Tasmanians can be proud of and one that is economically successful, environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and well managed.

Salmon Tasmania's report highlighted just how vital a social and economic contributor the industry is to our state. We back this industry and we welcome this report. It is great news, and it is wonderful to see this industry telling its own story - because it has a good story to tell. We want to see continued positive social, economic and environmental outcomes for Tasmania.

We know there is a global and domestic need for farmed fish. Our wild fisheries are under pressure and aquaculture is part of the solution as a sustainable protein source. Aquaculture now provides more than 50 per cent of all seafood consumed globally, with salmon having one of the lowest carbon footprints of any livestock industry.

Salmon Tasmania is an increasingly important contributor to the overall Australian seafood market, and a valued premium product in global markets.

Mr President, Tasmania grows 90 per cent of Australia's salmon and 83 per cent of that is consumed domestically. This is the highest value industry for our state. It is approximately double the size of the fruit and vegetable sector in Tasmania and 38 per cent larger than the red meat processing industry.

We know that each company has its own history which is deeply steeped in Tasmania's regional communities. From once small, family-run businesses to now being a \$1.3 billion industry that directly employs approximately 2000 staff and supports thousands of associated jobs, investing more than \$770 million annually into the Tasmanian economy. Taking a look at some of the notable highlights from the industry report: 87 per cent of its economic activity being regionally focused; providing nine out of 10 jobs in key regional areas; investing some \$8 million into staff training; investing millions of dollars into research and development. The industry also is providing grants, donations and community investments such as funding towards scholarships, running breakfast clubs for schools, sponsorship for sporting clubs and teams, and helping tackle food insecurity through regular donations to emergency or community food providers.

Other notable examples include Petuna as part of the employee vaccine drive and providing children living in Strahan with access to free influenza vaccines; Huon delivering a program to raise giant freshwater crayfish in freshwater hatcheries to boost their numbers in the wild in partnership with renowned Tasmanian ecologist and conservationist Todd Walsh; Tassal workers alone participating in 13 marine rescue and vessel assists in 2022, and double that for this year so far. In 2022 alone, Salmon Tasmania members and staff invested more than 3000 hours and \$1.6 million into local programs. The facts and figures presented in the

industry's report clearly demonstrate its importance to our economy and particularly to our regional communities.

The salmon industry has come a long way over the past 40 years and this has been a journey of learning, of improving and innovation as it establishes itself as a global leader in aquaculture. Over time, the industry and supporting business have been quietly delivering amazing innovation, developing world-leading technology and opportunity for Tasmania.

There have been vast improvements led by government also, including marine debris tracking and management, independent regulation, continued strengthening of our regulatory framework, improvements in transparency and communications and investments in science partnerships to underpin these decisions.

To continue to build on these achievements, we must remain future-focused and there is more we can do too as a government. This has clearly been committed to in our Salmon Industry Plan released on 1 May. We have prioritised improving environmental management outcomes, interactions with wildlife, providing certainty for both the community and industry, among many priority actions.

Importantly, the Government, through the salmon industry implementation plan, has committed to consult on an appropriate return from the salmon industry to the Tasmanian community for the use of our land and marine waters. I expect that we will also be consulting with industry on how the diverse contributions it already makes to the state, many of which are highlighted in their report, are considered in that process.

A key influence in getting us to where we are with our commitments to the Salmon Industry Plan is the extensive work and effort of the Legislative Council committee's review of finfish farming in Tasmania. I acknowledge this body of work that started pre-COVID-19. When released, it contributed to our Government's thinking on the salmon industry policy framework. The Government fully supported, or supported in principle, the majority of the 68 recommendations outlined by the committee in its final report. The priority actions of the plan reflect the Government's commitments to its response to the committee's recommendations, most of which are near- to medium-term deliverables for this Government.

