

**Wednesday 29 May 2019**

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

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Hospitals - Implementation of Recommendations of the Auditor-General**

**Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.02 a.m.]

The annual \$100 million blackhole in health funding remains and total funding for health services in Tasmania increased by less than \$11 million or 0.5 per cent over the next year and just \$5 million the following year. You know that the Auditor-General yesterday released an 18-month investigation into emergency rooms at each of Tasmania's four major public hospitals and found an unacceptable and dangerous situation. His most damning finding is that between 2015 and 2018 - on your watch - there was a 60 per cent increase in adverse events in emergency departments. Sick people presenting at EDs are getting sicker and Tasmanians are dying avoidable deaths. The Auditor-General makes a clear recommendation that you sufficiently resource hospital teams urgently. Are you finally listening and will you adopt that recommendation now?

## **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. Yes, the Government is listening. I am listening and we will never stop listening. I want to say from the outset that there are political points to be made on both sides of the Chamber around funding. We will always stand up for our strong record in providing extra funding into the health system each and every year. Many commentators including members opposite who failed to produce an alternative budget yesterday will have different points of view, which also can be made.

On the report from the Auditor-General, the Government welcomes that report. It should be welcomed indeed by every Tasmanian as it has been from across the clinical community. There are lessons that can be drawn from the Auditor-General's very detailed look into the performance of emergency departments.

The Auditor-General in his report casts his mind back much further than just five years. He goes back quite a period of time. It is a reflection not just - indeed, he has made this point quite explicitly - it is not just about funding at all. It is about governance and how decisions can be better made. It is about breaking down silos that continue to persist and cultural issues which the Auditor-General has pinpointed in wanting to be constructive. That is where he has placed quite a heavy emphasis. What this represents for us is an opportunity to explore his recommendations.

I am all for a thorough look into how we can implement the recommendations of the Auditor-General's report. I welcome it. To that end, even though it is the case that the report was only tabled yesterday, I have requested comprehensive advice from the department so that we know how we can implement those as soon as possible. The Government will continue to work with relevant stakeholders. We have our meeting next month. There is a lot of work going into that.

In advance of the Auditor-General's report, I had already come to the view that we should invite him to the Access Solutions meeting next week. I will ensure his report is provided to all attendees so they can be as informed as soon as possible so that everybody can come to the task with the right mindset.

The right mindset is to continue to deal with any bureaucratic obstacles that get in the way of whole-of-hospital solutions to an emergency department access challenge and also, to end the blame game.

**Members** interjecting.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr FERGUSON** - That is my responsibility, it is your responsibility, it is the Government's responsibility and it is the Opposition's responsibility because the blame game is helping no-one.

**Members** interjecting.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order. I would prefer that we did not have a repeat of yesterday's behaviour. Please let us get through question time.

**Mr FERGUSON** - The Government is all for helping our patients get better access to our hospitals. Almost for the first time, it seems to have dawned on members opposite that we have hit capacity. We are full. We have opened up all the wards that were closed and we are building more capacity. How can we do better before that capacity comes on line so that the patients get the best possible access? That is what the Government stands for.

Also, in line with much of the commentary in the report, which was not mentioned in the question, we acknowledge we need to improve governance and accountability within our health system. It is not a set and forget process. It is a continual need to monitor this and to be willing to change even more, if required, so that we can improve both governance and accountability within the health system.

By the way, as the report shows, many of these issues have been around for yonks, indeed over a decade.

We have been taking action by bringing in important reforms to clarify and strengthen accountability in our health system. The thing that brought this House together only one year ago, was placing accountability in one place, with the secretary of the department of Health being the single point of accountability for ongoing management and service improvement of health care in our state. Implicitly, this included stronger local leadership for our hospitals. We remain committed to seeking further improvements in that regard.

You ought not verbal the Auditor-General in relation to that because he held open the prospect that can, and should, be leveraged to deliver the better outcomes that we want.

I will conclude on this point, knowing that there will be more questions and interest in this and that is fair enough. We will act and I have welcomed the report. It is a really constructive contribution to how we can help patients get better access to our EDs. I am all for that and you will see action in this area.

## **Budget 2019-20 - Health Staff Funding**

### **Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.08 a.m.]

Together with your colleague, the Treasurer, your incompetence in budget management has resulted in the chronic underfunding of Tasmania's health and hospital system and now you are about to go further. Your latest train-wreck budget acts as a further \$450 million cut across the public service. The Australian Medical Association says in the next year alone that can only mean further cuts to health and has pleaded with you to stop. Dr John Saul says:

... the Government should cease the efficiency dividend that will see a \$14m cut to the health budget. This inevitably will mean around 130 backline staff will go, making it even harder for the front line to do their job or frontline staff not being employed fast enough to end the crisis.

Minister, you know this. How much will you slash from hospitals and health to reach your \$450 million in new cuts across government? How many staff will have to go or are you prepared to claim that Dr Saul is wrong?

### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I will answer the question by correcting the Leader of the Opposition. We are increasing the health budget and to correct five years of misinformation from Ms White, we have increased health funding every year we have been in office. We will always look to meet demand and that is exactly why we provided \$105 million additional in the current financial year and more funds in the new financial year which is set out in the budget papers. We have taken health funding now to \$8.1 billion over four years. That is the biggest increase in health funding but in the question you overlooked that fact.

**Ms White** - It is a sad joke.

**Mr FERGUSON** - This is from the Leader of the Opposition who only goes back to the one shot that she has, which is the blame game.

**Ms White** - Are you not accountable as minister?

**Mr FERGUSON** - We are actually interested in solutions and you have failed to acknowledge that in the Budget there is \$30 million specifically to meet demand where we have named up a preparedness to look at funding initiatives that emerge from the Access Solutions meetings which, by the way, is exactly what the Opposition has been calling on us to do and now we are doing it, the Labor Party is not happy. We are bringing together all the experts on an informed basis to create the right environment to make decisions and provide advice to government so that we can help our patients, and the Labor Party does not like it. That is offensive to Tasmanians because every editorial in today's papers has been calling for bipartisanship. We offer that bipartisanship again today but the line of questioning again shows that the Labor Party do not want bipartisanship. They want the blame game. You cannot have it both ways.

I again restate that the Government welcomes what is something like a scholarly piece of work by the Auditor-General with constructive recommendations that can support decision-makers to

work together to help provide a stronger and more accessible health system. I hope the Labor Party will embrace the bipartisanship I offer and which the editors and the newspapers and everyday Tasmanians are expecting of us.

### **Budget 2019-20 - Tourism Growth**

#### **Mr TUCKER question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN**

[10.12 a.m.]

Can you outline how the 2019-20 Budget continues to deliver on our goal to transform Tasmania into the tourism capital of the world?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question and the opportunity to talk about our Budget and the Government's determination to continue the momentum of growth investment and the excellent promotion of our state as the country's premier destination. The latest data confirms that the number of visitors coming to our state has again risen.

**Mr Bacon** - MONA was promoted in the north during the federal election campaign, wasn't it?

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, Mr Bacon.

**Mr HODGMAN** - Our plan is not only to attract more visitors but for them to see more of our state and spend more while they are here exploring our regions and supporting local businesses. It is working, with a record number of our visitors coming to our state and increasing the numbers of nights spent outside of Hobart and spending a record amount while they are here.

One of the key reasons people want to visit our state is to experience our magnificent natural environment and world-class parks. In fact, our parks attract more than 1.3 million visitors each and every year, so it is important to continue to invest in the care and maintenance of these precious assets.

**Ms O'Byrne** - Does anyone come to see MONA? You were very critical of MONA up north.

**Mr O'Byrne** interjecting.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, Ms O'Byrne - warning number one. Mr O'Byrne, you get one too.

**Mr HODGMAN** - Thank you, Madam Speaker. The 2019-20 Budget contains a substantial investment of \$200 million in job-creating tourism infrastructure to enhance experiences for our visitors and also for Tasmanians. We are investing \$32 million in our iconic national parks and wilderness experiences, including \$16 million to support the West Coast Wilderness Railway which is a tourism drawcard for the west coast and the north-west; \$4 million to further improve infrastructure and heritage sites, including new tourist accommodation options at Maria Island; \$3 million towards improving the standard and quality of huts along the Overland Track, recognised as one of the world's greatest multiday alpine walks within the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair

National Park; and \$1 million to improve facilities such as viewing platforms, tracks, toilets, car parks and key experiences including at Devil's Kitchen, Tasman Arch and Fortescue Bay within the Tasman National Park.

Maintenance is critical to ensure our parks are safe, enjoyable places for us all to visit and that we future-proof them for generations to come. We have committed \$8 million in a maintenance fund which will enable the delivery of improved infrastructure projects such as the removal of asbestos, paving at the residents workshop and lighthouse on Deal Island, road resealing at Cape Tourville at Freycinet National Park, and upgrades to staff accommodation at Lake St Clair. The Budget will also continue to advance our investment of \$87 million to transform Cradle Mountain into a world-class experience through the revitalisation of visitor facilities -

**Ms O'Connor** - No, into a theme park. You people have no idea.

**Mr HODGMAN** - That was an extraordinarily visionless statement by the Leader of the Greens. This will transform what is a nationally recognised iconic destination through the development of visitor facilities and the cableway project that will ensure visitors have all-year-round all-weather access to Dove Lake. There will be improvements at Dove Lake as well. We will incorporate a new viewing shelter, a bus shelter and an amenities building. These are pretty standard but important facilities and upgrades that this extraordinary area needs. There will also be an external viewing area, a bus turning area, parking, and a connection to the Dove Lark walking tracks. These experiences, along with the Cradle gateway precinct on the edge of the World Heritage Area, will deliver sustainable visitation while protecting what makes this spectacular region so special in the first place.

At Freycinet, we are nearing completion of a major visitor and infrastructure planning process for the Freycinet Peninsula, through the Freycinet Master Plan. We are working with the Morrison Liberal Government on a \$7.2 million investment to support tourism infrastructure upgrades identified through the Freycinet Master Plan. The additional funding will create new transport infrastructure to reduce congestion, support the development of new shelters, lookouts and walkways through the national park, as well as showcase Freycinet's rich indigenous heritage.

To disperse our visitors around the state into our regions there is a \$6 million Tasmanian cycle tourism fund which has supported 10 infrastructure projects, including stage 2 at Maydena, the Blue Derby mountain bike trails, the Meehan Ranges park and trail network, and the Snug to Margate cycleway.

We have also committed \$66 million under the roads package to support the visitor economy program to improve the safety and experience on key tourism roads for the many who travel them, including to the Three Capes Walk, Bruny Island, the Tarkine Drive and the Great Eastern Drive.

In conclusion, in addition to the investments which exceed \$200 million to support tourism and our parks and the infrastructure within them, we are also backing the private sector to invest and innovate, with a new \$20 million regional attraction loan scheme to stimulate investment in new products and experiences in regional areas.

Madam Speaker, the 2019-20 Budget has been described by the CEO of the state's peak tourism body as the best tourism budget in Tasmanian history, investing in our precious spots, delivering on election promises and stimulating investment in regional destinations. This Budget continues

this Government's very strong investment and our commitment in showcasing and preserving our state's -

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 48. The Premier has had far too sufficient time to answer a Dorothy Dixier when there are people dying in our emergency departments and extremely important and pressing questions that need to be asked and answered today.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Thank you, that is not a point of order. Premier, you have gone over six minutes already.

**Mr HODGMAN** - Thank you, Madam Speaker. There is a lot to talk about and I will conclude by saying that this Government will continue our very strong investment into our great visitor economy because it supports not only our economy but many businesses and jobs, right across our state.

### **Hospitals - Implementation of Recommendations of Auditor-General**

#### **Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.19 a.m.]

The Auditor-General's report into the performance of Tasmania's hospital emergency departments is extremely confronting. Patient safety, in their words, is 'severely and routinely compromised' because people cannot access a hospital bed when they need one, and there has been a 60 per cent increase in events that cause harm. Tom Millen from the Launceston General Hospital this morning said that patients are dying because of bed block, which now happens 70 per cent of the time at the LGH and 93 per cent of the time at the Royal Hobart Hospital. It is clear this hospital tragedy is not just about chronic underfunding. It is a cluster of failed leadership. Tasmanians are less safe in emergency departments now than when you took over as Health minister in 2014. You have had five years to turn around what you described then as a broken system, but you have made it worse than when you started. How has it come to this?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I reject the assertion in the question. The Government has worked very hard to strengthen our health system. It is a bigger health system than when this Government was elected to office. It is a safer health system due to the service reforms that needed to be introduced on the basis of expert advice from clinicians. It is also, as I outlined yesterday -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Point of order, Madam Speaker, that is a clear misleading of the House. That is not the Auditor-General's findings. It is not safer now. That is not the truth.

**Madam SPEAKER** - As you would appreciate, that is not a point of order. I ask the minister to answer the question as best he possibly can.

**Dr Woodruff** - Truthfully.

**Mr FERGUSON** - As I always do. Some of these statements thrown around the Chamber do need to be challenged. The Government has welcomed the Auditor-General's report. The recommendations put forward are very good and we ought to be looking at how we can implement

them. That is exactly what the Government is doing. I also want to let the member know, having raised the LGH, the Government, again, makes this point: the Government has opened ward 4B that was closed by Labor and the Greens.

**Ms O'Byrne** - But you've not staffed beds in the hospital.

**Mr FERGUSON** - We have opened it. The previous minister -

**Ms O'Byrne** - You haven't staffed the beds -

**Mr FERGUSON** - That is why the record needs to be correct. The Government has opened the ward, which the Labor-Greens government closed and had the beds sent up to Coats Patons to be locked away so they could not be used. We have seen an increase in demand, which the Auditor-General acknowledges. The increase in demand has -

**Dr Woodruff** - He didn't say that's the only reason. That is one of three reasons.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Ms Woodruff, warning number one.

**Mr FERGUSON** - gone at a faster rate than any government's ability to open more beds. At the LGH we are opening 40 more beds, including eight this year in the children's ward for the adolescent mental health unit that stakeholders have been crying out for, for years.

We accept there are problems in the system. When I first started I declared it a broken system and the Government immediately used the commissioned report to make it clear we needed reform and we embarked upon that. We have seen demand increasing at a rate beyond which we have been able to build, particularly I mention the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment. I wish it had been finished on time. If it had been done on time, if it had not been left in chaos, it would have been done three years ago. That infrastructure is coming on line.

We are all for helping Tasmanians get the health access they deserve, and that includes the emergency department. The Greens want to make it about funding as well. Our \$8.1 billion budget is all about investing for growth in our health services. Growth; not less, more. That includes new buildings, recruiting new staff and delivering new services.

**Dr Woodruff** - It is about chronic, dysfunctional, silo-mentality culture.

**Mr FERGUSON** - This is important as well, we have had some commentary and I will leave the House with this quote from the *Examiner's* editorial, which was very helpful -

Of course, the state Government must do more, but it is cheap and unproductive for Labor and the Greens to throw political stones without putting forward solutions, and outlining how they would fund them.

**Ms White** - I have put forward solutions, I have written letters and you haven't gotten back to me. What more do you want me to do?

**Mr FERGUSON** - The Leader of the Opposition yesterday had a golden opportunity afforded her for unlimited time and the opportunity to outline an alternative budget. The Leader of the Opposition chose not to do that and spoke for 30 minutes and gave nothing. The editorial said -

It is time for bipartisan politics to solve the poignant issues and the Access Solutions meeting in June is the perfect chance for something meaningful to occur.

I agree.

**Ms White** - How about you come back to me? I've written to the Premier multiple times.

**Mr FERGUSON** - If the member would stop interjecting, she would understand that she will be invited to the meeting. I have told you this before.

**Ms White** - I have asked multiple times to have a meeting and you have always rejected it.

**Mr FERGUSON** - You will be welcome to the meeting, but what will not be welcome is if you behave like this with more of the blame game, with which you will not help us to move toward solutions and your contribution will be a destructive one, not a constructive one. What Tasmanians expect from its parliamentarians is a willingness to work through these issues including the cultural issues in the health system. They expect us to resolve those and that is my commitment.

### **Hospitals - Implementation of Recommendations of Auditor-General**

**Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.25 a.m.]

This damning report into Tasmania's four major hospital emergency departments released yesterday by the Auditor-General reveal steady and dangerous deterioration on your watch over the past half-a-decade. The Auditor-General's investigation has found the Royal Hobart Hospital was bed-blocked for almost 93 per cent of the time between June last year and January this year, and the Launceston General Hospital spent almost 70 per cent of that time at the highest level of escalation in a state of what he described as 'almost constant gridlock'. That means that patients cannot get a bed and that leads to worse health outcomes.

**Mrs Rylah** interjecting.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Mrs Rylah, it would be helpful if you did not interject.

**Ms WHITE** - Your efficiency dividend will mean that you are now cutting the Health budget next year. Can you explain how Tasmania's hospital emergency rooms will not be constantly operating at anything other than highest escalation levels for the foreseeable future?

### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, the Government is not cutting the Health budget. The Government is increasing the Health budget. The Leader of the Opposition does not like the facts and it does not suit her blame game narrative. We will be increasing the Health budget and it is important we do so because we are about providing better access to health care. If the Leader of the Opposition had bothered to publish an alternative budget, maybe we could see what they really would cut in order to put any extra money into any other initiative but they have been unwilling to do that. I understand



that later today the real opposition leader will be doing an alternative budget and laying it before the House and presenting to the Tasmanian people how they would identify and fund their priorities.

**Mr Bacon** - Who is the real Health minister? Over here, isn't he?

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, Mr Bacon. Warning number one.

**Mr FERGUSON** - The Government has laid out its Budget. The Leader of the Opposition is too lazy or unable to publish their alternative. On the question of budget, we will be working to ensure we follow the guidance of the Auditor-General who is calling for better use of our resources and better efficiencies. This includes the potential for thousands of bed days if we can utilise our beds more efficiently. Another initiative will be in the use of overtime. That is a very real area of improvement that we can hold out. With the benefit of working with the unions, we have been discussing this. The potential for more fully-employed nurses as opposed to a reliance on overtime and double shifts is a very good initiative that you should be demanding that we do.

**Ms White** - I have been for the last five years. Wake up, minister. You have such a tin ear.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Thank you. Well, there is something we can agree on and we are working with the union on that. Maybe you do not like the answer to the question. You asked me how we are going to provide our budget measures. Our Health budget is bigger than last year and it is bigger over the forward Estimates. The Labor Party's last budget was short of \$1.5 billion a year for Health. Ours is now nudging \$2 billion a year for Health and it is \$8.1 billion over four years; bigger than you have ever delivered before.

Coming back to the Auditor-General's report, we acknowledge there are real challenges in Health. These are not five-year challenges. These are long-term challenges and it was proven. Labor had its own commission into these challenges. The report was released after they were kicked out of office in 2014 and it was a scathing assessment of their time governing the health system. That report found that Labor had failed to implement the Richardson report and the Tasmanian Health Plan 2007 and left the system without the governance arrangements required to drive change and improvement. It found that -

Poor leadership and bad behaviour is at the core of Tasmania's inability to achieve both effective governance and sustainable change. No move to improve the health system will succeed without cultural change.