We want to focus on achieving the priority outcomes of a sustainable industry, healthy ecosystems, prosperous communities and contemporary governance. A lot has been achieved already and this includes our new biosecurity regulations and new salmonid biosecurity program already being implemented; also, standardised marine farming management controls for our marine farming development plans; full-cost recovery for the industry, which commenced on 1 July; our recently released policy to support aquaculture research activities in Commonwealth waters, setting the scene for groundbreaking research consistent with the National Aquaculture Strategy, and draft environmental standards for marine finfish farming soon to be finalised under the minister for Environment's portfolio.

These actions implemented should absolutely assist in building community confidence in the Government's commitment to a sustainable industry, healthy ecosystems, prosperous communities and contemporary governance. Our Government has also committed to freshwater environmental standards and wildlife interaction standards. We have committed to progressing statutory planning processes for relevant marine farming development plans across the state to remove finfish farming from zones where the area is not subject to an existing

marine farming lease, commencing with the Furneaux, and reviewing the salmon data portal to expand the information publicly reported.

There are many other priority actions which directly and indirectly respond to the Legislative Council's recommendations and Government's response. These actions, as they are implemented by government, will build community confidence. We will continue to deliver continuous improvement in industry regulation, transparency, monitoring and performance through the implementation of this industry plan. Our research collaborations with the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS), the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) and Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre are fundamental to this work.

The management of Tasmania's many fishing and aquaculture sectors requires informed and careful management to ensure biological, ecological and environmental conditions are met and maintained. The research and analysis undertaken by IMAS through the Sustainable Marine Research Collaboration Agreement (SMRCA) underpins this careful management. Tasmanians should have confidence in the industry, that it is regulated effectively and operating sustainably and will continue under our plan.

I acknowledge the funding announcement by the federal government last week to support strategic priorities for the conservation and recovery of the endangered Maugean skate and further acknowledge the conservation advice they also released. This advice will be taken into consideration as we plan ongoing actions. Macquarie Harbour is a complex hydrological system, with many factors that can influence conditions in the harbour, including gillnetting, aquaculture, dam regulation and mining operations.

The minister for Environment and I have been engaging directly with federal ministers in relation to the skate's management, not only in terms of addressing the obvious and important next steps for managing recovery of the skate, but also in recognising the need to ensure that any decisions are based on science and evidence. Over time, the director of the EPA has reduced the production biomass of salmon farming in the harbour and last year set a total dissolved nitrogen output cap for marine farming to help with the management of dissolved oxygen. In response to identified risks to the skate, I too established interim management actions to restrict recreational gillnetting activities in the harbour and this is how recreational fishers can be part of the solution.

Employment on the west coast is strongly linked to salmon aquaculture and the salmon industry is taking these matters very seriously.

I congratulate the salmon industry who have been proactively part of the collaborative stakeholder work being led by NRE Tasmania's threatened species team under the minister for Environment's portfolio. The Government is committed to protecting the endangered skate and to ensuring it can coexist with the aquaculture industry. We formed the national recovery team, which comprises specialists and representatives from the Commonwealth, state and local government, aquaculture industry, local community, Hydro Tasmania, research organisations, natural resource managers and environmental NGOs.

The recovery team is supported by three multidisciplinary thematic teams who are progressing advice and initiatives relating to dissolved oxygen monitoring, environmental remediation and captive breeding. Pumping oxygen into the bottom layer of the water column

is a technique being used elsewhere in the world and could be an innovative solution emerging from the recovery team's investigations.

I would like to acknowledge the salmon industry has contributed \$750 000 for new actions to improve oxygen in the harbour. I believe this identifies the industry's commitment to being part of the solution, to ensure it can continue to coexist with the Maugean skate.

This Government has always been a strong supporter of this industry and we thank the industry for working alongside us to protect the skate.

The economic report which is the focus of the member of McIntyre's motion demonstrates the industry's proactiveness to contribute back to the community and extends to so many other activities. For instance, last September when we saw another devastating whale stranding occur on the west coast, more than 200 pilot whales were beached, followed rapidly by a massive rescue effort by the state Government, local agencies and the community. The industry greatly assisted in the recovery and the disposal of the stranded whales. The success of the operation would not have been possible without the assistance of these aquaculture companies and their willing employees who demonstrated their community spirit, efficiency and organisational abilities during the operation and continue to be active in monitoring Ocean Beach near Strahan and in clean-up activities. We thank those workers of the industry for the role they played alongside others in the community. The work was not easy, but it was important.