With the new Tasmanian Health Services Act we have removed any ambiguity regarding governance, authority and accountability. This provides the necessary foundation to drive the needed cultural change, which has already started.

I will conclude that a superficial blame game will not solve the challenges we are experiencing in our emergency departments. This Government has done everything it can to open up capacity and demand has continued to increase. The Treasurer has outlined this better than anyone. We saw a record flu season in 2017. We provided the extra staff, the extra beds and the extra funding but yet when the flu season was over demand did not abate.

As we are building more capacity and before it is completed, we will always look to do more and I welcome the Auditor-General's report. It is healthy, it is helpful and it is constructive. I will

certainly be taking those recommendations forward to the best of our ability and looking at what we can implement in the short term, in the medium term and through the solutions meeting.

### **Budget 2019-20 - Infrastructure Investment**

**Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.31 a.m.]

Can you inform the House how the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's record investment in job creating infrastructure in this year's state Budget is maintaining the momentum and investing for growth in Tasmania? Is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I could say 'yes' and 'no' but I will provide some more detail. I thank the member for his question. The Hodgman majority Liberal Government has a very strong record for investing in growth in Tasmania and particularly infrastructure: significant investments in roads, bridges and transport infrastructure right across Tasmania. Over \$1 billion of transport infrastructure investment has been delivered and that is money out the door since 2014-15 by the Hodgman Liberal Government.

We are ramping up with a 2019-20 state Budget providing record funding over \$1.6 billion in partnership with the federal Morrison Liberal Government to further build the job creating transport infrastructure that our growing state needs. To maintain the momentum, a majority Hodgman Liberal Government has built in Tasmania and to invest for growth in our state's future. I stand by our record of delivering significant investment in education infrastructure right across Tasmania. This Liberal Government has contributed more in this area than any government over the last two decades.

Our record commitment of \$184 million over the forward Estimates in this year's budget capital investment program provides funding for new schools, school rebuilds, major refurbishments and new child and family learning centres. Our budget features new projects. The 2019-20 budget investment into early learning will see the commencement of new construction, of new child and family learning centres with a new allocation of \$15 million over the forward Estimates to support these new projects.

Our budget also funds new upgrade projects to the Midland Highway including two that are commencing this construction season; one at Spring Hill and another between Melton Mowbray and Lovely Banks as part of the \$112 million allocation to our Midland Highway Action Plan.

Something else that is new in our budget -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The new detectives over there on the other side of the House. A new Bridgewater bridge. You had 16 years, the Labor Government, and you failed. That is the record. They are the facts. Nothing under you, but by 2024 people will be driving on the Bridgewater bridge. Dr Shane Broad yesterday had the audacity to say that the project had been pushed back.

When we announced the project, we were always committed to 2024. In 2024 cars will driving on the Bridgewater bridge.

Madam Speaker, the negativity -

**Members** interjecting.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order. It is not just the negativity, it is the lack of discipline. I ask the House to calm down. The frivolity is getting a little too much for me. Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Madam Speaker. The relentless negativity on the other side of the House also extends to the member for Franklin, the Opposition spokesperson for infrastructure. Mr O'Byrne said in this House, 'It is now halfway through 2019 and you have not let the tender out with respect to the Hobart airport roundabout'.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You are wrong. The tender for the project was actually let on 6 April this year. We expect to award the contract in the second half of this year. Wrong, Madam Speaker. There was another -

**Mr O'Byrne** - I said that you had not awarded it.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I thought you said 'point of order'.

**Madam SPEAKER** - I did too.

**Mr O'Byrne** - I do not want to interrupt, you are going so well.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. I am going to continue because there was another error in your ways yesterday. The honourable David O'Byrne also said incorrectly in the House yesterday - when it comes to our \$1.6 billion worth of infrastructure investment, all about job creating infrastructure - that \$900 million of that was federal money. That is wrong, \$925 million of that is actually state money, a state contribution. You are wrong.

No wonder there is not an alternative budget from those opposite, because they cannot add up. I was a little disappointed yesterday because we did have quite a lot of negativity about infrastructure from those opposite over the course of the last five days or so. I did not hear too much mention of infrastructure at all. You either agree with our \$3.6 billion infrastructure plan, or you do not.

**Members** interjecting.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Standing order 48, you have another long-winded, vacuous, tedious repetition Dorothy Dixier answer at a time when there are questions to be answered about people dying in the emergency departments of our hospitals.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Thank you, but standing order 48 allows me to call the next question if the minister has had sufficient time. I think he is about to wind up, so it will not be long.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am about to wind-up, Madam Speaker, because we have a strong pipeline of projects funded in the state Budget which will get underway in this financial year.

The Midland Highway upgrade at Spring Hill; the Midland Highway upgrade from Melton Mowbray to Lovely Banks; the Hobart Airport flyover interchange upgrade; the Arthur Highway overtaking lanes east of Sorell; the Sheas Creek Bridge replacement -

**Ms O'Connor** - You have been asked to wind-up. You have been prattling on for six minutes.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, I run the parliament, thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am winding-up with the facts, Madam Speaker. The West Tamar Highway Traffic Solution first projects including upgraded junctions for the safer highway for bikes between Brisbane Street and Legana; strengthening of eight bridges through continuation of the Freight Access Bridge Upgrade Program; East Tamar Highway, and a new roundabout at the Mowbray Connector. I could go on and on and on -

**Ms O'Connor** - You already have.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I respect Ms O'Connor, Madam Speaker, and her place in this House, so I will not, but I will just say that all those things that I mentioned are all about jobs. People will be employed, producing these projects. Contractors and all the people involved, engineers, planning; all about jobs, maintaining the momentum as our Budget does, and investing for growth.

### **Hospitals - Implementation of Recommendations of Auditor-General**

**Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.39 a.m.]

The number of patients unable to be transferred from ambulances to emergency departments within 30 minutes at Tasmania's four major hospitals has increased by 239 per cent despite only a 20 per cent growth in ambulance presentations. The Auditor-General has presented this disproportionate and alarming figure to you. The Australian Medical Association has warned you in the strongest possible terms that your cuts to health have resulted in a crisis and that crisis will continue to escalate. You have been warned in the strongest possible terms that you will lose more frontline health staff because of your Budget disaster.

Dr John Saul said:

Knowing patients are being harmed and not being able to do anything more to prevent this harm occurring because of the lack of beds and staff, is at best causing low morale among our doctors and at worst causing significant stress, with some doctors leaving the ED as a consequence.

Minister, by now you know that health is chronically underfunded, so my question to you is, did you ask for more money for Health in this train-wreck Budget and were you denied by the Treasurer?

## **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. To answer it directly so there can be no confusion, did I ask my Cabinet colleagues for more money for Health? The answer is yes. It points to the fact that the Budget is bigger in Health. It is growing to nearly \$2 billion in the coming financial year and \$8.1 billion over the full forward Estimates.

I was checking with the Treasurer earlier, since you brought him into the question, and in the last Labor-Greens budget Health as a percentage of total state budget was just 28 per cent over the last financial year in the forward Estimates. Under this Budget we have grown it to 32 per cent. That is a bigger percentage of a bigger budget and it puts paid to that continuing false claim from the Labor Party of budget cuts, because it is not true and it is an attempt to scare people.

I will make it really clear. There is more money in this Budget to meet the increasing demand and we have specifically named up the opportunity to fund initiatives that come out of the access solutions meetings. Some people might want to call that a roundtable but I am about solutions. What I hear from members opposite is that they are about blame and politics. Frankly, that falls very poorly in the Tasmanian community because they expect solutions and that is what we will deliver.

We have a funding line to support sensible policy initiatives that break down bureaucratic silos which have been highlighted in the Auditor-General's report. We want to tackle that. We want to get better utilisation of the beds that we have. The Auditor-General speculates that there could be 3000 bed days available if we can break down those silos further. Finally, we want to fund more beds and we are doing that. The AMA said to me last year, 'We know you cannot open more beds. We know that you have met your full occupancy of our hospitals', so they asked me to fund specific initiatives to support our ED staff, which we did, with \$5 million.

I believe the Leader of the Opposition has today misrepresented the AMA in her question. That is a matter for her to clear up, but the Government is growing our investment in Health. We respect and work well with the AMA, who are part of the solution. I will finish on this point. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition today, the AMA is part of the solution. The Government is part of the solution. I did not mention earlier that there will be an opportunity for the Greens members to be represented at the Access Solutions meeting and I am sure they will take up the opportunity. It is up to them. I ask if the Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party will be part of the solution or part of the blame game?

### **Health - Private Hospital Co-Location in Launceston**

#### **Mrs RYLAH question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.43 a.m.]

Can you update the House on progress with the assessments of a co-located private hospital for Launceston and the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's infrastructure investment in Health?

## **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, Health has been a key priority for this Government since day one and I am very pleased to receive this question today from Mrs Rylah. We acknowledge the challenges, we

acknowledge that our staff and hospitals are under pressure from increasing demand, and we acknowledge that we must do more and that is exactly what we are doing.

I am very pleased to provide an update to the House today that the Office of the Coordinator-General has now formally advised Calvary Health Care that the Government's preferred private hospital site for Launceston is the existing Health department land currently housing ageing mental health services buildings at 52 Franklin Street. This site is located directly across from the LGH and offers the best opportunity for all stakeholders, including the Government, to achieve the benefits of a co-located private hospital for northern Tasmanians. Importantly, this includes the ability to collaborate in the provision of services to our community and to give assistance to the LGH during periods of peak demand.

Calvary has previously publicly indicated that the proposal includes a range of services including new ones and palliative care, which we know is important for many individuals and families in the north. The community expects that decisions of this magnitude are thoroughly assessed and with a fully developed proposal for stage 2, we expect that to be delivered by Calvary in the second half of this calendar year with a final decision made in the first half of 2020.

A co-located private hospital would really complement the other infrastructure investments we are making at the LGH. Later this year we will open the first stage of the expanded and renovated ward 4K children's ward at the Launceston General Hospital. This is a project very close to this Government's heart. It is a huge moment and a milestone in the redevelopment that is well overdue, with more beds and a better environment for patients. I emphasise that this will be Tasmania's first-ever inpatient adolescent unit which will also cater for mental health needs for young people. I know there has been a lot of commentary on this. We are building that infrastructure and the funding to open that is also in this Budget. Over the Budget and forward Estimates there is \$61.2 million towards the redevelopment of the LGH which includes the development of a 32-bed ward and, importantly, more carparking.

In all regions of Tasmania, I can advise that a total of \$352.6 million will be invested in new and upgraded health and hospital facilities. This includes \$90.6 million to fully fund stage 2 of the Royal redevelopment, including the expansion of the ED, the ICU expansion and ward upgrades, which is a new project funded in this Budget. There is \$20.2 million for 27 new mental health beds in southern Tasmania; continuation of the \$35 million investment in the Mersey Community Hospital upgrades; \$32.3 million for rural hospital and ambulance upgrades, including new stations at Burnie and at Glenorchy; \$4 million to complete air-conditioning upgrades of hospitals; completion of the \$2.1 million purpose-built antenatal clinic at the North West Regional Hospital which complements our new integrated maternity service; and completion of \$13 million upgraded regional health facilities at King Island.

We are steadfastly delivering a plan to build a better health system. These improvements are needed to meet ever-growing demand. They are essential and I ask the House support them.

After five days of complaining about the Budget, yesterday was Labor's opportunity to prove they have an alternative plan to back up their incessant complaining. Labor had unlimited time to outline their hopes and dreams and show how they would pay for them. What would Labor change about our \$3.6 billion infrastructure program, including our Health infrastructure? There was not a word, not a peep from the Opposition. All Labor have been doing is play petty politics and criticise. They are more than happy to criticise but, as we saw yesterday, they could not come up with a better

budget. They could not put in the effort to show a better plan than the Government's, even if they had tried.

In the absence of Labor having any credible solutions or any plans, we will continue to work hard to build the infrastructure we need to meet that increase in demand and, importantly, to deliver the better and safer healthcare we want to give to all Tasmanians.

## **Health - Implementation of Recommendations of Auditor-General**

### **Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.48 a.m.]

The most scathing finding from the Auditor-General's report is the absence of effective leadership and accountability to change a health service culture deeply resistant to change which suffers from a 'dysfunctional silo mentality' - their words. Your Tasmanian Health Service has failed to coordinate and integrate the reforms of two previous reviews, which have now both stalled. You said today in the *Mercury* that there is no silver bullet to fix the waiting times and bed block, which shows you are utterly deaf to the Auditor-General's findings. If you had the heart and tenacity to tackle the organisational toxic culture and improve discharge management, the Auditor-General found that you would be able to create 3000 more bed days every year without a cost to the Budget. Why would any Tasmanian concerned about our hospital's emergency dysfunction have any confidence that you are prepared to do the hard, cultural work needed to stop patients dying unnecessarily?

### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, my guarantee is that we are putting in the hard yards. We have been working very hard.

**Dr Woodruff** - Five years, and it is worse.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, Dr Woodruff, warning number two.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Unlike some people, who have run away from the Health portfolio, I am here to deliver on behalf of this Government. We were elected by the people who support our plan for Health and they look to us to lead and guide us through important continuing reform. I have embraced the Auditor-General's report. It is helpful, constructive to the task and the Government is not interested in petty point scoring which advances nobody's interest. The cultural issues are as important as our service improvements in building and opening more capacity.

**Dr Woodruff** - Three thousand bed days.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Hello, I talked about this during the morning. We are embracing it and we are fully aware of those challenges being experienced.

**Dr Woodruff** - Just do it.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order, Dr Woodruff, warning number three. If you interrupt again, I have to ask you to leave.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Different people might want to grab a headline today but that will not help anybody. The superficial petty politics played does not advance anybody. The Government has opened more capacity and we look to continuing advice, including this from the Auditor-General, which helps show us a way to provide further improvements. For some people in the health system, the Auditor-General's report will be very challenging because it does point to the need for cultural as well as governance improvements. We have to work together on this because if it -

**Dr Woodruff** - It is the patients who find it challenging because they are dying.

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**Member Suspended**  
**Member for Franklin - Dr Woodruff**

**Madam SPEAKER** - Dr Woodruff, I am afraid you will have to leave the House. You may come back at the end of Question Time.

**Dr Woodruff withdrew.**

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**Mr FERGUSON** - That is really unfortunate. If it falls to the continuing style of debate we have seen this morning, I suspect we will not gain the bipartisan support for that cultural change. I will be reluctant to go much further. I say that advisedly because there are important changes that need to be made that will be very challenging for some people in our health system and there are differences of opinion. Oh, I see the grin over there. This is the appetite for politics. That is what that is. I saw the grin and I have seen it many times.

**Ms White** - I am talking to my colleague. How dare you infer such a slur on me.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr FERGUSON** - I will make the point again -

**Madam SPEAKER** - Order. There seems to be a lot of repetition here this morning and a lot of unrest. Could we please remind ourselves where we are and behave. Minister, I would appreciate it if you would make this one brief.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Madam Speaker, it is an important point. There is a difference of opinion that exists between different parts of the health system and I include the medical community in that. We have to work together to deal with some of these cultural challenges in a way that supports each person in our health system feeling empowered to take better steps in the way that decisions are made at the local level. Our House of parliament has done a very good thing in unifying around the law change that empowered local decision-making. The Auditor-General's comments support the need to leverage that empowerment at the local level to take out silos, to give hospitals whole-of-hospital empowerment to make decisions that deal with some of the challenges that sit in the ED, unfairly. The ED staff have to deal with the backlog that can occur as a result of a siloed approach within a hospital and they should not be left with that problem. I applaud our -

**Ms White** - Why don't you apologise to them as well?



**Madam SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr FERGUSON** - ED staff. They deal in very stressful situations. The Auditor-General has complimented them for doing a very good job with triaging, particularly the most urgent patients being given excellent access. The ED staff have to deal with access issues that are not their cause. The cause of those bed access issues sits across the hospital. This Government is about empowering them and supporting them so we can have more beds on line when they are ready and the better utilisation of the resources we have in the meantime. That is what the Government will continue to do with our stakeholders.

### **Hospitals - Implementation of Recommendations of Auditor-General**

**Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.55 a.m.]

You have so utterly failed Tasmanians with your uncaring and heartless approach to health funding that very sick Tasmanians have no option but to present at the emergency department. Once there, the Auditor-General has told you that wait times now average nine hours but you know it can stretch up to six days for some patients. The AMA says -

... the Government needs to look at these issues as more than just the ED or even the hospital. Underfunded mental Health Services, Drug and Alcohol Services, palliative care as well as other primary health services also mean that patients that should be cared for within the community are ending up in our hospitals.

Why, after half-a-decade of systematically underfunding the health and hospital system, do you continue to send a clear message to Tasmanians that they are on their own if they are suffering mental ill health or substance abuse?

### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, that is an unfortunate question. I care, the Government cares and we are in the business of improving access to all those services the Leader of the Opposition mentioned. Many Tasmanians will be quite appalled at that presentation because the mental health plan we took to the election is four times bigger than the one Labor took. In the area of drug and alcohol, we have increased access by 30 beds. Labor did not make that commitment at the election. In the area of palliative care across the state, we are providing further funds so we can improve access including a specialised service in the north-west.

If the Labor Party wants to continue with this dishonest campaign of the funding argument, why did they not publish an alternative health budget? If the Leader of the Opposition wants to be the great banner carrier for any health stakeholder, why did the Leader of the Opposition not outline her fully costed plan yesterday? It is because they are not willing to do the hard work. They only have cheap, negative politics.

## **Royal Hobart Hospital - Redevelopment**

### **Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.57 a.m.]

Over the past half-a-decade you have been in Government, you have repeatedly tried to deceive Tasmanians over the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment and you have pinned their hopes for an end to the health crisis on the redevelopment opening. In August 2016, you announced the redevelopment would be delayed a year only to later announce further delays. In a press release on 18 December last year, you said, 'The RHH Redevelopment remains on track to reach practical completion mid-2019, which is now less than 12 months away.'. On 16 February this year, you told the *Mercury*, 'The RHH redevelopment remains on track to reach practical completion mid-2019, which is now less than six months away.'.

The truth is in your Government's train wreck of a Budget released last Thursday, which lays bare that you have again been deceitful about when patients will be able to receive treatment in the new hospital. Can you confirm that the first patients will not be able to access a bed in the redevelopment until the middle of next year at the earliest?

### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I am very proud of the Government, building what Labor promised to build but never got around to building. They never got around to laying a single brick. I believe the Labor Party walked away from the redevelopment when they said, mid-stream in the last parliament, that we should build something new on the waterfront. The Labor Party has consistently talked down our success of building what Labor has been promising since 2006.

I will answer all of the question. Since 2006, the Labor Party were talking about a new hospital and spent how much? They spent \$10 million looking into it at the waterfront and when the Labor Party went through 2006-7, skip a few, 2010, 2013, 2014, they did not lay a single brick, not one.