It has been wonderful to visit so many of the industry sites on land and water. I have had the pleasure of meeting with many small, medium and large businesses that support this industry, from a feed centre in central Hobart to on-water operations out in Storm Bay or a processing line on a barge. The confidence, the pride and the passion of the workers I have met has been inspiring.

Industry and supporting businesses have been quietly delivering amazing innovation, developing world-leading technology and opportunity for Tasmania.

The Government has always been a strong supporter of the industry and supporting businesses. For example, in May 2020, BioMar Australia opened a state-of-the-art aquaculture feed mill in nearby Wesley Vale. The Tasmanian Government supported the project with a \$2.3 million assistance package to demonstrate its commitment to jobs in the north-west region. This facility can manufacture up to 110 000 tonnes of feed products per annum for domestic and international commercial fish-farming markets. The facility created more than 55 full-time jobs and an additional 30 jobs across the region through indirect support, operational, port services and logistical roles.

During its two-year \$56 million project to redevelop a former particle board manufacturing site, BioMar engaged about 250 contractors, subcontractors and workers. This has had even further flow-on benefits with BioMar and De Bruyn's Transport teaming up with export fishing companies Move Oceans and Qube, to enable BioMar fish feed to be exported direct from Devonport to both New Zealand and Indonesia. Tasmanian fish feed from BioMar in the north and Skretting in the south is now one of the state's largest exports to New Zealand. What a success story for our state.

This is an industry that backs its workers and it backs its families, and knows its worth in our community. As we have done for many years, our Government continues to back the salmon industry and the jobs it creates and its future sustainable growth. We want to see an industry continue to sustainably produce outstanding Tasmania salmon.

I thank the industry for this report and for sharing their stories of determination, continued improvement and passion for what they do. This is an industry we want all Tasmanians to be proud of. I note the motion.

[5.44 p.m.]

Mr HARRISS (Huon) - Mr President, once again, I have enjoyed listening to the debate so far. I think it is important we have debates like this and this is clearly an important topic.

Point (1) of the motion I will read out again:

Notes the economic analysis provided by Deloitte Access Economics Report dated 2020 regarding the Tasmanian salmon industry.

There has been a fair bit of debate around this and covered by members, so I will not go too much into the specifics of the report. Point (2), however, in the notice of motion, reads:

Acknowledges that the Tasmanian salmon industry is a vital social and economic contributor to the Tasmanian community.

This is where I will base my short contribution. Having lived in the Huon Valley my whole life, it has always been about the salmon industry. I have recognised and appreciated the contribution it makes throughout the region. It has been mentioned a few times here, but I can tell you that you cannot go to too many events in the Huon or be involved with sporting clubs or community organisations without interacting with people who are directly or indirectly involved with the industry. I would rarely go to the supermarket without seeing numerous people with their Huon Aquaculture or Tassal uniforms on.

As the member for Pembroke mentioned before, I too have had the opportunity on a few occasions to visit most of the operating sites across the industry in my area. From out at Lonnale to Judbury and Ranelagh where the hatcheries are, and to a processing plant in Huonville and down to Hideaway Bay near Dover, and out onto the water.

I have friends that work in the industry and I enjoy catching up with them whenever I am out and about. But I also, when visiting sites, have met people I have not known and do not know and they all speak with passion and pride, as the minister has noted, about the industry they are involved in. From the scientific teams to the crews on the water and engineering, they all want the salmon industry to be there for many years to come. They are proud of what they do, which is providing food for many Australians and people around the world. In turn, it goes without saying it therefore needs to be environmentally sustainable.

As a side note, at the start of the year I caught up with Kristy Harrison from Huon Aquaculture and she wanted to touch base with the possibility of distributing some product throughout some food relief distribution charities. I asked Megan from my office to make a few phone calls and contacted around 11 community organisations, which were excited at the possibility of being able to take a bit of salmon to help with their ever-increasing demand for

relief food. There will be some 250 kilos of salmon that go out every three months to those charities and will hopefully, in some small way, help assist with that food relief.