The first incoming brief on the redevelopment was what a mess it was in. It was in turmoil. I see the former Health minister shake her head. There have been delays to the redevelopment and that is because Labor did not start it. Had they started when they said they would, it would have been finished three years ago.

Now that we have built the building, it is going through its finishing stages, everybody within 10 or 20 kilometres of Hobart city can see it. It is there, we have built what Labor could not build. Yes, there have been a few challenges along the way and that would be expected for a project of that magnitude. Nearly 700 -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr FERGUSON** - I can see the Labor Party's discomfort. But now that we are on the precipice of receiving the project, Labor again wants play to politics.

I will inform the Leader of the Opposition because, clearly, she has not been reading either this year's budget papers or last budget papers, or last year's election policy, which outlined our program for opening 300 more beds. Today, I can inform the Leader of the Opposition, we are budgeted to provide more beds from 1 July next year at the Royal Hobart Hospital. That is not news. But they

are the new beds. They are the additional beds, because through the commissioning phase, the existing beds will move in first.

What I am about to say is also not news, because the Leader of the Opposition does not listen. I have been trying to emphasise that we have provided funding in this budget: this Government has provided further funding which can be used for bringing forward the opening of more beds sooner.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition to cease this negative, petty politics. You are helping zero patients. It falls to the Government to do that.

**Ms WHITE** - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Standing order 45. The Minister did not answer the question regarding when patients would actually be in beds.

**Mr FERGUSON** - I did answer that.

**Madam SPEAKER** - That is not a point of order.

### **Budget 2019-20 - Agricultural Sector**

**Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr BARNETT**

[11.02 a.m.]

Are you aware of evidence confirming that the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's comprehensive plan to grow the agricultural sector is working, delivering jobs and opportunities for Tasmanians across every region?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his strong interest and support for agriculture. I can answer that question. We do have a plan and it is working. The Hodgman Liberal Government is no better friend of rural and regional Tasmania. Our target to grow the annual farm gate value of the agricultural sector to \$10 billion by 2050 is on track. There is good news - the Australian Bureau of Statistics - the latest report, we are on track to meet our target. It is an increase in agricultural production by 9 per cent: 9 per cent in 2017-18 to just over \$1.6 billion. This is good news.

It is fantastic news because there are many sectors that deserve special recognition. Dairy was once again Tasmania's highest-value commodity with a 32 per cent increase in production. The next most valuable commodities are beef, potatoes, wool; all doing really well. The value of fruit production has increased to an impressive \$197 million for the 2017-18 year.

What about confidence? Confidence is up in rural and regional Tasmania. It is very high amongst Tasmanian farmers with growth at the farm gate value.

The Rural Confidence Survey from Rabobank showed that two-thirds of Tasmania's farmers were positive about the outlook. Rabobank also reported that Tasmanian farmers hold among the strongest investment intentions in the nation with 34 per cent, over one third of producers, looking at increasing investment.

Why would our farmers not be confident to invest knowing that they have a Hodgman Liberal government backing them? Backing them to the hilt. I am proud to be the minister backing them for and on behalf of the Hodgman Liberal Government, together with every member of the team on this side of parliament.

We are delivering the Agri-Food Plan. And what are we delivering? The industry development across all sectors: farm, business, mentoring, agri-business study scholarships, Landcare, weeds action, rural support organisations. We are backing them with research and development, just to name a few of the initiatives.

Biosecurity is a top priority and we are backing that to protect our primary industries, our environment, our tourism sector. We are backing it because it is a top priority.

What about the \$170 million? State and federal governments working together investing in irrigation. Irrigation infrastructure. This is part of our infrastructure plan that the Treasurer outlined in the budget. We are maintaining that momentum, investing for growth.

Transforming Tasmanian agriculture through the phase three, the third tranche of the Tasmanian Irrigation Scheme. When fully implemented we will have 10 irrigation schemes delivering 78 000 megalitres, creating thousands of jobs, \$114 million each year extra for our economy. This is all because we are investing in agricultural infrastructure, and we are proud of it.

We are delivering. They are laughing on the other side. They are smirking and they are not taking this seriously. Agriculture is a top priority. The pipeline to prosperity is good news. I want the other side to be backing it 100 per cent. I want everyone in this parliament on board to the pipeline to prosperity.

What does the key stakeholder, the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, say about our budget? Peter Skillern says agriculture has been a winner in the state budget. It is a winner.

What does Ben Cameron, chair of Oysters Tasmania, say with our initiatives?

The oyster industry welcomes yesterday's Budget from the Tasmanian Government. The continued support of the Government over the last few years demonstrates a commitment to aquaculture and its importance in regional areas.

What about the fruit growers? CEO Stuart Burgess welcomed our announcements of continued Government investment in regional irrigation infrastructure and on-farm energy initiatives. A very good initiative.

I compare that to those on the other side. What happened yesterday? What did we hear from the Opposition? Nothing in terms of growing agriculture. Nothing. Not one policy to grow agriculture. No alternative plan. They do not have a plan. Not even my shadow has a plan. The lack of policy to grow agriculture is not there. Where is it? It is not to be seen.

There is no recognition of the primary industries sectors. What about seafood and aquaculture? What did you say? Nothing. Zero. Nothing on irrigation. Nothing said on biosecurity. Nothing said on industry development. Nothing said on farm energy. Nothing on agricultural competitiveness and nothing on support for rural communities.

There is much to celebrate when it comes to agriculture. But guess what? There is still more work to do and we are getting on with the job to do it.

### **Budget 2019-20 - Health Funding**

#### **Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON**

[11.08]

TasCOSS is also telling you that you are utterly failing with your uncaring attitude to health funding. TasCOSS says the budget contains, and I quote:

No new announcements in public health, and funding falls over the forward Estimates to a record low of 1.2 per cent of the overall health budget, down from 1.5 per cent four years ago.

Why are you so incapable of listening that you are prepared to ignore the concerns of the peak body for Tasmania's most vulnerable people?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I have a very good relationship with TasCOSS and Kym Goodes. They do a great job and we are doing great things working together in my portfolio, particularly as well in science and technology so that we can actually do the very opposite of your claim. We do care about people and we want to empower people to live their best lives and that is why that partnership is really important to our Government, so I will continue with that attitude.

I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition has been on this. We know she ran away from the Health portfolio. We know her seven versions of a health policy were rejected by the voters, but we also know one of the reasons that voters rejected her health policy was because she wanted to create a \$20 million health bureaucracy.

What we are doing, which I think the Leader of the Opposition has missed, we have \$6 million for preventative initiatives - which I will have more to say about - so we can help Tasmanians be healthier. That is what the Government is doing and I reject the assertion once again by the Leader of the Opposition, who comprehensively failed yesterday to put forward any alternative plan.

**Time expired.**

### **COMMUNITY, HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND RELATED LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 2018 (No. 58)**

Bill agreed to by the Legislative Council without amendment.

### **MESSAGE FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

#### **Committee Appointments**

The Legislative Council has advised the following appointments to committees -

Mr Willie to the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts;  
Ms Webb to the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation;  
Ms Armitage to the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Integrity; and  
Ms Armitage to the Joint Parliamentary Library Committee.

## **MOTION**

### **Leave to Move Motion Forthwith - Leave Denied**

[11.11 a.m.]

**Ms WHITE** (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion without notice for the purposes of moving the following motion, which I will circulate -

That the House -

Calls on the Minister for Health to make an urgent statement to the House about whether the Government will adopt in full the recommendations of the Auditor-General's report titled Performance of Tasmania's Four Major Hospitals in the Delivery of Emergency Department Services.

I will explain why I have moved this motion and am seeking leave to debate it.

**Madam SPEAKER** - Ms White, I will just take some advice. The motion is out of order. Government business has precedence unless it is a censure motion or a vote of no confidence.

**Ms White** - I understand, Madam Speaker, but it is disappointing that the minister was unable to confirm whether he would accept the recommendations. He should have been able to do that.

## **MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

### **Mental Health in Schools**

[11.13 a.m.]

**Ms WHITE** (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: mental health in schools.

I bring on this important motion for debate today because there can be nothing more important for us to do as members of this place but support our young people and our children. Yesterday I had the honour to announce a policy on behalf of my parliamentary colleagues that Labor would, in government, put mental health workers in every state primary and high school, around 202 schools across the state. We know from the evidence presented to us that this will make an enormous difference into the health and wellbeing of our young people.

The Labor Party embarked this year on a health discussion paper and called for submissions from the sector and community to understand how we can make improvements to the mental health

and wellbeing of all people in this state. Overwhelmingly those submissions showed us that we need to make investments early. We need to do the best we can to prevent the onset of acute mental ill health and one of the obvious ways for us to do that is by investing in our school system and providing access to social workers, school psychologists and other support workers for children in their primary and high school years. Alarming, acute mental health conditions that develop can, in most cases, be identified in children under the age of 14. We need to recognise that we can do so much more to support young people to be healthy and well and strong, not just physically but also mentally.

It is common across all schools for students to participate in physical activity. I can remember very clearly at my school that we had a sports teacher. There was a heavy emphasis on physical education and physical health and wellbeing. The same cannot be said for mental health and wellbeing. Yet we know how fundamentally important it is for the emotional and personal development of individuals to have resilience, the capacity to regulate behaviours, to be able to understand one another, have empathy, and also in order to address the unfortunate prevalence of bullying that we see in our schools.

This is an investment in our young people so they can have healthy and productive lives, participate more fully in school, have a more enjoyable time and get a better education and go on and do whatever they aspire to once they leave the education system. It is about making sure that students have access to these resources when they need them. I respect that, right now across our school system, there are services available for young people, but they are ad hoc and not readily available. I hear frequently from students, teachers and parents that they have to wait for an appointment to be available and it might be in a fortnight's time. The health worker might not be available on the day they are dealing with some pressing mental health issues. This is about making sure that young people can have access to that support at their school when they need it, rather than sharing resources across schools which is what currently takes place. It is also about making sure that we have trained health professionals working in the school system.

There are others. The chaplaincy program is one that provides support services to students and I respect the work they do and the guidance they give children, but we want to be able to provide the clinical support, the social workers, the school psychologists and the expertise that is required for people dealing with mental ill health, and that is different from what is currently offered in the school system.

Our policy was welcomed yesterday by the Youth Network of Tasmania that has, through their consultation processes, provided evidence to us that has helped to shape the announcement we made yesterday. They tell us that evidence suggests more than 75 per cent of mental health issues develop before the age of 25 and that greater investment in prevention and early intervention services for young people will reduce the demand for costly tertiary services and save lives. They have done an enormous amount of consultative work. We also know from the engagement we have had with the Mental Health Council of Tasmania that there is so much more we can do, particularly if you look at the alarmingly high rate of youth suicide in our state. We have to take action and show leadership. We need to invest in our young people.

It is a policy I am very proud of and encourage the Government to adopt. They should be able to make provision to ensure that our young people have access to mental health support the same way they do a range of other services and place a higher priority on their health and wellbeing, because without that they are not going to be engaging and learning as constructively as they otherwise might.

We also know that the statistics are alarming. I mentioned earlier that half of all lifelong mental health problems begin before the age of 14. One in seven young people aged four to 17 experience a mental health condition in any given year, one in 10 young people aged 12 to 17 years will self-harm, one in 13 will seriously consider a suicide attempt and one in 40 will attempt suicide. Unfortunately, suicide continues to be the biggest killer of young Australians.

There is an urgent need for us to act and invest in preventative health and ensure that our young people are the focus of that investment. It is about ensuring that we reduce the number of acute mental health issues that present in young people and then place pressure on them and their families and their ability to have a happy and healthy life but also place pressure on our health department. We have heard about the enormous impact that is having on our emergency system and our acute health system.

We understand very much the importance of investing early and that has also been recognised by the Government with their commitment to child and family centres. We acknowledge that the first five years of a child's life is fundamentally important for their development but we also need to acknowledge that those early years, those primary school years can be fundamental in shaping who those young people become as adults.

If we do not invest in them and their health and wellbeing and particularly their mental health, then we are not doing our job.

I encourage the Government to adopt the policy we announced yesterday.

[11.20 a.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on the matter of public importance today, particularly on issues around mental health more broadly. It is one of the reasons why I stood for parliament 17 or 18 years ago, the need to support our community more with respect to mental health. It was also one of the reasons why, as shadow minister for health in 2013 or 2014, I released a policy about school nurses in our schools. One of the reasons for that was what are increasingly complex issues that our young people have to deal with, more generally, whether in their schools or their home life, issues of anxiety, bullying, body image, self-worth: a large, complex array of issues. We are committed in this area.

I take the Opposition Leader's contribution in the goodwill and in terms of the importance of this particular issue. I do not agree that the Government is not focusing on this as a matter of priority. Clearly, all the evidence would suggest that over the last five years we have made this an absolute priority in terms of our child, adolescent and student wellbeing. Under the Government, we have invested an unprecedented \$81 million that has been committed to support mental health and wellbeing in our schools. We are well aware that students who have greater health and wellbeing are more likely to have better educational outcomes.

This is the key reason why we are investing in a new student disability funding model, why we are investing in the area of trauma. There are many barriers to learning that our young people face in our schools. We need to reduce those barriers if we are going to ensure that every single child that does have a fundamental right to a quality education can do so.

There is no one single solution to dealing with mental health issues which is why we need to have a holistic and multi-faceted approach to supporting students who need help. We have



significantly increased professional support staff in our schools since 2014 with an additional 65 full-time equivalents. This includes psychologists, speech pathologists, social workers and the nurses I spoke of before.

We have already committed \$1.6 million over the four years to establish a child and student wellbeing unit and the unit is responsible for implementing the Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy, which was released in June last year. The strategy identifies key areas for future focus which will be progressed through yearly action plans in the area of mental wellbeing, which is the focus this year: physical wellbeing in the environment and wellbeing in the student voice.

The strategy puts the child at the centre of our efforts to support positive wellbeing and will deliver better outcomes for children and students. The trial of a student wellbeing survey supports the development of valid and reliable measures of child and student wellbeing and the priority of the strategy. I had the pleasure to launch that in Hobart College a month or two ago and speak to the students at the Hobart College about those survey results.

The 2019 Mental Wellbeing Action Plan demonstrates our collective effort across the department for the wellbeing of all students and that was released in April. Action 1 of the plan progresses the development of valid and reliable measures of child and student wellbeing to build on the 2018 wellbeing survey trials. From this year, all students from years 4 to 12 will be annually surveyed to capture views on their own wellbeing. The student survey will provide schools and the department with critical data on the wellbeing of students and will be used to plan and implement programs and professional learning to support the wellbeing of all students.

To support student participation in the wellbeing survey, a student booklet has been developed and the booklet outlines why understanding the wellbeing of all students matters and, importantly, who students can contact to support their mental wellbeing.

An important part of this action plan is that wellbeing is relevant to all students. We are committed to a preventative approach to wellbeing whilst also providing support and intervention where that is needed. This work aligns with commitments to mental wellbeing at the national level, such as Beyond Blue's Be You initiative.

Our Government is also deeply committed to a school environment that is safe, that is inclusive and free from bullying, and that is why we are developing and promoting new resources such as 'Bullying Stops Here!'

The 2019-20 Budget continues our strong focus on the wellbeing of students with an additional \$7.25 million over the four years to support students impacted by trauma, and those with emotional and behavioural challenges. Initiatives will include trauma informed practice training and professional learning for school staff and student engagement approaches. I note the Tasmanian Principals Association's positive comments, with president, Sally Milbourne, saying yesterday that the funding would enable the sector to take a long term and strategic approach to help students. We are also continuing to fund dedicated support teams that work with the schools and other agencies to support students impacted by family violence, abuse and neglect.

Our Budget also sees another eight school nurses funded, one in each of our eight colleges, and this is the final phase of our school nurses' program to provide school nurses across all of our government schools. These positions have been a huge success in schools, and with nurses assisting students who are suffering from eating disorders, stress, and other mental health related issues.

I need to also mention the \$4.9 million investment for our Principal Wellbeing Action Plan, which I released a few months ago in Devonport, which is ensuring principals have the support they need to flourish and lead learning and improvement in their schools.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are committed to investing further in mental health and wellbeing. We have a strong record as well.

**Time expired.**

[11.27 a.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE (Bass)** - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am very proud to support Labor's initiative to provide mental health workers for all Tasmanian schools. The strength of Labor's commitment is that it is about ensuring that those people in schools are appropriately trained and appropriately qualified to provide the level of support that our young people need. One in four young Australians currently has a mental health condition. Suicide is the biggest killer of young Australians, accounting for the deaths of more young people than car accidents, and half of all lifetime cases of mental health disorders start by the time you are 14 years of age.

In fact, the data shows that one in 10 preschool children, aged three to five, show mental health problems. Between 21 per cent and 23 per cent of children live in households where there are significant mental health issues already presented. About one in four school children are bullied. Children living in disadvantaged families are three more times likely to suffer from mental health disorders, and 45 per cent of children who have mild or moderate conduct problems go on to commit community crime. Contributors to mental health problems include peer bullying, impact stigma, family relationship stress, abuse, trauma and unsafe environments.

Tasmania has now presented with some rather terrifying suicide rates. The five-year suicide rate, which is the best measure within our communities, places Tasmania the second highest in Australia, behind the Northern Territory. That is 50 per cent higher than Victoria and the ACT. The Tasmanian suicide rate for each of the past three years is higher than any other point this century. This is a significant crisis for our community and all the evidence shows that an early intervention is the best way to provide support for young people.

The Deputy Premier spoke of the School Health Nurse Program. School nurses provide a good resource to schools and we are supportive of the work that they do. They are not specifically mental health trained nurses and they are not specifically from the types of resources to provide the types of response.

When you speak to our allied health workers, the minister referred to all of the people working across agencies that provide support to the students. All of those allied health workers say that they have significant waiting lists. Our psychologists in schools say that they have significant waiting lists for children needing to be seen, let alone to be given support. They are spread very thinly across the schools that they work in. They work very hard. They do their absolute best but children are not receiving that specialist support they need. That places a number of impacts on the school, for the child who is identified or self-identifies and needs support. If you do not respond to that request immediately, you can cause even more damage to the child in them not being supported at the point of identification.

It puts pressure on teaching staff and other support staff attempting to manage without the skills of the mental health support in schools. It puts pressure on the other students in the class because

the behavioural outcomes of a child suffering from mental health challenges, mental health illnesses, mental conditions, is that it does act out in class and in the playground. When we look at why we see prevalence of bullying, bullying is the reaction of children who are frustrated, who are unwell, who are not coping within the strict system and the structure. There are some really interesting models where we have changed education practice in schools, Australian models not in Tasmania but in other jurisdictions where bullying has decreased and almost ended in some schools as a result of children being far more supported and engaged in individual capacities in their learning environment. There is capacity to make a change.

The Leader spoke very highly of the chaplains' program. In the work the chaplains do in providing a level of pastoral care they are good additions to schools, but if you had a choice of providing that religious, spiritual support or a psychologist or a psychiatrist, there is no-one in this room that would think that would be the choice we would make. I hope there is a renewed pressure from the Government to their federal colleagues on opening up the chaplaincy funding so that it can be used to engage those professionals, which would make a significant difference. The work that chaplains do in the presentations they receive are already significantly in advance of the complexity of cases. The bulk of presentations are mental health presentations that they are not qualified to deal with and that puts more pressure on them.

The Deputy Premier talked about the other initiatives; the student wellbeing program and the nurses. They are good and fine programs and should be implemented but other jurisdictions that already have those programs have recognised the shortage is of qualified health professionals to deal with mental health. Both Victoria and New South Wales committed to increasing as they went into their last elections. Victoria committed to increasing the prevalence of trained mental health workers, the psychologists, psychiatrists and the like, and New South Wales went so far as to say they would place one in every school. Whilst credit can be given to the wellbeing study, the wellbeing program is not the be all and end all to resolve this because we are dealing with complex cases that need professional care.

The Deputy Premier spoke about the survey they are conducting. YNOT have been conducting those surveys and mental health has been identified as the leading health concern during consultations with young Tasmanians. At the 2018 Youth Forum they identified anxiety, depression, stress and being overwhelmed and pressured as significant areas of concern for young people. Evidence suggests that more than 75 per cent of mental health issues are developed before the age of 25 and there is now evidence about the presentations in three to five-year-olds and that the bulk of issues can be identified by the time they are 14.

The place we can provide the best level of support is in that school environment where we have captured these children and we can engage with them. Nurses play a role, surveys play a role, health and wellbeing initiatives play a role but it is crucial we have the best quality of support. If a child is identified or self-identifies as requiring support, they should not be on a waiting list. The Deputy Premier would be well aware of the waiting list in schools right now for a psychological assessment or any kind of assessment once a student identifies.

This initiative does allow us as a government to work collaboratively on something we all agree on, to ensure we meet the needs of these children. It is for them at the time they need it, for their teachers and to make teaching a much more positive experience and, if we want to prevent the ongoing impact to our communities, our justice and our health systems, we need to support these children early. The statistics are terrifying and I give credit to the investments the minister said he is making. The evidence and the evidence in other jurisdictions is very, very clear. We need to

have available professionals in the health system every single day. If a student identifies; they need to be supported immediately. Allied Health professionals tell me they have children on their list up to two years before they can get an assessment. The damage in that two years is irreparable.

**Time expired.**

[11.35 a.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to make some comments on behalf of the Greens on this very serious matter that I am sure hangs heavily on the minds of many parents in the Tasmanian community: the issue of the state of mental health of young children, adolescents and young people up to the age of 25, when people's brains are forming and neural pathways are being thickened and changed. It is not until 25 when that process completes and you can call a person fully adult in their brain development and emotional development.

We have children at the age of 18 cast into what we have traditionally called adulthood with enormous social and personal internal expectations placed upon them about what they can achieve in their lives. The evidence before us is of incredibly high rates of anxiety, depression, stress, of suicide achieved and suicidal ideation or the thought of killing oneself. These rates are high but, even worse, they are continuing to trend upwards. For parents, for children and young people, for us as a society, this is a truly alarming situation because these are the people of our future. They are the people we are launching as caring adults into their future lives.

What are we doing to help them? I am sure every person in this House wants to do everything we can to help them. I understand that the minister for Education is very caring and has made some definite efforts in the Budget to focus on some of the issues which, it is understood, will make a difference in a child's life and to help improve them in the school environment.

The complexity of issues that bring increasing rates of anxiety and depression for an individual child and for children as a community are not fixed in the school classroom. They are a whole-of-society and a whole-of-government approach to thinking about the underlying factors driving those increasing rates of anxiety, suicide, stress and depression. These factors have been mentioned by other members before but I want to focus on the future and that is what bears so heavily on children.

Through trauma, family violence, through the bullying they experience on social media, through the isolation and loneliness they experience with the increasing internal viewing of devices at the expense of communicating with their friends and having group activities, all of these things mean that children are now in an impoverished state in coming to grapple with the truly enormous changes happening at the global climate and environmental system level.

That is what we are seeing. That is why we are seeing new words like solastalgia appearing. Solastalgia is what we are seeing happening for many young adolescent people, and that is an understanding about the changing environment, and it is causing them mental distress, it is causing them depression, and it is causing them extreme anxiety. Not only do they feel dislocated from the natural world and have personal fear for their lives with the threat of bushfires, the threat of extreme cyclones or hurricanes depending on where they live, but they have extreme concern and anxiety about the jobs of the future. Where will they come from? How will they compete with robots for jobs? How will they work in industries where, despite how Liberal governments in Australia might pretend otherwise, they can see quite clearly that these industries are disappearing. The industries of fossil fuel energy generation are going.

Young people have devices. It does not matter what we tell them, they can look at their hand and read the information about what is happening in the world. Sometimes we know what they read is a bubble of mistruth, a bubble of fear and a bubble of bullying, and all these factors come into play on a young person's ability to cope.

The Greens understand that children need extra help which is why we have prioritised in our budget 50 extra full-time equivalent school psychologists, \$7 million into social workers and an extra \$1.6 million into trauma-informed schools. We have balanced this across the budget, unlike the Labor Party which has a good idea for putting mental health support staff in schools but has not told us where that money is coming from. The Greens have made a commitment to put on these extra social workers and school psychologists and an extra 90 teachers and 80 support staff into our school system to take pressure off teachers so they can give the personalised care children need, and they can have the multidisciplinary connection outside the school with families at home, and do what we can to improve people's mental health.

### **Time expired.**

[11.42 a.m.]

**Mrs RYLAH** (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to building a better mental health system for Tasmanians in line with the recent mental health plan and by working closely with frontline staff, consumers, community organisations and stakeholders. I have a strong commitment to mental health matters, supporting and developing so that all Tasmanians stay well. We in the Hodgman Liberal Government are getting on with the job of rolling out our \$104 million plan to deliver more beds, more community support and acute child and adolescent facilities for the first time ever, all within a more integrated mental health system.

We are responding to the increasing number of patients presenting with mental health conditions with extra funding and more beds, on top of other services and preventative initiatives already in place and being rolled out. This includes delivering inpatient adolescent mental health facilities at the LGH and the Royal, with the redeveloped ward 4K at the LGH to feature single-bed rooms designed to meet contemporary adolescent mental health care requirements. The new adolescent ward at the Royal will feature a 16-bed unit with rooms meeting modern standards for adolescent mental health care.

The Government has provided a significant funding boost for CAMHS, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, during the last term, with \$800 000 per annum to better support young Tasmanians and ensure CAMHS has the resources they need to recruit additional staff. This was the first funding boost CAMHS had received for years. This Government is making the investment, reforms and service improvements that our mental health sector has been crying out for too long. We know there is currently demand pressure on mental health services and that is why we are boosting services to ensure mental health care can be provided in the right place at the right time.

I turn now to schools. The Government already has a proud record of investing more into mental health support for our schools but we acknowledge there is always more to do. Last year, the minister, Mr Rockliff, launched the first wellbeing strategy focusing specifically on mental health and backed up by a considerable investment to address student wellbeing including mental health, plus we have our trauma and disability funding solutions. This is a valid, reliable whole-of-student approach.

The action plan specifically addresses the key issues experienced by our children and students such as resilience, depression and anxiety and cyber safety. It is not the ad hoc approach Labor has used in the past. The wellbeing action plan comes on top of other significant mental health initiatives we have been delivering, including the reinstatement of the school nurses program following Labor's cuts and new funding for Speak Up, Stay Chatty.

We are looking outside the square. Last year the Minister for Health also raised at COAG the matter of continuity of care for patients moving between interstate jurisdictions, which has resulted in the chief psychiatrists around Australia prioritising this issue. Sometimes there are severe and complex cases that require interstate transfer on an individual basis and this always takes place in close consultation with clinical teams with the best interests of the patient first and foremost.

Our approach is holistic and multifaceted. We want Tasmanians to get the care they need when they need it, so our plan includes 27 new beds, a greenfield 12-bed facility, a rebuilt Peacock Centre and a mental health-in-the-home service that will commence this month. We know and acknowledge that there are still Tasmanians who are waiting too long for care and have trouble accessing the care they need. That is why the beds we are building will improve patient flow and most importantly keep more Tasmanians living with mental ill health out of hospital in the first place.

The brand new hospital-in-the-home service has been set up so that patients can get the care they need sooner while we build a brand new 12-bed dedicated mental health facility on a greenfield site at St Johns Park in New Town. This innovative and safe service model is used in other states around Australia and allows patients to receive hospital-level care while being accommodated in their own home where they can feel safe and be close to family. The service will reduce the current pressure on the EDs, ensuring more Tasmanians living with mental ill health can receive the care they need in the right place at the right time. The immediate benefits will be felt by the Royal Hobart Hospital, as additional bed options means reduced pressure on our staff and patients.

**Time expired.**

**Matter noted.**

## **APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2019 (No. 21)**

### **Second Reading**

**Resumed from 28 May 2019 (page 99)**

**Ms HADDAD** (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe I have a couple of minutes left to conclude my contribution.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - You have seven minutes.

**Ms HADDAD** - Thank you. Last night I went through many of my concerns with the Budget across several portfolios in my contribution so with my remaining minutes I thought I would speak about the positive alternatives Labor has been putting forward.

I will starting with what has just been discussed in detail in the MPI and that is mental health support workers for Tasmanian schools. Labor's announcement is that we would recruit mental health workers in all 202 Tasmanian state primary and high schools because the statistics around mental health issues for Australian young people are startling and half of all lifelong mental health problems begin before the age of 14. One in seven young people aged four to 17 years experiences a mental health condition in any given year, one in 10 young people aged 12 to 17 will self-harm, one in 13 will seriously consider a suicide attempt and one in 40 will in fact attempt suicide. Suicide continues to be the biggest killer of young Australia which I acknowledge everyone in this Chamber is extremely concerned about, but as this policy notes, we can and must do better.

Labor has consulted widely and the feedback is clear from schools and families in the Tasmanian education system that prevention and early intervention is vital in protecting a young person's mental health. Labor's commitment would be \$40 million to mental health workers in schools which would ensure Tasmanian students have access to specialist mental health support when they need it and, most importantly, have that early. It would employ a range of mental health professionals such as social workers, youth workers and psychologists who would help to destigmatise mental health and break down a lot of the stigma that still surrounds mental health conditions in the Tasmania community, foster a more supportive peer support network in schools and build skills among other school staff to manage student mental health. They would be providing direct counselling support and early intervention services as well as coordinating appropriate support for students with more severe needs.

The key aim of the initiative would be to reduce Tasmania's youth suicide rate which is amongst the highest in the country. While the Government in question time today told us repeatedly that Labor had no substance, no policy and no commitment to achieving improvements in our health system, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact Labor put forward in yesterday's budget reply a fully funded and costed and very well negotiated and consulted policy on mental health workers in schools. It recognises that by identifying and treating mental ill health in children we can reduce the number of acute mental health issues presenting at our hospitals, either in children or later in life when mental health conditions are left to smoulder and become increasingly worse amongst our young people, teenagers and adults.

We recognise that mental health and wellbeing is vital to learning and to life and that children who are mentally well learn better, benefit from life experiences and have stronger relationships with family, school, staff and peers. Good mental health in childhood also provides a solid foundation for managing the transition to adolescence and adulthood, engaging successfully in education and having a happier life.

I am proud to be the mother of two amazing young Tasmanian women, aged 14 and almost 11 - her birthday is in two week's time - and I know that my two daughters and many of their peers would benefit from Labor's proposal to spend \$40 million on mental health workers to be placed in the Tasmanian school system. It is not just Labor talking about this. Today in the *Mercury* editorial it was noted quite clearly that Labor's proposal to pay for specialist mental health workers so they can attend every Tasmanian school is good policy and, indeed, the editorial encourages the Government to adopt that policy. The editorial quite correctly assumed that the Government would no doubt claim today that state school kids already have access to support staff, but the program for specialist workers put forward by the Opposition Leader in her budget reply speech is in fact far more targeted as well as widespread than what is currently on offer. It is also a critical needs-based response to a very real challenge.

With all the bluff and bluster today about bipartisanship, this is one more example to add to the list where Labor has put forward a well-supported idea for policy and budget spending that should be acknowledged and picked up by the Government. We have put forward a number of responses to government that have been ignored by the Premier and the minister when written to in detail by the Leader of the Opposition. Here is one more to add to that package of policies and spending that would improve the lives of Tasmanians across the board and in particular in the case of this policy, would improve the lives of young people and their families by ensuring there are early intervention mental health services available to children and young people directly in their schools.

With those comments I will conclude my contribution on the budget reply and look forward to the rest of the debate.

[11.55 a.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Tasmanian Greens to respond to the 2019-20 state Budget and to deliver the Greens' fully costed alternative budget.

Before I begin, I acknowledge that we are standing on the land of the mouheneener people and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging, to acknowledge that we are standing on land that is owned by the Aboriginal people of Tasmania and that we must move towards a treaty with the first people. We must restart the land returns process and acknowledge that true reconciliation requires much stronger leadership and action from the Tasmanian Parliament and, indeed, the Tasmanian Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, every Tasmanian has the right to a good quality of life. They have the right to access high-quality health services, to attend and send their children to great public schools, to go into a well-funded TAFE system or to university, and to secure stable, meaningful employment. Every Tasmanian has the right to a secure, affordable home, whether it is one they rent or are able to buy. They have a right to access well-funded support services when they need them. If life is not going so well and they are afflicted by mental ill health, every Tasmanian has the right to well-funded and resourced accessible mental health services in both community and clinical settings.

We just had a debate on the increasing levels of depression and anxiety amongst young people. Every young Tasmanian who is experiencing distress has the right to access the best psychologists, psychiatrists and therapists in the public system. An increasing number of young Tasmanians are experiencing mental distress over their future and we have seen it here on the lawns of our Parliament when young people were striking in their thousands demanding action on the climate emergency. We saw it in this place last Wednesday when young people, with very little prompting, came to this place to watch the debate on the declaration of a climate emergency, and it is a matter of historical record that that motion was defeated by both the Government and the Opposition members with the casting vote of Speaker Sue Hickey, but I can commit on behalf of the Greens that we will come back into this place and again give Parliament an opportunity to declare a climate emergency and accept the facts of climate change. Young people want to know that their leaders are actually leading and responding to the climate emergency.

This year's state Budget is a bitter disappointment to those of us who want to see government lead on climate action. It is a bitter disappointment to the community sector and those organisations and individuals who are working on the front line of our communities.



I go back to the report card TasCOSS issued on the day the Treasurer handed down the state Budget. There are more people accessing energy concessions now than when we left government in 2014. The number of people who are seen at the ED within four hours at the Royal Hobart Hospital has gone from 60.3 per cent to 54 per cent in 2018-19. The elective surgery waiting list has climbed from 7438 in 2013-14 to 9043 in 2018-19. The proportion of people who are deferring access to GPs due to costs has risen from 6.9 per cent to 8.7 per cent. TAFE and VET enrolments have fallen from 63 400 to 54 100.

In good news, the school retention rate has increased from 68.4 per cent to 74 per cent, but in terms of unemployment, we have heard a lot from the Liberals in government about creating jobs, but the hard data shows they are failing. The number of unemployed in 2013-14 was 18 900 and it is now 17 500, so that is an improvement in real terms of 1200 people who have been able to secure employment and, let us not forget, the data from 2013-14 was when the state was coming out of the impact of the global financial crisis. The number of under-employed people has risen under this Government.

The number of people on the housing register has increased from 2054, when a Greens minister was administering the portfolio and had the housing waiting list to its lowest level in a decade, to now 3233 languishing on public housing waiting list. It is taking much longer for people to be housed. It has gone from 19 weeks under a Greens minister to 56 weeks under a Liberal minister. The number of children in out-of-home care has climbed from 1054 to now 1310. On any metric, socially, Tasmania has gone backward after five years of a Liberal Government.

We are proud to present the Tasmanian Greens' fully costed long-term vision for Tasmania, our alternative budget 2019-20. As Greens, we recognise a good state budget must address the triple bottom line. It must also apply the lens of intergenerational equity to policy and funding decisions. Future generations deserve nothing less. The forward Estimates are only four years but the reach of policy and funding decisions made in a decent long-term budget must look past the forward Estimates and the next election.

Our vision for the future is of a healthy, resilient and prosperous Tasmania where the natural environment is protected and every citizen feels included and respected. We know Tasmania can be a beacon to the world of sustainability, creativity and fairness. This requires both leadership and heart, a preparedness to see past the short-term and to recognise an investment in the wellbeing of people is an investment in the future wellbeing of all Tasmanians. In a time of climate emergency, as a community, we must prioritise strong climate action. We can bring down emissions, adapt to a rapidly-changing climate and create new career pathways for Tasmanians looking for work. On this critical measure, we demonstrate it can be done. All it takes is leadership.

Right now in Tasmania, unemployment is the highest in the country. Too many people simply are not feeling the 'golden age'. A growing number of young people, families and older singles are finding it harder and harder to rent, let alone buy a home. At the same time, both patients and staff in the state's four public hospitals are under intensifying pressure. With under-investment in public health comes further disadvantage across the community and it impacts on all Tasmanians. The Greens' alternative budget prioritises high-quality health, housing and education services for every Tasmanian. It makes a clear choice to deliver better social infrastructure over roads and bridges. We demonstrate it is possible to really tackle the housing crisis, to increase the supply of secure, affordable and energy-efficient housing.

Our alternative budget removes poker machines from communities and raises the tax on casinos. It levies international visitors for the privilege of spending time on this beautiful island and increases registration for high-emission vehicles. It cuts funding to V8 Supercars and imposes a sensible waste levy to pay for environment protection and community wellbeing. The Greens have always recognised that strengthening Tasmania's democratic institutions and the human rights of all citizens in an equal society makes for a stronger, more diverse and resilient community. A state budget is a statement of values. Our values are clearly reflected in our alternative budget.

This was the hottest summer in the state's history with fires that threatened communities for weeks and months and burned 6 per cent of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Tasmania is feeling the escalating, volatile climate with bushfires, droughts and floods. People want reassurance their government recognises and is prepared to act and protect them in response to the climate emergency. Climate action is at the heart of the Greens budget and it starts with leadership. Our alternative budget reinstates a minister for climate change and the Climate Action Council, both axed by the Hodgman Government in 2014. Our budget appoints a chief scientist to oversee all government policy with a view to ensuring the Government's response to the climate emergency is grounded in the latest evidence. Our alternative budget ends all native forest logging to preserve the state's much needed carbon sinks and to protect the wondrous biodiversity of our forests.