Last month it was announced that Huon Aquaculture would invest \$20 million into a project at Lonnvale for a rendering facility. It will process by-product and fill a gap in the market for fishmeal and salmon oil. The project will require up to 80 construction jobs and 10 full-time ongoing jobs for operation.

It is not just the bigger projects and some of the bigger things that have been mentioned today, like the whale rescues and some of the marine recoveries and assistances that are required from time to time. Throughout my local area, both Huon and Tassal support and provide assistance in delivering the school breakfast clubs in Dover, Geeveston and Huonville. Again, we heard from the member for Rosevears, the minister, only this morning in her special interest matter, noting the positive outcomes of providing food for children who sometimes do not have the option of simply going to the cupboard at home and grabbing something to eat on their way to school. In 2022, more than 50 community organisations in the Huon and Channel benefitted from support through the salmon industry. They range from major sporting groups, as has been mentioned, to very small community groups.

I know the member for Mersey mentioned about all three salmon companies being foreign-owned, which is no secret. I question why this may be. I would not want to speak for Peter and Francis Bender, who were the former owners of Huon Aquaculture, but in their case it could be that with over 30 years of committed business and running what started as a small business, it was just time to move on and see what else life had to offer. I think it is a good story. I know they were passionate, and still are passionate, about the industry. It is quite reasonable for a company or a person to build something up and then move on and sell it for what it might be worth.

Mr President, the salmon industry in my electorate, as I have touched on, certainly has a lot of operations which take place and I believe it is a vital social and economic contributor. I note the report.

[5.51 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, I thank the member for McIntyre for bringing this on for debate. I do not think she properly appreciated how long it might go for today.

Ms Rattray - It is not up to me, Mr President, how long people speak.

Mr VALENTINE - No, of course it is not; but it has certainly been a motion that has had a high degree of interest, there is no question about that.

Mr President, the salmon industry report, as we have been informed, is based on the Deloitte Access Economics report and the IMAS report. I am not aware whether all members have received feedback on this from other members of the community, but I have certainly received emails from a number of people saying, 'Look, this report is not accurate', and pointing to an analysis that was done by the Independent Science Council.

When you look at reports like this, different people will gain differing levels of understanding when reading the same report. It depends on which perspective they are coming

at it from. Interpretation can be coloured, but when I find myself in that circumstance, I do like to go to an independent source.

I started my career in agriculture, which might surprise some people. I started with the Department of Agriculture in 1970. That was after I spent a fair bit of time at a little place called Dunally for 20 of my formative years. My father used to run a fish cannery there, so I know a fair bit about fish, over the years. I have certainly cooked a lot. I have been involved with shucking abalone and splitting scallops. I think I started splitting scallops at the age of seven. That would be called child slave labour, but in fact we were paid our pocket money for doing that and we were paid the same as the adults - it is just that the adults could do it a bit faster. So, I have been in and around the fishing industry for quite some time - and that is the wild-caught fishing industry I am talking about, not the farmed products that we are talking about here today.

I have to say that the benefits or detriments of the industry that we are talking about here today present a vexed question. You would have to be living under a rock not to see that. It is certainly something that has been front and centre of a lot of people's minds.

When I was in the Department of Agriculture, we were involved in scientific analysis. It was to do with fertiliser trials. When looking at data, you do have to examine it. The information that is being put to us today looks at one side of the argument, as is pointed out by a number of the people that have been emailing me, and it is verified by that independent report that has come from the Independent Science Council. Now that has been dealt with a heck of a lot today by people and the shortcomings have been pointed up in that report.

There is no doubt that salmon farming is an economic contributor to the Tasmanian economy. There is no question about that, but the real question is: at what cost? I was left in no doubt as to the impact of the industry when we spent some two-and-a-half years doing the finfish farming in Tasmania inquiry. We heard from so many people - industry people, scientists, people that are impacted by the industry, and people who believe that the industry is a benefit. We heard from all sorts of people, and there was a heck of a lot of data to process and there was a very thick report.

It takes a lot of data to produce a report like that, and it had many recommendations and many findings. What this particular report looked at, as much as the economics of it, was the social and environmental impact as well. I am saying that this looked at it; it is the fact that people gave us that evidence for us to consider. Those on the committee did not just think this up - it came from people in the community that were concerned about how it was impacting on their daily life. Of course, we visited a number of places to have a look at what level of impact there seemed to be or that we were being told about; and this thing called 'social licence' is very real.

We do not need division in our community because of the impacts that industries - not just this industry, but any industry - can bring. We need, as a parliament, as a government, to try to work to benefit the communities that we represent. Now, some will say 'Yes, well, we are doing that by supporting industry, which gives them a job'. That is one part of it, but you listen to some of the impacts that people are having to put up with in this space and you think to yourself: is that the best we can do?

I will go to some recommendations in our report and look at what they come out with. Recommendation 54 says:

Undertake and publicly release an assessment of the economic benefit provided by the fin fish farming industry to local communities in which industry operations are based and to the state overall.

I think that would be really good. What we have here is an industry version of that. It is not a government version. Recommendation 55:

Develop a fin fish farming industry marine debris policy, in consultation with the community and other stakeholders, that can be effectively implemented, monitored, enforced and reported on publicly.

There is the first impact on the community. That is, the marine debris that is produced: plastic - some very large pieces of plastic, some large enough to dislodge the keels of boats if they are going at a certain speed. I am talking about yachts in this instance.

Look at recommendation 59:

Increase the funding of the EPA to ensure it has the capacity to undertake comprehensive monitoring, assessment and enforcement of noise impact and noise complaints in relation to fin fish operations.

We heard from people living near operations where they have boats towing pens through the water to ensure there was enough flow of oxygenated water through them to clean out gills and all of those sorts of exercises, where the thumping and the droning of motors was continual, at a very slow speed, past their residences. It was continually happening to the point where there were such low frequencies that it really impacted the health of those individuals.

Now, you think to yourself, how can that be? If you listen to the people and you listen to what they are having to put up with, at what cost are we allowing some of these operations in public waters? People who previously enjoyed the quiet tranquillity of the space are now finding that they are seeking mental health assistance. The light that they are having to put up with because it is shining in through their lounge rooms and bedrooms at night and how it disturbs their sleep. Now, you might say, get over it, but if it is happening to you and it is happening to you every night, day after day after day, month after month, it means a heck of a lot to be able to have that fixed.

Recommendation 59 about noise impacts and recommendation 60 - 'set and enforce site-specific regulated limits in relation to noise generated by fin fish operations and include, where relevant, decibel level, tone, frequency, regularity and time of occurrence' - those recommendations did not go in there just because it was just one complaint. It was a whole heap. Those were the concerns that people had.

'Consider the inclusion of the regulation of light in the Environmental Standard and setting site-specific conditions on the use of lights in fin fish farming operations.' I have not touched base with the minister, but it would be interesting to know whether some of those things are actually being looked at or implemented by the Government. That is recommendation 62.

Recommendation 63:

Increase the funding of the EPA to ensure it has the capacity to undertake assessment of complaints regarding the use lights in fin fish farming operations.

I do not know whether that is being looked at or not.

Recommendation 66:

Conduct a review of the fin fish farming industry impact on, and relationship with, the Tasmanian tourism industry to inform the Revised Salmon Industry Growth Plan.

Tourism is something our state prides itself on. It is interesting that the person who used to run the peak body for tourism is now in the salmon space. I am sure he has some of his previous people who used to be supportive of him in the tourism industry coming to him and saying, 'You need to do something about this'. I do not know, I have not spoken to him about it, but it must be difficult changing industries the way Mr Martin has done. Maybe I will get a chance to talk to him about it one day.

Recommendation 67:

Ensure continued research and monitoring is undertaken in the Derwent Estuary with regard to heavy metal resuspension associated with fin fish farming, including the identification of any public health risks relating to heavy metal contamination.