We also fund multiple methods of carbon sequestration across farming and land management. We recognise our farmers are doing the hard yards and their costs are rising. Our alternative budget invests in on-farm renewables and energy saving measures to support our farmers. With a dry El Niño forecast this summer and extreme weather events no longer exceptional, our budget recognises the costs of responding to these events are likely to soar year on year into the future. We invest in 20 extra remote area firefighters and fund the trial of two very large air tankers to fight bushfires that threaten homes and wilderness. We also provide the resources for communities to better plan for bushfires and we substantially increase funding for the State Emergency Services by \$8 million across the forward Estimates.

Our alternative budget supports the necessary and inevitable transition from fossil to renewable fuels and prioritises funding into public transport options. We fund the state's contribution towards Hobart light rail and invest in Derwent ferries to remove more cars from Hobart's busy roads. We electrify the ministerial and government fleets and fund the roll-out of electric buses. This is an example of a government showing leadership. We build more pedestrian infrastructure and cycleways including the Battery Point walkway and light rail to reduce emissions, improve people's health and create a more liveable Hobart. The Greens would also invest \$3 million per year in energy efficiency upgrades to low-income households, those people hit hardest by climbing energy costs. This would restart the highly successful roll-out of free energy efficiency upgrades that was undertaken by a Greens minister, who delivered nine-and-a-half thousand free energy efficiency upgrades for low-income households, community groups and small business, lowering emissions and improving the cost of living.

Responsible governments prepare for the future. The Greens recognise there are massive transitions occurring worldwide in the employment, communication and energy sector as well as the global climate system, which is in an alarming state of disruption. Our budget prioritises planning to position Tasmania for tomorrow's opportunities as well as its challenges. We want to protect our island's many values that are the source of our precious clean, green brand. We established the portfolio of minister for employment to tackle our high unemployment and to actively prepare for the industries and jobs of the future. The employment minister would oversee

the reskilling of seniors and people in regional areas where industries are changing fast in an increasingly automated world. We need to help our young people move into the jobs that robots cannot take. As it is, they are deeply concerned about automation, artificial intelligence and what that means for their future employment prospects.

Our budget focuses on all regions and provides the tools communities need to choose their own economic path. We invest \$50 million each year into a regional reinvestment infrastructure fund to help communities prosper into the future. Tasmania has a growing population and an increasing number of new arrivals are climate refugees. Our settlement and land-use patterns must actively reflect the demands of the climate emergency. Planning must prioritise environmental protection, public participation and it must value our shared public places. The Greens' budget establishes the offices of the chief engineer, the state demographer and it reinstates the state architect. These offices will ensure Tasmania is equipped with the expertise needed for future planning. We institute real state policies and fund comprehensive biodiversity mapping so that Tasmania has an integrated framework for future development that works for people and protects our environment. We provide additional funding to the Tasmanian Planning Commission, the Resource Management Planning Appeals Tribunal and the Environmental Defenders Office to guarantee the planning system maintains its integrity and the public has a real say in developments. To offset some of these costs, we would gladly defund the Office of the Coordinator-General.

**Dr Woodruff** - Hear, hear.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Thank you, Dr Woodruff. Every Tasmanian has the right to a secure, affordable place to call home. This is a fundamental human right being denied to a growing number of Tasmanians. On any given night in Tasmania, up to 1600 Tasmanians are homeless. They are living on the streets in shelters, tents, temporarily at friends' places or in their cars. Many more are languishing on the housing waiting list, now at its highest level in a decade. We can and must do better by Tasmanians who are being shut out of both the rental and the real estate market.

To deliver a sustainable social housing system, the state needs to absorb the Commonwealth housing debt into the consolidated fund or the public account, as we now call it, and unburdening Housing Tasmania to increase the supply of affordable housing. We demonstrate that it is necessary and achievable to do this. It is all about your priorities. The Greens' alternative budget invests \$50 million in building new, energy-efficient homes in the next two financial years. We also invest \$30 million into new homelessness facilities to help those who need immediate emergency relief. The Greens would regulate short-stay accommodation and implement a vacant residence tax to free up the supply of affordable homes. The Greens' alternative budget tackles the housing crisis immediately and would provide real relief for those in housing distress. We present housing solutions to meet the immediate, medium and long-term needs of Tasmanians.

The Greens understand health and wellbeing is the basis of a healthy community, which our investment priorities reflect. Tasmanian hospitals are bursting at the seams. When patients arrive, they will wait hours for acute care and we know there are patients dying in our emergency departments. In order to tackle the rising demand for emergency services, we understand it is critical to properly fund those preventative health services that help keep people well and out of hospital. This Government has dropped the ball on reducing the very high rate of smoking, alcohol and drug use and of poor nutrition. There are food deserts in Tasmania where families cannot access healthy, affordable food. This is not good enough in a modern society. We invest \$23 million into community preventative health services, expanding the population health unit and into drug rehabilitation treatment.

We also recognise that when people need an emergency service, they need help immediately. Our budget provides \$16 million for ten psychiatric and ten emergency department nurses and for extra clinical specialists to reduce the pressure in acute emergency care. The levels of mental ill health in Tasmania, including rising depression and anxiety amongst young people are deeply concerning. The Greens' budget prioritises an extra \$25 million into mental health services. This includes \$12 million for child and youth mental health services with a focus on protection so that young people do not fall through service and age cracks and can have age-appropriate care. People should have access to excellent health care across their life span including at the end stage. We provide substantial funding of \$42 million into those palliative care services Tasmanians want and need, including a northern Whittle ward and \$3 million each year for Hospice in the Home. The safety of young people at music festivals must be paramount. Our budget provides for an education program on pill testing. Pill testing saves lives. It is good policy and it must be supported by any responsible government. Pig-headed politics and 'just saying no' ideologies do not keep young people safe and it risks losing lives. This alternative budget that funding preventative health is a budget saving, with a total \$22 million investment we promote healthy living and mental wellness, along with reproductive health and compassionate palliative care choices.

Tasmania's protected areas and environment are the main reason people travel from around the world to visit. Those values must be protected, not exploited. Our alternative budget establishes a standalone department of environment and parks to prioritise the protection of the places we love that are unique in the world. We also invest in an extra 15 park rangers and field officers. The booming visitor economy is having a heavy impact on parks and regional areas. You only have to have a look at the queues lining up for the Wineglass Bay track and to get into Cradle Mountain to know that our protected areas are under extraordinary pressure from increasing visitor numbers. Our budget institutes a visitor levy so people who visit our state contribute to ensuring its values are looked after, protected, well-managed and maintained for all to enjoy into the future.

The Greens would establish stronger environmental laws and an independent environment protection agency to protect our natural marine and land areas. Our alternative budget defunds the divisive and exploitative expressions of interest process established by the Liberals to develop in parks and reserve areas and it funds a statutory process to govern the development decisions within parks and reserves. Our budget ensures protected areas can no longer be privatised by stealth and it gives Tasmanians a say about how public lands are protected for generations to come. We recognise Australia's largest temperate rainforest, the world-renowned and celebrated takayna Tarkine, should be protected. The Greens would create a takayna national park. It would be an iconic attraction for north-west Tasmania. It would create lasting employment and long-term economic prosperity for the region. The Greens' budget invests \$5 million a year in regenerating farming and other degraded lands, to improve biodiversity through an ecosystem regeneration fund. We also provide extra funds for the important work of Landcare and toward a bigger seedbank to preserve native species.

Our alternative budget addresses the escalating waste crisis by introducing a waste levy, long supported by local councils, with funding directed toward a container deposit scheme, statewide single-use plastic laws, addressing trade waste, and preparing Tasmania for a zero-waste future.

Every young Tasmanian deserves a high-quality public education that nourishes their wellbeing, personal development and future potential. They also deserve clear training and career pathways. A strong investment in public education underpins the state's future social and economic wellbeing. The Greens will work with parents and communities to develop a quality guarantee for Tasmanian schools, setting annual minimum standards for all schools and holding government to

account for lifting standards. The Greens' alternative budget invests \$32 million for 90 additional teachers and 80 support staff to ease pressure on educators and lift educational outcomes. We also allocate an additional \$30 million toward quality school infrastructure and we invest in greening up our schools, with funding for renewables and more energy-efficient schools. This will lower power costs and emissions and it demonstrates climate leadership to students.

We recognise some students need extra support to reach their potential. We will provide funding for 30 hours of literacy and numeracy tutoring in each subject area for each student who falls below the national standard. Young people are experiencing depression and anxiety in increasing numbers. We understand a quality education is not solely about academic performance. It is also very much about student wellbeing. Our alternative budget invests \$8 million into extra school psychologists, \$6 million for social workers, and it establishes a climate resilience program across the public education system. We want young Tasmanians to be ready for the future in every possible way. We allocate resourcing towards introducing comprehensive civics education into the school curriculum to ensure young Tasmanians are engaged and aware of this nation's democratic foundations. Tasmanian schools are fostering the leaders of tomorrow and we see this as a crucial education reform.

The Greens also recognise the vital role TasTAFE plays in preparing young people for the jobs of today and tomorrow. This alternative budget revitalises an underfunded TAFE system and establishes a centre of excellence in aged and disability care, an area of rapid and increasing jobs growth. Our alternative budget provides the education framework Tasmania needs, improving education and wellbeing outcomes for every young Tasmanian.

Children and young people are able to flourish in a secure and stable environment. To reach their full personal and emotional potential, young people need to be nurtured and supported through a sustained commitment from all sectors of the community and government. Tasmania's child safety system is chronically and dangerously underfunded. Significant investment is urgently needed. Our alternative budget provides for 50 new child safety officers and restores the support staff cut by the Liberals. These initiatives will free up child safety workers to investigate allegations and to support families. The Greens recognise that the wellbeing of Tasmania's children should be above politics. We will move to establish a joint standing committee on child safety to provide nonpartisan parliamentary leadership and to foster collaboration.

Our alternative budget funds a specialised child, youth and family intervention course through TasTAFE and a cadetship program trial to run over three years in order to attract, train and retain new staff. We invest in developing minimum standards for foster carers and increasing the support available to carers. We also fund parent advocacy services to improve the chances of safe, sustainable family reunions. The Greens alternative budget provides additional case workers, restores support and provides the building blocks for a more secure, safer child protection system.

A healthy democracy and justice system are critical social infrastructure; vital elements of a fair and equitable society. When these erode, the whole community suffers. The Greens understand the importance of justice for Tasmania's first people, the palawa pakana. The Tasmanian Aboriginal community has long been neglected by governments. To have justice, we must take real steps towards reconciliation. Our alternative budget provides funding to develop a treaty with Aboriginal Tasmanians. We would restart the process of returning lands, consult to establish a reconciliation day and ensure Tasmanian Aboriginal history is taught in our schools.

All government policy and legislation must take human rights into consideration. The Greens will move to establish a Human Rights Act and our budget supports the legislation with a human rights commission to ensure human rights compliance by parliament and government. Our budget establishes a restorative justice policy and programs unit within the Department of Justice which focuses on crime prevention and rehabilitation programs in prisons and within communities.

The Greens have long recognised the Ashley Youth Detention Centre is not fit for purpose. Our alternative budget establishes two facilities, one in the north and one in the south. These facilities are based on world's best practice, the Missouri model that emphasises rehabilitation and adopts a therapeutic model to reduce reoffending.

We recognise our integrity bodies are a critical part of holding governments to account and are currently underfunded for the important work they do. We increase funding levels to the Integrity Commission and to the Ombudsman. The Greens budget puts rights back into the justice system and invests in democracy, both critical pillars for the healthy functioning of Tasmania. Healthy and vibrant communities require investment, good leadership and tangible investment.

A keystone of the Greens alternative budget is the removal of poker machines from pubs and clubs. This is a critical economic and social reform. Poker machines cost lives. They lead to suicide, family breakdown, homelessness, mental illness and addiction. They must be removed from communities. Poker machine addiction leeches funds from some of the most disadvantaged areas. Our alternative budget increases the taxes and licensing fees on casinos in Tasmania which profit hugely from gambling and the misery of others. This is in line with similar approaches towards alcohol and tobacco products and would provide \$58 million in revenue over the forward Estimates.

We also invest \$1 million per year into a medical cannabis compassionate growers scheme to ensure more Tasmanians currently suffering with chronic conditions or illnesses can access this critical pain relief medication.

The Greens understand that Tasmanians living with disability who require services not covered by the NDIS should not suffer. Our alternative budget provides funding for those services and for a disability self-advocacy program to ensure people living with a disability are guaranteed their own strong voice.

We also invest in world's best practice elder abuse prevention legislation to protect older Tasmanians from physical, emotional and financial abuse. Our alternative budget properly invests in the community sector. We restore indexation to community sector organisations so those who support Tasmania's most disadvantaged are not disadvantaged themselves. We establish a community services commission to ensure there is appropriate oversight of the sector and that individual rights are recognised and protected.

The Greens understand that cultural investment is critical to healthy communities, particularly in regional areas. We invest \$1 million in regional arts grants and \$200 000 for emerging artists to foster talent and to connect communities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the way we treat animals reflects who we are as a society. Tasmania still has chickens trapped in battery cages, 1080 poison is being laid on farm lands and plantations and greyhounds are still being killed by the hundreds every year to prop up a cruel industry. Tasmania

can do much better by all its creatures, great and small. The Greens alternative budget establishes an animal welfare commission to ensure that the rights of animals are respected and protected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The member's time has expired.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the member be heard for the short remaining part of her speech.

**Leave granted.**

**Ms O'CONNOR** - I have about two minutes left. Thank you. The Greens will move to strengthen the Animal Welfare Act 1993 to contemporise the legal framework for a more humane Tasmania. As members know, we have legislation on the table.

This alternative budget outlaws the cruel industries of battery hen farms and greyhound racing, as well as rodeos. We will also move to ensure the mental suffering of animals is captured within the Animal Welfare Act 1993 so those who torture animals face meaningful consequences. We will also establish an animal welfare inspectorate within Tasmania Police.

Animal cruelty offences and welfare crimes are currently under investigated or not prosecuted due to a lack of inspectorate resourcing. We recognise the pressing need for Tasmania Police to be properly resourced to effectively undertake inspectorate work. The Greens alternative budget invests in animal sanctuaries and shelters in recognition of the vital work they do on behalf of the voiceless.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek the leave of the House to table our alternative budget 2019-20.

**Leave granted.**

[12.27 p.m.]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am delighted to support the 2019-20 Budget and the Hodgman Liberal Government's efforts in that regard.

I commend the member for Clark and Leader of the Greens for putting forward an alternative budget. That is commendable. I congratulate them on that, although obviously disagree with many aspects of it. The very fact that an alternative budget has just been tabled by the Greens highlights the fact that the Labor Opposition has not tabled or put forward an alternative budget. That should be noted and acknowledged upfront. I say congratulations, and well done, on putting forward an alternative budget.

**Ms O'Connor** - Kooky as it is, as your Treasurer would say.

**Mr BARNETT** - I will not dwell on that interjection from the Leader of the Greens although some aspects of it were somewhat kooky, but they have put forward an alternative, unlike the Labor Opposition.

Frankly, let us be clear that a strong economy is critical to the number and quality of services a government is able to deliver to households, families, regional communities and the business

sector. It is the main point of difference between our side of politics and the Labor-Greens alliance on the other side.

On 18 May the Australian people voted overwhelmingly to reject federal Labor's big taxing plans and instead embraced the Coalition's plans for a strong and growing economy, creating jobs and entrusting the Morrison Liberal Government to deliver the services that the community depends on. As I have said previously in this Parliament, how good is ScoMo?

Labor knows the Labor mantra, and it was demonstrated at the federal election, that it cannot be trusted with the public's money. That is why they proposed at the national level the biggest tax grab ever in Australian political history and they were shut down by the Australian taxpayers and voters who they expected to pay the bills. Voters knew you cannot trust Labor or Labor and the Greens with your money.

I would like to reflect on the former prime minister of the UK, Margaret Thatcher, who observed that the trouble with socialists is that eventually they run out of other people's money. That is a very true point and Labor abandoned the working Australians and their families and Australians abandoned the Labor Party. Labor knows it cannot govern on its own. They got a little bit more than a third of the vote and likewise in Tasmania -

**Ms O'Connor** - Sorry, you are actually in a coalition government in Canberra, you know. Liberals cannot govern on their own either.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms O'Connor** - I just wanted to help the minister.

**Mr BARNETT** - Labor needs its Greens coalition colleagues and that is why Labor has abandoned the interests of the working people in favour of the extremist sectional interests of the Greens.

Our Budget delivers on our commitments to the Tasmanian people and on our promises to the Tasmanian people. It demonstrates that the Liberal principles of managing a strong and growing economy, delivering more jobs, enables us to fund essential services, to reinvest in health, in education and specifically in infrastructure and in keeping the community safe. Our community the state is more stable, it is safer, it is a more confident place with nearly 13 000 new jobs since we were first elected in 2014. We are continuing to grow our trade and export industries and that is just terrific.

As our economy grows, the Budget is designed to support and encourage that growth and that is what we are doing. That is what the Treasurer outlined to maintain that momentum, to invest for growth and we are delivering. We are delivering unprecedented infrastructure spending and the state's largest ever budget for health and education, as was made very clear by the Minister for Health earlier today in question time.

We are continuing to invest in the infrastructure our growing state needs with a record \$3.6 billion for job creating infrastructure projects right around Tasmania, for bridges, for roads, hospitals, schools, dams, irrigation - I will come to that further - and a whole lot more. A record \$8.1 billion over the forward Estimates, over the next four years, for health and hospitals and that



is \$2 billion more than was spent in the last years of the Labor-Greens government 2013-14. More new beds in our hospitals, more nurses, more doctors and the like.

In the very important area of our community, education, we have earmarked \$7.1 billion over the four years for education and training, including 250 new teachers, 80 extra teacher assistants and more support staff.

Tasmania is the renewable energy powerhouse of the nation. We have plans to be the battery of the nation. I am proud to be the Minister for Energy, passionately driving these renewable energy developments that will ensure that we are well on the way to achieving 100 per cent, fully self-sufficient in renewable energy by 2022. We are on track with the Cattle Hill wind farm. I was there a few weeks ago officially opening the first turbine. A cold day but a great day. With Granville Harbour on the west coast, with wind farm development underway, we are on track to deliver 100 per cent fully self-sufficient, fully renewable by 2022. We are way ahead of every other state in Australia and most other countries in the world. We should be proud of it. We should be very proud of that fact. It is a proud record of achievement under the Hodgman Liberal Government.

We have delivered and yet the Leader of the Opposition yesterday said the Budget makes no mention of renewable energy. How wrong, how wrong, how wrong. Let us make it very clear. The Budget clearly includes \$56 million for progressing the design and approval stage for Project Marinus. That is for the interconnector to the mainland from Tasmania, \$56 million, to progress that work. Special acknowledgement and thanks to Scott Morrison and Angus Taylor for their commitment on behalf of the federal government for that support.