These things can impact the community. We need to make sure that the community that elects us to this place, this Chamber, elects us to review what the Government is doing. It is important that the Government does its best to support all Tasmanians, not just one sector. You look back and you think about the benefits of industries in regional areas and a couple of members talked about that, how they helped with breakfast clubs and all of those sorts of things. I can remember way back when the zinc works used to support its community very heavily. They had their own dentist, facilities that their workers could use for their benefit, but at the same time the Derwent ended up a basket case.

There is a balance, I am sure; it is just a matter of finding the balance. Some would say the balance would be putting it all onto shore, land-based facilities. That would not be without its problems, we know that. You would still have noise and light problems, so it would have to be a matter of where those sorts of operations were undertaken and whether or not they were impacting those people who live in and around them. Putting it onto land does not necessarily mean that all the problems go away.

The thing is, we cannot just look at the economics as this report is wont to do. We have to look at the social and environmental - it all comes as a package, or it should. In one email it mentions the triple bottom line. I think there are some that look at four bottom lines, with the social inclusion aspect as well.

When it comes to looking at how we deal with industries like this, it is important that governments do not become the regulator and the promoter. It is a difficult space. It is not easy, I understand. You want to encourage industry. You want to improve employment. You want to see a healthy community, so you have to make sure that when industries like this are developed, that they tick the boxes.

Ms Rattray - Are you suggesting the EPA is not independent?

Mr VALENTINE - I am not suggesting the EPA is not independent; I am saying the Government cannot be absolved from looking at these things and to expect the EPA to do that. You have to look at the impact prior to supporting industry, not after the event. That is the way I would see it and important that we do. If we want a society not continually divided on things like forestry, salmon farming and agriculture - you might think agriculture is not very divided, you wait for a few years and see what happens as a result of the irrigation systems in place. Now, tremendous productivity increase, but what attention are we paying to the run-off of nutrients into rivers and streams? What attention are we paying to the rising watertables and salination of the land as a result of irrigation? We say we monitor these sorts of things, but I think you will find in years to come we probably do not have enough controls over that sort of thing. You say, what do you do, sit still and twiddle your thumbs?

Ms Rattray - And not feed the world.

Mr VALENTINE - And not feed the world.

Ms Rattray - Or our state.

Mr VALENTINE - No, I understand there is that, but there is a balance. It is a matter of making sure that in whatever we do we apply that quadruple bottom line, including social inclusion. It is important we do that. At this time of the day I have probably said enough, but I want to underscore those issues we saw during this inquiry. I never forget going down to Long Bay near Port Arthur, and I have been travelling through Port Arthur since I was a little tacker. In fact, I remember going down to White Beach when I was about four and my father, being a manager of the factory at the time, picked up five tonnes of salmon there that somebody had brought in onto White Beach in a purse seine and had this wonderful interaction with a big sunfish. I remember it. It made a big impression on me.

But when we went to visit down there during our finfish inquiry to have a look, there was one beach at Wedge Bay that was absolutely chock-a-block full of weed. It looked like filamentous algae. I had never seen that beach look like that. I went around to Long Bay and it had mats of this stuff. There were various opinions as to why that had occurred, but it was the member for Nelson that talked about the fallowing of that bay and how it subsided and when they brought salmon farming back it started to become a problem again. Clearly, the industry was having an impact there. If you live in and around that area and you are used to going boating and you are used to going fishing and you are having to compete with these huge great mats of weed and the like, there is nothing pretty about it or encouraging tourism about that.

We need to do better. I do not think anyone likes to think of their special place as being impacted. Dunally, where I grew up and now have a shack, I would hate to think of it becoming so polluted or impacted by industry I could no longer enjoy the place. Many

members have spoken about different aspects about the pollution from fish poo being very significant. It is true, the amount of waste that goes into our oceans and, as the member for Mersey pointed out, it is equivalent to sewage from a city the size of Burnie. I do not know whether that was annual or what - member for Mersey, can you remember?

Mr Gaffney - Annual, I think; I will have to check.