The Leader of the Opposition said nothing about whether Labor supports the Battery of the Nation project or Marinus link or whether Labor supports keeping downward pressure on power prices through the Tasmania-First Energy Policy. There was nothing - a vacuous hole in that contribution from the Leader of the Opposition. The Marinus link is strategic national infrastructure. It unlocks Tasmania's battery of the nation; it delivers what the rest of the nation needs - low cost, reliable, clean energy. That is what it delivers and that is what the nation needs and wants desperately. A recent report said the Battery of the Nation and Marinus is estimated to deliver \$5 billion in economic stimulus to Tasmania alone and thousands of jobs, not to mention the increased energy security benefits and the downward pressure on our electricity prices.

As our newly re-elected Prime Minister has stated:

We've got to get this second interconnector built. Tasmania will be charging up the rest of the nation and Tasmania will be the one making a contribution to Australia. It means those who are benefiting will be carrying the financial cost.

He was backed by the federal Energy minister, Angus Taylor, who stated:

Projects like this aren't nice to have, they are necessary to have. We must have them. We stand ready to finance them.

**Ms O'Connor** - Angus Taylor, the crook.

**Mr BARNETT** - Excuse me, you can perhaps apologise or withdraw at a later time. With respect to Angus Taylor -

**Ms O'Connor** - I certainly will not. The evidence speaks for itself. He was rewarded by a position in Cabinet, that says it all.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr BARNETT** - he has done a terrific job in supporting Tasmania's plans to be the Battery of the Nation. I should note on the way through that the Greens candidate for Bass, Tom Hall, is strongly opposed to and on behalf of the Greens to the Battery of the Nation with a huge op-ed in *The Examiner*- very disappointing indeed. If you want to come in here and correct the record and express the views of the Greens, I would be delighted to hear it.

We have that commitment. The Australian Government is also committed to do a deal on underwriting phase one of Battery of the Nation and we have matched that with up to \$30 million to progress one of the top three storage sites - Lake Cethana, Lake Rowallan and Tribute Power Station on the west coast, to investment-ready stage. This has been supported further by the Morrison Government's commitment of \$17 million towards energising Tasmania's workforce.

You can see that we are working together in partnership to deliver for Tasmania. Our budget delivers on our commitment to keep energy prices as low as possible by capping regulated electricity prices at no more than CPI for a further two years and committing \$5.5 million to extend energy rebates for our commercial and industrial businesses.

We will also ensure Tasmanians enjoy the lowest regulated energy prices long term by undertaking a review of the wholesale pricing framework to unlink our household and small business bills from the volatile Victorian prices. This is placing Tasmania's small businesses in a strong competitive position to foster growth and development. We all know small business is the backbone, particularly of our rural and regional communities. It is the backbone of the economy, employing 100 000 Tasmanians. They do a terrific job and I commend all small business men and women and those in small businesses and their families for their contribution to Tasmania.

The cost of doing business, the cost of living - we know it is important to all Tasmanians, residential and business. That is why the Government places a priority on the cost of doing business and the cost of living.

The Budget does continue one of the most generous schemes in the nation and that is our \$45 million electricity concession program that supports more than 90 000 Tasmanians in need. It is a really important initiative and it should not be forgotten.

The 2019-20 Budget has a strong focus on the most vulnerable Tasmanians. It has a new commitment of \$1 million over four years to the energy saver subsidy NILS Scheme, providing low income families with access to funds to invest in energy-saving appliances for their home. This Government has kept power prices down, unlike Labor's record where prices rose by 65 per cent over the seven years. On our watch, regulated power prices have risen by only 1.5 per cent in those five years of us being in government so there is in fact no comparison. It is just a stark comparison.

The 2019-20 Budget entrenches our energy on farm policy commitments with continuation of the \$750 000 on-farm energy and irrigation audit and capital grants scheme which commenced in 2018-19; a continuation of the Aurora farm energy advocacy services for another year and that is to help and support farmers and keep power prices down. We are continuing the review of the irrigation tariffs and that is well underway and the \$5.5 million Tasmanian Irrigation Renewable

Energy program. They are very exciting initiatives. We are backing them and are progressing very positively.

I now turn to the Hodgman Liberal Government's passionate support for our farmers, our fishers and our rural communities and the vital role they play in building a stronger economy and creating more jobs. At the 2016 census over 7500 were directly employed in agriculture in Tasmania and over 2000 were directly employed in agriculture and fishing.

Yesterday we did not see much at all from the Labor Opposition when it came to primary industries. There was no mention from the Leader of the Opposition or the shadow spokesperson, Dr Broad, on how Labor would support growth in primary industries, agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture. There was no reference to how primary industries are a key plank of the economy generating thousands of jobs directly and indirectly.

Our state Budget confirms we are delivering our comprehensive agrifood plan for 2018-2023 with \$100 million of initiatives for agriculture and \$13.8 million of initiatives for our wild caught and farmed seafood sector. I am proud of that fact. That is a huge \$100 million commitment. Our target is to grow the farmgate value of agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050 and we are on track. I was able to announce earlier today that according to the latest data, the value of Tasmania's agriculture production has increased by 9 per cent in the 2017-18 year to over a \$1.6 billion contribution to the Tasmanian economy. It is a very good increase and a great outcome.

A total of \$16 million is supporting industry development across key agricultural sectors as well as the Rural Financial Counselling Service, farm business mentoring, the Blundstone Scholarship - thank you member for Braddon, Joan Rylah; very good initiatives - and those scholarships support students to study agribusiness at UTAS. We have the Tasmanian Women in Agriculture and Rural Youth Tasmanian leadership programs, and didn't they do a terrific job at Agfest again this year? What a wonderful event that is for Tasmania and people in agriculture in particular.

There is also the TFGA Living Next Door to a Farmer program, the agrigrowth liaison officers and the farm point website and helpline which make it easier for farmers and others to access a single contact point for information to do what they need to do so they can get on with their businesses and do it really well. This includes additional funding to the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture to deliver on our comprehensive white paper, Growing Tasmanian Agricultural Research Development Extension for 2050.

The Budget continues to deliver on our commitment of an additional \$3 million for our agricultural innovation fund for industry-aligned priority research projects and \$7 million to modernise our research farm assets - all terrific initiatives, well supported.

Our other major initiatives include \$3 million to continue investing in Landcare across the state and \$4.8 million for the Weed Action Fund. We want to eliminate weeds and I thank Ian Sauer for taking up the role as chair of the Weed Action Fund. There is \$2 million towards the department of Primary Industries and Water staff moving to the north and north-west which is bringing the department closer to the action, closer to farmers and fishing communities.

Regarding irrigation, as I have said many times, water is liquid gold. The Hodgman Liberal Government has secured the funding and delivered five tranche 2 irrigation schemes and now we are onto tranche 3, the Pipeline to Prosperity. It is going ahead because of the efforts of the

Hodgman Liberal Government and \$100 million in support from the Morrison Government. I put on record my thanks to Scott Morrison who has made this commitment. I was with him when he made it, together with Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack, and I say thank you to the Hon David Littleproud, former minister for agriculture and water and a special thank you to Senator Richard Colbeck, assistant minister then and now recently promoted for his commitment, promotion and support for these water projects in Tasmania. The Tasmanian Liberal Senate team did a terrific job.

The expertise of Tasmanian Irrigation is essential and, most importantly, the foresight of our farming communities and irrigation communities, and should not be underestimated. We have \$170 million on the table, plus the investment from our farmers and farm communities, which means that the first phase of at least five irrigation projects will proceed while Tasmanian Irrigation continues with planning for other proposed schemes.

The Tasmanian Government recently submitted a business case to Infrastructure Australia for the entire long-term \$496 million proposed 10-project Pipeline to Prosperity irrigation program. This followed Infrastructure Australia listing it as a priority initiative earlier this year. That is because of the hard work we have done behind the scenes working with the Commonwealth to try and make a difference to our rural and regional communities and the Tasmanian economy to provide more jobs and increase productivity.

When fully implemented, it will deliver 10 proposed irrigation schemes, providing an additional 78 000 megalitres of water, thousands of jobs and injecting an estimated \$114 million each year into the agricultural sector and our economy more broadly. This is terrific. The first phase is based on Tasmanian Irrigation's expert advice and includes the projects that have progressed far enough to commence within 12 months, which is a key consideration for the national water infrastructure development plans. This is where you have to do the work behind the scenes, get the detail right and make it happen. Our investment in critical infrastructure, like the Pipeline to Prosperity, is further good news for Tasmanian farmers and farming communities.

Last Sunday, I was with Corey and Janelle Spencer at Bracknell on their farm with their family, together with minister Sarah Courtney, who was making an announcement about quad bike safety, and we were talking about safe farming initiatives and of course the importance of irrigation. That is not far from where you live, Mr Deputy Speaker, at Bracknell. The grass is growing really well because they have access to water. It is a great place for growing grass, growing sheep, cattle, and doing what farmers do best, and supporting our environment with access to water.

In addition to that, the Budget has terrific support for our world-class wild-catch and farmed seafood sector. That includes \$800 000 per annum over four years to support the new Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre to deliver initiatives in aquaculture and seafood production, marine renewal energy production, and offshore engineering. I am so excited about this. It has been a long time coming; working with UTAS and all the key stakeholders involved, a huge commitment, nearly \$330 million over the next 10 years and it is going to be based in Launceston. This is fantastic, a real vote of confidence in Tasmania and the work we do here, and having the Blue Economy based at the Australian Maritime College; I just discussed it last week with the UTAS vice-chancellor and he was very pleased indeed.

We have \$1 million for Analytical Services Tasmania to deliver product quality testing services to a range of sectors including shellfish and rock lobster. I recently visited the impressive Biosecurity Tasmania Fish Health Centre of Excellence research laboratory in Launceston, and that

is home to some of the leading salmon vaccine development. There is \$11.4 million in our Budget to continue vital commercial fisheries development initiatives, including the East Coast Rock Lobster Translocation Program, and I acknowledge John Samson and the terrific work he is doing on behalf of the Rock Lobster Association. There is also the fisheries digital transition project for efficient fisheries management and quota monitoring. The bottom line is we are cutting the red tape and streamlining the process to make it easier and faster for our commercial fishermen to do what they do best, and that is to catch fish.

Abalone industry development will also tackle the invasive long-spined sea urchin, *Centrostephanus rodgersii*. It is a real issue on the east coast and we are putting in place initiatives to address that and turn it into a commercial opportunity. I enjoyed trying some sea urchin roe recently, swallowed it down and it is a very interesting taste. A certain portion of the population, particularly in Asia, love it. That is a terrific opportunity for Tasmania.

There is Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council's policy support and, again, acknowledge the leadership of Lindsay Newman and the CEO, Julian Harrington, and their team. I thank them for their support. There is research into sustainable fisheries management and opportunities through the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies. It is great to be working with them and have their support for what we are doing. We have allocated \$600 000 to continue the revamped shellfish quality assurance and aquaculture market access program and oyster and shellfish real-time sensor monitoring. Ben Cameron, Chair of Oysters Tasmania, indicated publicly a few days ago the oyster industry welcomes the Tasmanian Government's Budget. He made some very positive comments about the support we have provided for the oyster industry over the past few years, because it is very important to our Government and our state.

To the crucial issue of biosecurity, the Budget significantly strengthens Tasmania's biosecurity systems to keep pests and diseases out of Tasmania, to protect our vital primary industries, our environment and our tourism sector and the Tasmanian brand. Since 2014, we have consistently delivered additional funding for biosecurity and we are ensuring our frontline biosecurity continues to respond to the risks and changing demands.

Under the Labor-Greens government the expenditure into this vital area was \$20.8 million in 2013-14. This year it is budgeted to be \$30.36 million. We have an additional \$2.6 million per annum to further boost front line biosecurity and that will help to keep Tasmania free from fruit fly, other pests and disease and to maintain access to premium markets. It is never a guarantee but we are going to do everything we can to support Tasmania in this regard. What this means is more biosecurity inspectors doing more inspections. It will increase partnerships with industry groups on preparedness and emergency responses, it will increase tourism engagement and awareness, improve signage and review border compliance. I will be focusing on that carefully over the next 12 months. We will be improving systems to support biosecurity inspection administration.

This frontline boost will be supported by changes to the partial cost recovery of inspection services fees for 2019-20 and onward. It recognises the risk posed from imported produce, freight and goods and further information will be outlined in a regulatory impact statement soon to be released for community and industry consultation. The Budget confirms ongoing delivering of initiatives commenced last year including truck and machinery washdown stations, working with the industry to address risks and on-farm hygiene strategies, biosecurity officers on the Bass Strait islands and additional inspectors, a specialist fruit fly adviser and an industry collaboration manager in Biosecurity Tasmania. I am very pleased. Key stakeholders such as the CEO, Peter Skillern of TFGA said, 'agriculture was a "winner" in the Budget'. Commitments to irrigation infrastructure

are crucial to the ongoing success of the sector. Today's commitment of \$70 million is a significant step in the right direction. He also said, 'The funding commitment to address concerns with quadbike safety is to be highly commended.'. Further funding for biosecurity shows an additional investment in an area the TFGA has advocated over many years. We welcome the acknowledgement and minister's genuine commitment to protecting Tasmanian agriculture.

Likewise, Fruit Growers Tasmania President, Nic Hansen, said -

'Today's Government budget announcement is an important milestone for Tasmanian agriculture and horticulture. These extra funds will be vital for making sure Biosecurity Tasmania has enough biosecurity officers to help protect our state from pests, particularly Fruit Fly. We welcome the Tasmanian Government's commitment to funding additional education programs around Biosecurity in the Tourism space'.

Time does not allow me to go into detail but I will mention investments being made in other portfolio areas. As part of the state Budget record infrastructure spend, the Government is supporting both inland and saltwater recreational fishing. For example, a \$300 000 two-year commitment has been made to see new amenities being constructed at high-visitation inland fishing locations on track to be opened prior to this angling season. Tasmania is soon to be on show to the rest of the world with the World Fly Fishing Championships beginning in December this year and we are backing it. I spoke about the importance of trout fishing to Tasmania last night on the adjournment and there are so many initiatives we have in the Budget to support it.

With respect to veterans, we are such a strong supporter of our Tasmanian veteran community and their families. That has seen a record \$750 000 election package continuing with a number of new and existing programs to support our Tasmanian veterans and ex-serving personnel and their families. I am pleased and proud of that and the continuing Frank MacDonald Memorial Prize, the Anzac Day Trust and the annual state reception for Tasmanian service personnel who deploy on operations with the Australian Defence Force. As a long-time advocate for veterans around the country and in Tasmania, to recognise their service, I was honoured to present the case for Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' Sheean to receive a posthumous Victoria Cross. The Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal held their hearing in Hobart at the end of March and a decision is expected in coming weeks and months.

As a proud member of the Hodgman Liberal team, specifically representing the very large electorate of Lyons, the Budget supports so many essential services and infrastructure in the Lyons electorate including the Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience Master Plan. The Premier spoke about it this morning in question time. It is fantastic. It is what we do well with our natural environment.

We have terrific support for a new Longford Police Station, the New Norfolk Police Station, the Campbell Town Ambulance Station upgrade of \$2.8 million and the Sheffield School Farm, Jordan River Learning Federation farm, with further support for farm and agriculture educational teachers. That is very important. Being a boy born and raised at Hagley and attending the Hagley Farm School, I am biased. They have 5000-plus people attending the Hagley Farm School every year to learn about farm education; milk comes from a cow, not a carton, and eggs from the chooks and not the carton. Paddock to the plate, there is so much more in agricultural education.

We have initiatives including the Campbell Town pedestrian underpass, the work on the Esk Main Road, safety upgrades on the Bass Highway between Deloraine and Latrobe and sealing of

the Highland Lakes Road. It has been a long time coming and I thank the Minister for Infrastructure for his support. The roads funding support for the south-east from Hobart through to Sorell is a really important initiative, and the Midland Highway as well. There is a lot of support. On the east coast, \$58 million will be spent on tourism routes including the Great Eastern Drive and we will be celebrating that at the East Coast Regional Tourism Awards night in a few weeks' time, Saturday 15 June at Freycinet. There is a lot to be proud of and a lot to be thankful for.

In conclusion, I thank volunteers in the Lyons electorate and the volunteer organisations for the wonderful support they provide, 700 million hours a year is estimated, contributing \$4.9 billion a year to the Tasmanian economy. It is amazing. Where would we be without our volunteers? With the fires, it was tough in January-February and a huge thank you to our professional firefighters and all those volunteer firefighters and emergency personnel who did so much for the state of Tasmania and those communities affected. I put on record my thanks to them and I thank the House.

[12.58 p.m.]

**Mr BACON** (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on the 2019-20 state Budget. I start my remarks by noting what a change we have seen in what the Liberal Party would say before the election, what they said in last year's Budget and what has become apparent in the 2019-20 Budget. We have heard some rhetoric from the Treasurer over the last four or five days. He said on Thursday this is his proudest budget ever. Then we reach Monday and they have already stopped talking about their own Budget because Peter Gutwein, the Treasurer of Tasmania, should be embarrassed by this Budget that he brought down.

The first thing it includes is a \$1 billion broken promise. In the history of Tasmania, I am not sure we have seen a government break a promise by \$1 billion. You only have to go back to the comments made by this Treasurer and by this government in the lead-up to the 2018 election, when they said that they would keep the state net debt-free. Here we are, a little over 12 months later, and the Treasurer is going to drive the state into a debt spiral. In the last year of the forward Estimates we will be in \$1.1 billion-worth of debt. We have heard from the Treasurer already, with no real explanation of how we got there and no real explanation about how he is going to cover the borrowing costs rather than putting it in to our broken health system.

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

## **APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2019 (No. 21)**

### **Second Reading**

**Resumed from above.**

**Mr BACON** (Clark) - Madam Speaker, I would like to continue talking about the \$1.1 billion of net debt that this Treasurer has irresponsibly got us headed towards. A quote was pointed out to me during the luncheon break from that great economist, Dr Seuss. This is from the book *Oh, the Places You'll Go*. This is quite appropriate for the Treasurer and the whole state, not only the Budget but the economy as well. It goes:

You'll come down from the Lurch with an unpleasant bump.

And the chances are, then, that you'll be in a Slump.  
And when you're in a Slump, you're not in for much fun.  
Un-slumping yourself is not easily done.

They are apt words from Dr Seuss. This is not apparent to those opposite or, at least, they are not honest about it. Only a year ago, the Treasurer told Tasmanians that we were in a 'golden age', that the economy was strong and that he had fixed the budget mess, to quote the Treasurer. He had done all this with his good budget management. Not only was the budget in surplus but he had kept us out of net debt.

We now know, 12 months on, that not only is the state headed for at least \$1.1 billion-worth of debt but also that there are further budget cuts to our health system, our education system and vital other public services here in Tasmania. We have a Treasurer who has been blessed with relatively strong economic conditions but because of his own poor financial management we are going to end up in \$1.1 billion-worth of net debt with absolutely nothing to show for it.

The clear line - and the Leader of the Opposition mentioned this in her speech - is that the 'golden age' has been squandered by this Treasurer. It is a series of missed opportunities when it comes to this Government and particularly when it comes to this Treasurer.