Mr VALENTINE - When you stop to think about it, we cannot allow that to continue. I hear what the minister was saying: it is an industry we can all be proud of - well, we would like to be proud of it. Most people would, but how can people who are so impacted by it be proud of it? They cannot be proud of it. Yes, it is a \$1.3 billion industry and they want to grow it to \$2 billion. If you cannot fix up the impact today, why will growing it make it any better? It will just make things worse and we will end up with an even bigger detriment to our communities.

Something needs to be done. Yes, the community can benefit and does get support from these industries. On our tour, I think it was down Nubeena way, there were people afraid to speak out and it was a divided community. We do not want communities like that in Tasmania, we really do not. There was mention of the sustainable research collaborative agreement. That is all well and good. It has to be done in a way, as a regulator and a promoter. There needs to be a fine separation, helping industry, but at the same time trying to control industry. It is always difficult to look someone in the face and say you disagree with what they are doing and that you have to moderate what they are doing because it is harming the environment. I am sure it is difficult, but we have to find a way of doing that.

Restricting gillnetting in Macquarie Harbour is probably a good start. The problem with Macquarie Harbour is that it is a bowl: the water does not circulate well out of Macquarie because it has a lip. The member for Murchison would probably be able to describe it better, but it has a wall that basically prevents proper circulation of the water across the harbour.

Ms Forrest - It is much more complicated than that.

Mr VALENTINE - More complicated?

Ms Forrest - Yes, it is a very complex body of water.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, that is one aspect of it. The more pollution you put into it, it has extra problems and issues mitigating the impact of that pollution. Gillnetting is a start, but with a species on the brink of extinction - and yes, they are putting \$750 million from industries, but they are doing that because they want to continue to farm there.

Mr Gaffney - It was \$750 000, Rob, not \$750 million.

Mr VALENTINE - Sorry, \$750 000, did I say million?

Mr Gaffney - Yes, I heard that.

Ms Rattray - You are not misrepresenting us, are you?

Mr VALENTINE - No, I do not want to misrepresent, no.

Ms Webb - Not inflating a number, goodness.

Mr VALENTINE - Could not inflate a number, \$750 000 from the industry, and it is good to know that they are putting their hand in their pocket. But, at the end of the day, they are making a heck of a lot more than that out of what they are farming in that location. Again, can we get the balance right? We have to look at the bottom line impact on the environment.

I have said enough. I believe people know my feelings. I keep coming back to this huge report, which looked at - as best we could, and in an unbiased manner - the submissions that were received. The findings and recommendations were very carefully considered. Anyone who was on that committee would understand that.

I will note the report. I cannot agree with part 2, because - as a number of people have said - there are so many downsides as well that need to be considered. I hope that, as a parliament, we can see our way clear to put the people first, to look at the environmental and social impacts as well as the economic impacts.

[6.21 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, first I will acknowledge and thank the members who have provided a very considered and one very impassioned contribution today for this notice of motion. I believe it has been a useful exercise. Halfway through the contributions, I was not quite sure that I felt that way; but as the day has rolled on and we have continued to listen to contributions, it has been useful. I believe the member for Mersey acknowledged that in his contribution.

It has given - particularly for those members who were part of the finfish inquiry - an opportunity to go back and revisit some of the findings and recommendations. It gave the minister the chance to make a contribution and talk about those findings and recommendations. It also gave her an opportunity to talk about what is being done, not only to make the industry more acceptable in the community but also for the environmental issues. The matters that were raised around the Maugean skate are very important aspects when it is a species where there are some concerns. So, I do think it has been a useful opportunity.

I will not attempt to try to answer everything that has been raised here, or else we would probably be here until tomorrow, and I do not have that knowledge and understanding. As the day has gone on, I have had a couple of emails asking for quite a bit of reflection and information. I will deal with that at a later time.