We have had no sustainable solution to the health crisis in our hospitals around the state. You only have to look at the Auditor-General's report brought down yesterday into our emergency department systems here in Tasmania. I was going to call them highlights but clearly, they are lowlights of what is going on in our health system under this minister, Mr Ferguson. It seems apparent that part of the reason that Mr Ferguson cannot get on and fix some of these problems in the health system is that he cannot get the funding that is required out of the Treasurer to make sure that Tasmanians are not having adverse impacts in our health system and that we are not seeing a ramp-up in the number of avoidable deaths.

One of the lowlights in the Auditor-General's report yesterday was that despite an increase of only 20 per cent in ambulance presentations in emergency departments since 2012-13 there is an increase of 149 per cent of ambulances ramped over the same period. They are unable to transfer the care of their patients to the emergency departments because of bed block. There is also a 197 per cent increase in ambulances that are ramped for more than 15 minutes. We have a 239 per cent increase in ambulances ramped for longer than 30 minutes.

We have seen an increase in adverse events of 60 per cent over this period. Adverse events are any event or circumstance that could have, or did lead to, an unintended or unexpected harm, loss or damage to any person receiving care or services from health services. This can include avoidable deaths. We have had a 60 per cent increase over that period and we have had an increase of 60 per cent in the number of people suffering from worse health outcomes in our hospitals.

Between July 2018 and January 2019, the Royal Hobart Hospital was in a state of bed block for 93 per cent of the time, and the Launceston General Hospital for almost 90 per cent of the time. This is an indictment on the Health minister. This is a Health minister who has been in the position for half a decade - five years of this Health minister and we have had this report handed down only yesterday. Do we see the minister come forward with solutions, listen to people who are coming forward with solutions, engage with the Opposition when the Leader of the Opposition writes to the Premier to suggest the bipartisan approach? No, they ignore those cries.



We know this is a minister who has failed the Health portfolio over the last four years and at the same time we see that health spending is going to go backwards. There is an increase of 0.5 per cent on what was actually spent this year. That does not take into account the 0.75 per cent efficiency dividend. We have not heard from the Government yet exactly where that efficiency dividend will come from; \$450 million of our public services is due to be cut. If you want to see just how dishonest the Treasurer is when it comes to the Budget, you only have to read the Budget speech because he glosses over certain issues and there is nothing more stark than when it comes to the so-called efficiency dividend. I will quote from the Treasurer's speech. He says:

... this budget introduces a modest efficiency dividend of three-quarters of 1 per cent. In practice, this means that next year the Government will work to save 75 cents out of every \$100 that it spends.

That is all well and good but he does not talk about the \$450 million in cuts that are embedded in this Budget. He does not talk about the detail of where these cuts are going to come from. He does not mention which departments are going to be cut, which jobs are going to go and he does not mention the fact that the efficiency dividend ramps up each and every year.

We have the so called 75 cents of every \$100 - what the Treasurer called on budget day 'the loose change' that was going to be easy for him to find because he was going to get it from down the back of the couch. In reality, this is people's jobs, people who are providing services to the Tasmanian people and 0.75 per cent is only the first year. We know that. The second year, it goes up to \$100 million. The year after that \$150 million, and the year after that another \$150 million.

We are not seeing real funding increase when it comes to the Health budget. You only have to keep looking through the Budget to see how selective the detail is, the pay deal that hardworking public servants - teachers, nurses, firefighters - other hardworking public servants are trying to get a fair pay rise. Do we get an honest speech from the Treasurer about how that is going to be delivered? We do not. On Thursday last week the Treasurer said, and I will quote -

Our latest wage offer included increases to a range of terms and conditions and a wage increase of 7 per cent over three years, offset by sensible savings.

How do we know they are sensible? He has not even told us what they are. This is another example of the Treasurer building in cuts to our public services with no detail. He said on budget day that he had made the tough decisions. He has not made the tough decisions. He has pushed those back on departments, back on unions, back on his own workforce to come up with his savings. Again, he has done it with no detail. He goes on to say:

... wage increases of 2 per cent are factored into the Budget. In line with our recent offer, increases higher than 2 per cent per annum are to be funded by identified savings.

Another example of him putting it back on other people to find his savings for him. This is a Treasurer who is always asking other people to solve his problems for him. He is the one who has plunged the state into \$1.1 billion-worth of debt - a \$1 billion broken promise. When he talks about that in the Budget speech, does he talk about how much net debt we are headed for? Of course, he does not. He makes a very brief mention of it.

He went on to say in that speech last Thursday, 'That will mean the state will carry a manageable level of net debt'. He does not mention the \$1.1 billion figure he is going to plunge the state into. He does not give a real explanation of how he put us in this mess and he does not talk about the path out of net debt. He does not tell us how he is going to get the state out of debt and he cannot give a date that he is going to repay that debt. It is the future generations of Tasmanians he is lumbering with this debt. When we receive next year's budget, I am sure it will have blown out even more because he has been less than honest again this year.

We have seen the Treasurer very keen to talk about Infrastructure funding, keen to say that his funding for TasWater has gone from \$200 million up to \$300 million. That is over a 10-year period, so \$100 million he has added in this Budget is not even in this Budget. It is in budgets yet to come. The Treasurer went on the talk about the TT-Line -

TT-Line is no different, and it is seeing spectacular growth in its freight, passenger and vehicle markets. To meet this demand, the government and TT-Line will deliver two purpose-built vessels that are bigger, better and can accommodate more passengers and cars.

I looked through the speech when the Treasurer was delivering that speech on election day. I saw the TT-Line there and I assumed detail around the dividends would be mentioned in the speech, given that it is a significant policy change to take dividends from the TT-Line, but there was no mention of that.

Another thing the Treasurer seeks to hide as much as possible from the Tasmanian people is how out-of-home care will be funded. This is a vital area of service delivery in Tasmania. You could not think of a more important area in a state budget than looking after Tasmania's most vulnerable children. It was proudly trumpeted in the budget speech by the Treasurer, who said, 'We have allocated an additional \$16.9 million of out-of-home care to support our most needy children.'. That is well and good but there is only funding for one year. There is a black hole in this budget of \$50 million for out-of-home care and that is not something the Treasurer will talk about.

If you are going to sustainably fund Tasmanian public services, you have to do it year on year. It should be in there for the forward Estimates. It is identified as a risk in the Budget but it is another budget black hole: \$50 million in the most important area of government service delivery; looking after vulnerable children. In the past, approaches like this have been taken with the West Coast Wilderness Railway amongst other budget line items. We saw the railway not funded year on year, with \$4 million a year, and then this year we hear the speech and it is trumpeted that \$16 million will be provided. It should be provided but it is the \$4 million year on year that should have been provided in each and every one of Peter Gutwein's dishonest budgets.

On budget day, Peter Gutwein said he was proud of the budget he delivered and that it was his proudest budget yet. You would have to ask, what exactly does he have to be proud of? It was only days later that, all of a sudden, seeming to be embarrassed, the Treasurer ran out of things to say of his own budget. He stood in parliament and said they made choices when they brought down the Budget. The biggest choice they made was a billion-dollar broken promise to plunge the state into net debt. He said time and again that he makes no apologies for that. That is a billion-dollar broken promise he should apologise for. He should have done it by now and he should do it in the summing up of this debate. It is an opportunity for him to apologise to the Tasmanian people.

When he was in Opposition, Peter Gutwein thought net debt was a bad thing. He put a press release out on 7 February 2012, saying, 'Giddings must rule out going into net debt.'. It was about \$200 million the government was predicting we would be in net debt. We never saw that because good financial management kept us out of net debt. Yet, we end up in the so-called golden age in which we are headed to \$1 billion worth of debt. Mr Hodgman said on Tuesday 28 May -

As a result, net debt has skyrocketed and will peak at \$229 million in 2014-15, \$95 million more than the Budget the last year. Rather than take responsibility for all this, the Premier will make excuses like repeatedly blaming supposed falls in revenue.

That sounds familiar. He goes on to say -

When the fact is, this year, revenue is up by 3.5 per cent, the problem with spending is also up by 2.9 per cent, despite the Government promising in 2011 that it would limit spending growth to just 0.3 per cent. Last year, Ms Giddings claimed that she sets targets and she sticks to them. This Budget puts a lie to that claim. This Government has a spending problem, a serious spending problem, and Tasmanians are paying the price.

If \$229 million worth of debt is skyrocketing and it is a \$95 million increase on last year, what would you call \$1.1 billion worth of debt, Madam Speaker? This is a Government that said while in opposition that net debt was a bad thing. Now, they say that \$1 billion-worth of debt, even when promising not to do it, is no big thing and they make no apologies. Mr Gutwein went on to say on Wednesday 23 May 2012, 'Not only have they overspent, but we have gone into net debt for the first time in a decade, something that this Premier said she would never do.'. That sounds very familiar. This is a Treasurer and a Premier who said they would never take the state into net debt.

You only have to go to the old 'Building Your Future' document put out before the last election and read point five, which says, 'We will remain net debt free'. It is a massive broken promise at \$1 billion. This is a disgrace. It is an embarrassment. That is why the Treasurer is no longer keen to talk about the broken promise of net debt and it is why this Premier has gone from being proud, on Thursday, to embarrassed by his own Budget.

We have seen the broken promise on net debt and a broken promise on the funding of infrastructure. Before the election, the Treasurer said that the Liberal Party would fund Infrastructure with cash in the bank and with revenues. Now they are at pains to say the only reason we are in net debt is because of their debt funding infrastructure. You do not have to take my word for it. You can look at what Moody's have said as the fiscal deficit has been pushed out again; a return to fiscal surplus has been pushed out, again, to 2023. They have said that this is a fiscal negative and they are right.

It will be interesting to see what the rating agencies have to say about Peter Gutwein's latest Budget. He has had a credit downgrade in the past. We do not want to see that coming up, but given the appalling budget mismanagement we have seen from this Treasurer and the dishonesty, it is very difficult to see how that will happen.

It is not only the health crisis. You only have to talk to any reasonable person around the state to see we also have a crisis of homelessness, a crisis of rental affordability and a crisis of housing affordability right across the housing system.

We have an unemployment rate that is the worst in the nation. This is from a government that promised to bring it down to be the best in the nation. All these things have happened after the Government has been in for half a decade. Five years, and their biggest achievement is to put us into net debt for the first time in 15 years. This is a burden on future Tasmanians. The Treasurer has no pathway out of debt and he will not tell us when he is going to pay it back. It is a complete train wreck because there are also \$450 million-worth of cuts alongside the net debt. These will come in our hospitals, our schools and our other vital public services. We have an unfunded series of wage agreements across the public sector, raids on government businesses, delayed infrastructure projects and the systematic underfunding of essential services. The really interesting thing is that I do not know if this is the first time in history that anyone has put out an infrastructure budget with not one new infrastructure project. This is extraordinary and shows a government that is out of ideas and has no vision for the state. You can trumpet an infrastructure budget as much as you like but when you do not have one new project in there it really seems like a pretty thin argument.

When it comes to infrastructure, this is a government that has failed time and time again to get their infrastructure spending done. In 2017-18, the Government promised to spend around \$610 million, and how much did they end up spending? How much did they actually deliver on? It was just \$436 million, so when it comes to that one year of infrastructure spending we are talking about a huge shortfall of \$174 million.

This Treasurer has blown the Budget and is very reluctant to talk about the cost of the debt he has put the state into. We are talking around \$100 million in public money that is going to have to be spent across the Budget just to pay interest and borrowing costs on Peter Gutwein's debt. This is money that could be spent in our hospitals, \$100 million that could be spent in our schools or in protecting vulnerable Tasmanian children, but Peter Gutwein would rather spend it on interest and other borrowing costs.

Every year the Treasurer has spent more than he budgeted for and we have ended up with huge cash deficits. We have underlying net operating balance deficits, we have fiscal deficits and we have huge cash deficits, and that is only if the Treasurer can deliver on what he has there in black and white. We know that it is smoke and mirrors all the time when it comes to this Treasurer; he has made a hallmark of it. He has got away with it for the first four years, but less so last year and even less this year when it comes to people's impression of the Tasmanian budget and that will deteriorate as time goes on.

One of the key things that has been the hallmark of Peter Gutwein's approach as Treasurer is his determination to strip dividends from our GBEs. In the first budget Peter Gutwein brought down we saw not only \$100 million taken from the MAIB in terms of the special dividend, a trick he has played again this year with another \$50 million, but in an attempt to take \$100 million from Hydro Tasmania in that first budget in 2014 at exactly the time that Hydro Tasmania had written to the Government to say that they could not provide any dividends, the Government tried to squeeze \$100 million from them. The result of that was that the Government forced Hydro Tasmania to sell the combined cycle unit, the Tamar Valley Power Station, to prop up the Government's bottom line. Mrs Rylah knows that because she was on the Public Accounts Committee, where the Government refused to provide any documents to uncover the truth and she sat there in silence while all that went on, which is a disgrace.

We know that Peter Gutwein's number-one trick is to rip money out of GBEs and he has done it again this time - not only \$50 million from the MAIB, but also \$39.5 million from the Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation, and there are increases to other GBEs as well in terms of their dividend.

There is the change in policy regarding taking dividends from the TT-Line. That money cannot be spent on government services. It can only be spent on the two new ships that everyone in Tasmania should support because they are so important, not only for our tourism industry but also our freight issues here in the state. This Government has used the removal of dividends from TT-Line and then held them in a special account in terms of the ships to prop up their own bottom line, because it is so poor.

Peter Gutwein has a history of this and it has gone to a new level this year. We know that there has also been a range of other measures in this Budget. There is the land tax on foreign investors that is going to be consulted upon and it will be interesting to see exactly who that affects and how much of an effect that will have on international investment here in Tasmania. You have to put something in a Budget when you have no ideas, so an idea you might possibly go down is one thing the Treasurer has done to try to mask not only his ineptitude but his lack of imagination and lack of ticker when it comes to economic reform. His only real attempt at that was trying to take over TasWater and he got an absolute hiding. That takeover cost the state probably around five years in delay in terms of properly funding water and sewerage infrastructure in Tasmania and we still see the problems that causes because the Treasurer has not taken that issue seriously.

There is also the introduction of a point of consumption tax. It says in the budget speech that that is up to 15 per cent. One would question why you would bring that in at a lower rate than 15 per cent given that most states in Australia have a 15 per cent rate. The racing industry wants to know what amount of the money that comes from the point of consumption tax will go to the industry and why racing minister after racing minister refused to even look at this tax, why it has taken so long and why we are the last state in the country to bring it in. We know that Jeremy Rockliff said in GBE scrutiny a few years ago that it would be a broken promise if they brought it in. Whether that is the reason it has taken so long I am not sure, but the industry wants to know what rate it will be set at and how much of that funding will go to the racing industry.

In summary, this Budget is another fraud on the Tasmanian people. Mr Gutwein is running out of options when it comes to trickery and budget tricks he can use to try to mask his own incompetence and it is starting to catch up with him. He says he is proud but when he sits next to the Minister for Health day after day and there are reports coming out saying that adverse impacts in our emergency departments are up and avoidable deaths are up, you wonder exactly what he has to be proud of. I would say he has nothing to be proud of and he should hang his head in shame. The first thing he should do is start to be honest with the Tasmanian people. The second thing he should do is talk to the Health minister about how they are going to resolve the crisis in our health and hospital system.

It is well past time that the Treasurer took these issues seriously. The Health minister is at pains to say that he takes all these issues seriously. Of course he is not at pains to get on and try to fix any of these issues. He washes his hands effectively and blames the Leader of the Opposition bizarrely for the fact that he cannot do his job. The opportunity is there now for the Government to take these issues seriously, get on and try to fix the crisis in our health system, but the first thing they need to do is get the Treasurer to take it seriously and start telling the truth.

[2.58 p.m.]

**Mrs PETRUSMA** (Franklin - Minister for Disability Services and Community Development) - Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure and honour today to rise to speak in response to the Hodgman Liberal Government's second Budget of our second term and the sixth budget we have delivered overall.

Before I discuss in detail the initiatives we are committing to in this Budget, both in my electorate of Franklin and in my portfolios, I take a moment to recognise and acknowledge the Treasurer for having delivered yet another budget that maintains the momentum and invests for growth. This Budget is the next step in this Government's long-term plan to grow the economy, create jobs, continue to invest in essential services and to protect our way of life.

Today we have a strong, enviable economy. Almost 13 000 jobs have been created in the past five years and Tasmanian businesses are the most confident in the country. The 2019-20 state Budget also makes record investments of \$8.1 billion into Health and \$7.1 billion into Education. It is a hallmark of strong and stable government that we are investing a record amount of \$3.6 billion to deliver the job-creating intergenerational infrastructure Tasmania needs now and in the future, while at the same time focusing on the things that matter most to Tasmanians, including looking after the state's most vulnerable.

There are no new taxes for Tasmanians. There is record investment into our Affordable Housing Action Plan 2 and we are continuing to deliver on our commitment to help and protect Tasmania's children and young people, with additional funding allocated in the 2019-20 Budget.

As always there are challenges. However, this Government will continue to meet these challenges as we aim for strategic growth so that more Tasmanians across every region can share in the benefits that a confident state produces.

One of our first challenges this year was over summer where we faced ferocious bushfires, especially the residents of the Huon Valley in my electorate of Franklin. In spite of challenges like these bushfires and because our Budget is on a strong footing, we have been able to respond to these challenges and still deliver a budget surplus next year, an important element of our responsible financial management.

As a proud representative of the electorate of Franklin I want to highlight some of the important projects in the south of the state. In particular, I will focus on our significant investment in infrastructure. This Government is working to build our future from the ground up whilst protecting and preserving the things that matter, like our way of life.

In regards to roads this Government is investing \$71.8 million in the Greater Hobart Traffic Solution, including a fifth lane on Hobart's southern outlet with priority for buses and car pooling. There is \$58 million to seal Bruny Island Main Road between Alonnah and Lunawanna, as well as to seal Hastings Cave Road and to improve Arve Road and Jeffreys Track.

On the Eastern Shore the Government is investing \$85.6 million, including the Richmond Road Master Plan, duplicating the missing link and upgrading junctions on the East Derwent Highway and planning for access ramps to Rosny from the Tasman Highway.

With the population growth in Kingborough it is fantastic to see \$3.5 million is allocated for a new child and family learning centre in Kingborough.

There is also \$2.1 million for a new gymnasium hall at Snug Primary School, \$1.55 million to upgrade the Montagu Bay Primary School and \$4 million for the Southern Support School, as well as sports stadium upgrades for Clarence and Moonah sports stadiums to the value of \$200 000.

These infrastructure commitments will help to ensure infrastructure keeps pace with these growing areas. That is not only great for the region, but also for the state.

Since the 2018 election I have had the pleasure and honour of serving as the Minister for Disability Services and Community Development, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women. I want to first put on the record my deep thanks and appreciation to my ministerial staff, as well as all the department staff who I have had the pleasure of working with, for their passion, dedication and commitment to making a real difference in the lives of nearly all Tasmanians that my portfolios intersect with.