I want to touch on the questions that have been raised about the verification of the report, because I asked the same question before I put the motion about the report. I was told that the industry can offer an absolute assurance on the independence and integrity of the work undertaken by Deloitte; and that the industry has total confidence in the findings they have reached. And yes, you can say, 'Well, it is an industry version report; why wouldn't it?' But you would not expect a company like Deloitte to put their name to something that does not have any veracity and any validity. That is my assumption. I just wanted to say that. We all know the work that Deloitte does, for all manner of businesses and organisations; and governments, for that matter. I think they even audited some of our GBEs. I find that an interesting assumption.

Mr Valentine - Mr President, I do not think people are saying Deloitte fudged its figures. I think they are looking at it purely from an economic perspective.

Ms RATTRAY - That is exactly what it said - that it did not take into consideration those environmental aspects.

Ms Webb - Through you, Mr President, it is the transparency and it is not in the public domain, so it cannot be scrutinised readily. That is the issue, I think.

Mr Valentine - That is right.

Ms RATTRAY - Anyway, that is my opportunity to make a comment about that, Mr President. Nobody would think that I would not make some comment on that, because I put forward the motion.

I have a few responses and I hear what members have said and it is their right to have to have that view. Certainly, it was based on ABS data and what I understand is Deloitte Access Economics calculations. The resulting claims made by Salmon Tasmania are based on total economic contributions of the salmon industry, which was \$770 million. That is one-fifth of the \$4.135 million in Gross Value Added of the Tasmania agriculture, forestry and fishing industry in the comparable financial year 2022. In the absence of contribution studies of each individual industry, there is not a basis for comparing the total contribution of the salmon industry with others. The report is clear regarding the nature of its comparison and the definition of the numerator and denominator in the calculation itself. All I can do is offer up what has been provided to me. I am not an economist.

In regard to the high wages paid by industry and the claim that it was an overstatement - the calculation behind the relatively high wage figures is based on those directly employed in the industry. That is the appropriate focus, given it best reflects the rates of pay by firms within the salmon industry. The figures of those in the supply chain are not within the control of the industry and could be influenced by a range of other factors. So it is not appropriate to include the wages paid by this group of businesses in the analysis. I note that there was some assertion about holiday pay and loadings and the like. I know somebody who has to stay on site because if the alarms go off and the lights go out you have an issue with your fish, particularly at the hatcheries. There would obviously be loadings for that. If you are away from home for seven nights and seven days, there would be a loading. Obviously, there are some factors around that. I wanted to make that point.

As I said, Mr President, I am not in a position to answer every issue that has been raised here today and we have already noted that the hour is quite late. I repeat that I believe the debate and this opportunity has been useful. I know, from speaking with representatives from Salmon Tasmania, that they welcome sound and sensible discussions, not only in this place, but with the Tasmanian community. They have a strong interest in the future of the industry, as we all do, and so we should.

I am happy to stand up here, not in a hurry, but talk about other industries that we have in this state as well. As the member for Huon said, some of those divide communities as well. It is not a perfect world we live in but when you are talking about salmon farming as being one of the fastest growing food production sectors globally, it is critical to ensuring food security and sustainable food production. As I said by interjection, we have to feed people or there will

be no community. I am not saying it is the only food we need to eat but it is one that has value in my mind.

I commend the motion to the House and again acknowledge and have appreciated the opportunity.

Motion agreed to.

**NORTH WEST MATERNITY (EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS)
BILL 2023 (No. 23)**

First Reading

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

[6.32 p.m.]

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

That the second reading of the bill be made an order of the day for Tuesday next.

Motion agreed to.

**POLICE POWERS (SURVEILLANCE DEVICES) AMENDMENT
BILL 2022 (No. 57)**

The House of Assembly advised that it agreed to the Council amendments.

ADJOURNMENT

[6.33 p.m.]

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

That at its rising the Council does adjourn until 11 a.m. on Wednesday, 13 September 2023.

Motion agreed to.

Mrs HISCUTT - Before I move the adjournment, I remind members of our briefings starting tomorrow at 9 a.m. which will be run by the member for Mersey on the Residential Tenancy Amendment Bill, followed by a briefing on the Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation at 9.30 a.m.

The Council adjourned at 6.34 p.m.