The Hodgman Liberal Government has a strong track record of delivering better outcomes for people with disability in this state. I am very pleased to say that we are continuing to build on our previous work while investing even more funding in the 2019-20 Budget towards the provision of services and supports for Tasmanians with a disability.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is one of the biggest and most important reforms that Australia has ever seen and this Government is 100 per cent committed to playing its part in ensuring that Tasmania's transfer to the full scheme is a success. That is why we are investing at record levels over the 2019-20 Budget and forward Estimates, with \$1.04 billion in cash and in-kind contributions committed by the Tasmanian Government towards the NDIS.

Madam Speaker, \$1.04 billion in cash and in-kind contributions is significant, but we are not stopping there. I am pleased to confirm that disability support services that remain outside of the scope of the NDIS will also be funded, including mainstream children's therapy services, individual advocacy services and continuity of support for people with disability who are not eligible for the NDIS.

In addition to these initiatives, as was outlined by the Minister for Education and Training in this House recently, the Government is providing a massive boost to support students with a disability in the 2019-20 Budget with an additional \$34 million over the forward Estimates. This has been allocated to support a new needs-based funding model in Tasmania that will see up to a doubling of students able to access support. This funding takes the total investment to support students with disability in the 2019 education budget to \$93.35 million, an increase of \$24 million since 2014. This new needs-based model moves away from a one-size-fits-all approach of providing funding based on the type of disability and instead focuses on the individual and the support they need to achieve a better educational outcome.

An additional \$1 million has been allocated to the Tasmanian Autism Diagnostic Services, making a total of nearly \$1.9 million available in 2019-20 to assist in reducing the wait time for an autism assessment for children aged zero to 18 years. Early diagnostic assessments of autism also enable earlier transition to the NDIS for children, with families being able to access the services and funding they require far earlier.

To further improve outcomes for children through access to early intervention and support, the Government is also funding important mainstream children's therapy services. Mainstream children's therapy services provide for health-related interventions, rehabilitation and therapy for developmental support for children and young people ineligible for the NDIS and early childhood early intervention services.

The Tasmanian Government recognises the vital role of independent individual advocacy services and the critical role they provide in ensuring people with disability can access the same rights as others. Individual advocacy services will therefore continue to be funded to ensure that

people with disability are adequately supported in advocating for their needs to be met, including under the NDIS.

In accordance with our bilateral agreement with the Australian Government with regard to continued support, we are also committed to continuing to fund individuals with disability who were receiving funding for support even though not eligible for individual support packages through the NDIS or who require supports that are outside the scope of those funded under the NDIS.

Community Development: collectively, our community development peak bodies represent nearly all of Tasmania's population, including older Tasmanians, volunteers, young people, carers, multicultural Tasmanians, LGBTI Tasmanians as well as veterans under the minister, Mr Barnett. In this year's state Budget, we have made sure that these community development peak bodies can continue to advocate for and support Tasmanians to ensure that the voices and views of Tasmanians are heard, to provide advice to government and to raise awareness of available government programs and services for Tasmanians.

Last year we increased these peak bodies core funding for the first time since 2010. To ensure funding for our community development peak bodies keeps pace with operational requirements, our 2019-20 Budget sees annual indexation of 2.25 per cent applied to core funding for these peaks for the first time, which brings annual core funding to each of the peaks to \$112 475 for 2019-20. This boost to funding will help ensure these key organisations can continue to deliver services and support to those who need it most.

The Hodgman Liberal Government is also a strong supporter of Tasmania's youth and the Youth Network of Tasmania. YNOT plays an important role in advocating for young people and for the youth sector. That is why this year the Government has committed \$25 000 in 2019-20 and again in 2021-22 to YNOT to host a Tasmanian youth conference. Including peak body and project funding and the \$40 000 per annum that YNOT receives to host Youth Week Tasmania each year, YNOT will receive \$932 976 over three years from 2018-19 to help Tasmania's young people.

As well as receiving indexed peak body funding, Carers Tasmania will again receive \$20 000 extra towards their very popular I Care resource to provide 10 000 booklets to carers.

In addition to their indexed peak body funding, the Tasmanian Men's Shed Association will receive additional funding of \$125 000 this year for the Tasmanian Men's Shed grant fund, with applications for 2019 now open.

The Council on the Ageing (COTA) will also receive funding of \$390 000 over the next two years to implement initiatives under the Government's Strong, liveable communities: Tasmania's Active Ageing Plan 2017-2022, our comprehensive whole-of-government strategy for older Tasmanians. In addition to this and their peak body funding, we are also providing COTA with \$106 000 each year to fund Seniors Week.

This budget also maintains our election commitment funding of \$1.8 million for food security in Tasmania including \$250 000 per annum in funding to Foodbank. This is in addition to our commitment of \$100 000 per annum to Foodbank for the base in the north-west.

There is also funding for the Loaves and Fishes Tasmania project of \$150 000, a partnership between the Devonport Chaplaincy, SecondBite, the Devonport Youth Accommodation Facility and the Devonport Homelessness Action Group. This social enterprise is based in Devonport and



sees quality donated fresh and surplus food producing thousands of nutritious ready-to-eat cooked meals being distributed to Tasmanians doing it tough each week.

We are investing \$25 000 to support the work of Produce to the People, on top of \$75 000 over three years to further develop and maintain its successful microgreen social enterprise. We have committed \$60 000 in funding this year for Tasmania's three mobile food van services including Gran's Van in Devonport, Loui's Van in Hobart and Launceston Mission's Street Beat, to continue their great community service of delivering hot food, warm clothing and blankets to those who are homeless. To support positive outcomes for Tasmania's multicultural communities, refugees and migrants we are delighted to also be providing an additional \$595 000 this year for a range of initiatives that will help support and lead to a stronger more vibrant multicultural Tasmania.

Another way we are working to improve the lives of Tasmanians is through the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio. In our first term we focused heavily on resetting our relationship with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. The Premier set a strong agenda that was designed to make a real difference to the lives of Tasmania's Aboriginal people.

Over the last year I have had the immense privilege to continue that work on behalf of the Government and today, more than ever, we remain steadfast in that commitment. We are focused on improving the social, cultural and economic outcomes and promoting greater understanding and acceptance of Aboriginal culture because we have a genuine desire to make a positive difference, a true difference that recognises Tasmania's remarkable 40 000-plus years of Aboriginal heritage and culture and one that points to a brighter future for Aboriginal Tasmanians.

To demonstrate that our commitment today to the reset is as strong as ever, the 2019-20 state Budget invests new funding of \$542 000 across the forward Estimates to support activities and initiatives. This includes \$90 000 next year and every year over the forward Estimates to support greater involvement of Aboriginal communities and government decisions of policy-making, therefore resulting in better outcomes consistent with the statement of intent between the Tasmanian Regional Aboriginal Communities Alliance and the Tasmanian Government.

We are also providing \$5000 per annum and over the forward Estimates to support emerging Tasmanian Aboriginal female leaders and promote career pathways for Aboriginal girls through a new annual awards program to highlight leadership and excellence. This program will be open to secondary school students attending all Tasmanian schools. Teachers will nominate eligible students who will be invited to outline how they will use the award to support and advance their academic or career interests. Five emerging leaders will be selected and awarded a scholarship of \$1000 each.

We are also continuing to invest in activities and events that will help us to continue the Reset momentum like our Heads of Agency forums, regional reconciliation festivals and events including the two new events that we announced this week, and ongoing consultation with Aboriginal communities on important government policy. Across government we are also working to close the gap in inequalities experienced by Aboriginal people. This work includes initiatives such as support for Aboriginal Tasmanians impacted by family violence and permanent funding with a coordinated approach to increase the number of Aboriginal people employed in the State Service. We are also committed to supporting the growth and sustainability of Aboriginal enterprises and look forward to releasing our indigenous procurement policy next quarter to help support more opportunities for Tasmanian Aboriginal businesses.

In regard to our extensive Aboriginal heritage and culture we are also providing ongoing funding of \$200 000 per annum to support the cultural management group to continue its work on the management of cultural values, tourism and a program for Aboriginal Tasmanians to access important resources within the Tasmanian Wilderness and World Heritage Area, as well as the Aboriginal trainee rangers to work in our national parks and reserves.

Another of my portfolio areas is Sport and Recreation. The Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to being the healthiest state as well as to have the lowest rate of obesity in Australia by 2025, which is why we are investing in key areas in the 2019-20 state Budget to help that vision become a reality. Playing sport is key to establishing lifelong healthy habits and has a wide range of benefits, ranging from improving physical and mental health to fostering social skills and developing team work and leadership skills.

In 2019-20 alone over \$28 million will be invested in initiatives that will boost participation and improve sport and recreation facilities and programs to grow the number of Tasmanians involved in sport. Our investments in sport this year have a particular focus on boosting participation by women and girls, people with disability, children and young people and those who face the biggest barriers to participation. Importantly, our commitments include an additional \$1 million in 2019-20 for our Ticket to Play program, the first sports voucher system in Tasmania for children and young people listed on a valid Centrelink healthcare card or pensioner concession card. This takes our commitment to Ticket to Play to a total of \$4 million or 40 000 sports vouchers to assist with the cost of sporting memberships.

To further assist people experiencing significant disadvantage we are also supporting the work of RecLink Australia in implementing the RecLink program in George Town, Risdon Vale, Glenorchy and Brighton, with funding of \$286 000 allocated over two years. This program delivers sport and recreation opportunities to help transform the lives of vulnerable people from 16 years of age upwards.

In further recognition of the importance of connecting students with opportunities to participate in sport, we have allocated \$1.4 million in the Department of Education for a new initiative of regional sports coordinators who will be employed in each of Tasmania's regions. Participation in sport from an early age is integral to establishing lifelong healthy habits. Therefore the regional sports coordinator program's primary aim will be to drive participation and be a key point of contact between families and children who want to play sport and sport leagues and clubs looking to organise access to schools. They will also investigate talent pathways and substantially improve outcomes for our students, while also coordinating sporting equipment, uniforms, after-school transport and training where possible. Not only will the coordinators work towards improving sporting outcomes for Tasmanian students but they can also assist schools in applying for grant funding.

Christian Ellston from North Melbourne Football Club said:

We are very supportive of this move and see it as a vital cog in boosting participation in sport across the board and providing a link between sports and other key learning areas.

In regard to women in sport one initiative is in providing \$240 000 per annum to support high performance and additional pathways for women into cricket. In addition \$200 000 will be

provided to support hosting the Big Bash League and women's Big Bash League matches in the north and north-west in 2019-20.

Cricket Tasmania CEO Nick Cummins has welcomed this announcement and said that their female program couldn't have undergone the improvement it did last year without the support of the Government.

He also said:

We are pleased that the Government shares our view that as Tasmania's team, the Hurricanes should be accessible to all Tasmanians, be it in the north or the south of the state.

A further \$400 000 over four years will be provided to Hockey Tasmania to assist participation in the new domestic league, Hockey One. Damian Smith, CEO of Hockey Tasmania, stated:

The Tasmanian State Government are fantastic supporters of hockey in Tasmania and this funding agreement is a massive financial boost to our Tassie Tigers, our senior elite representing women's and men's team, as they seek to continue their national success in the new Hockey One league.

There is also new funding of \$250 000 to the Sporting Competitions Access Fund for dedicated funding support for athletes with disability to assist with the increased costs they face in regard to access to sporting events, especially nationally and internationally.

The Elphin Sports Centre will receive a new roof through \$400 000 funding support and there is \$200 000 to assist the NFSRA with maintenance for their Moonah and Clarence sports centres.

To help grow grassroots football in the state and also help forge a pathway to a Tasmanian AFL and AFLW team, there is also \$195 000 over three years to provide administrative support to the Football Tasmania board that commences 1 July.

Another 2019-20 budget key deliverable is a statewide strategy for sport and recreation facilities which will inform future sport and recreation facility investment decisions with the aim of increasing opportunities for all Tasmanians to engage in physical activity. I am delighted to say that these are just some of the initiatives we are committed to delivering and funding in Sport and Recreation to help provide even more opportunities for Tasmanians to be active and to enjoy participation in sport and recreation right around Tasmania.

I have had the absolute privilege to serve as Minister for Women since this Government came to office in 2014. I have always been of the view that the Hodgman Liberal Government's vision for a more inclusive Tasmania that empowers and enables women and girls to fully participate in our economic, social, political and community life is not just sound policy, it is also vitally important and crucial for Tasmania's future. Our Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-21 is a critical enabler in this process and encapsulates the measures we need to pursue to help create a more equal society.

I am proud to be serving in a government that passionately wants to reduce gender-based inequalities and promote gender equality in Tasmania. Our strategic approach deliberately focuses on leadership and participation, health and wellbeing, financial security and safety, and is supported

by a range of key initiatives in the 2019-20 Budget - a budget that delivers on our plan to build a better future for women and girls.

The 2019-20 Budget provides additional funding of \$200 000 over four years for scholarships to support women in leadership. This program is directed toward women who are Tasmania's emerging leaders, particularly those who face the most barriers to leadership opportunities and board appointments. This program is all about giving more Tasmanian women the opportunity to learn the skills they will need so that they can serve as company directors, including potentially on government boards and committees.

When we first came to government, women held only 33.8 per cent of all board positions. As at 31 December 2018, the percentage of board positions held by women is now at 44.18 per cent. We saw a massive increase, nearly 31 per cent, in the ratio of women board members and an increase of 10.38 percentage points in the number of board positions held by women since 2015. These great results are a testament to our Women on Boards Strategy 2015-2020, which ensures greater consideration is given to identify and recruit women with the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to fill board vacancies.

Good health and wellbeing positively affects the lives of women and girls in many ways, enhancing their quality of life, education and the ability to participate socially and economically in the community. Tasmanian women are now receiving the health care they need sooner under the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's funding to boost access to women's health services.

I acknowledge this is due to the partnership approach taken by yourself as well as the Health minister, the honourable Michael Ferguson MP, as you have both worked together since the election to put this new program in place. I am delighted to see that there is an additional \$7.2 million, being \$3.6 million in 2018-19 and \$3.6 million in 2020, to enable an estimated 900 additional surgical procedures targeted specifically at women who have waited the longest for their procedures on the elective surgery waiting list. Part of this funding will also provide better support for women not requiring surgery. In relation to the non-surgical services component of this important women's health initiative, a program is being implemented to provide alternative treatment for conditions where women elect not to undertake surgery or surgery is not considered the best treatment option, and implementation will primarily be through physiotherapy departments.

We are proud to be building a better health system for all Tasmanians with record funding, more staff and increased services. We are also proud to be delivering more funding to support women in our state because gender is also one of the most powerful determinants of health outcomes. That is why, under the Hodgman Liberal Government's Tasmanian Women's Strategy, health and wellbeing is one of the four key action areas, especially as the 2017 report, *Health of Australia's Females*, released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that only one in two women get sufficient physical activity. Two of the priorities in the strategy are therefore to promote women and girls increased participation in sport, recreation and physical activity and to address the barriers to women's and girls' participation in sport, recreation and physical activity.

Research has shown that one of the biggest barriers to female participation is poor, inadequate facilities. That is why we have committed \$10 million over two years for the Levelling the Playing Field grants program, to remove this barrier and to make sure our sport facilities are of an appropriate standard. This \$10 million is by far the largest per capita investment in women and girls' facilities by any state or territory government and it proudly demonstrates this Government's commitment to women's sport. Through Levelling the Playing Field, this Government is providing

grants from \$15 000 up to \$1 million to support the development of facilities such as changerooms, lockers, toilets, showers and amenities for female athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers. The first round was a tremendous success with 21 organisations around the state successful and receiving funding. These include: \$250 000 to refurbish the North Hobart Oval changerooms; \$630 000 for new changerooms at Pembroke Park, Sorell; \$310 000 for new changerooms and toilets at the Wynyard Recreation Ground; and \$438 100 to upgrade the changerooms at the Westbury Recreation Ground.

The total projects to be delivered around Tasmania under round one are worth over \$10.1 million, a fantastic return on investment between the Tasmanian Government, local government and sports organisations. To further encourage women and girls participation in sport, the Levelling the Playing Field grants program round 2 expressions of interest have recently been undertaken. The program received 35 expressions of interest that are now being assessed by the department. As for round 1, Levelling the Playing Field is being administered in two stages. By conducting a two-stage process, we are able to gauge interest, gain an overview of the project, manage expectations and ensure we are only asking applicants with a strong case for how their project would definitely increase female participation to move to the next stage, and to then provide the detailed project information required for the full application. Projects with matching dollar-for-dollar funding from the facility owner and a funding contribution from the relevant sport or local council will be viewed more favourably, as we aim to leverage the Government's \$10 million commitment to achieve around \$20 million in investment into more female-friendly facilities around Tasmania.

Another key pillar of our women's strategy is safety and the Hodgman Liberal Government has made eliminating family violence a top priority, which is why in last year's Budget we made a commitment to invest an additional \$20.2 million in funding to address this scourge. This includes extending our \$26 million nation-leading Safe Homes, Safe Families, Tasmania's Family Violence Action Plan, including \$6 million per annum to implement the Family Violence Action Plan Stage 2. This year's Budget has even more funding, which will support the establishment of a single combined family violence and sexual violence action plan. This is based on the family violence service system review findings, research and practical evidence that recommended the need for an increased focus on sexual violence within family violence in recognition that sexual violence often intersects with family violence. The new plan is scheduled for release prior to 1 July.

An additional \$4.7 million is being provided over three years for family violence initiatives, and an additional \$1.9 million is being provided over three years for the implementation of sexual violence initiatives, on top of last year's funding boost. All new actions that will be announced in the near future are informed and based on the outcomes of the comprehensive Family Violence Service System Review. The Project O family violence primary prevention project to help drive generational attitude change by backing rural young women to become changemakers in the community on the north-west coast also continues this year, as well as planning for a new women and children's crisis shelter in the south, with associated mapping of a need for family style crisis accommodation in the north and north-west.

Our continuing investment in family violence ensures we continue to offer the greatest protection possible for Tasmanian families at risk. While significant action has been taken and progress made, family violence remains unacceptably prevalent in our community and addressing it requires ongoing action. Therefore our commitment of additional funding provides certainty to our partner organisations and agencies and demonstrates this Government's unwavering commitment to continue our efforts to eliminate family violence.

The Hodgman Government is also focused on increasing women's financial security. This includes delivering on our Financial Security for Women Action Plan, which sets out a range of actions across the whole-of-government to address women's financial security. It includes an aim of increasing the number of women and girls in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine, or STEMM. That includes DPIPWE's See it. Dream it. Do it. Program that I was delighted to help launch earlier this year.

Over our first four-year term, the Hodgman Liberal Government provided new funding of \$80 000 to Tasmanian Women in Agriculture. As part of taking agriculture to the next level policy, we have increased our support to \$120 000 per annum. This reflects our confidence in the demonstrated ability of TWiA to support and empower more rural women to take on leadership roles in Tasmanian primary industries by providing opportunities to network and support each other and by empowering them to realise their full potential. It is exciting to see TWiA encouraging their members to expand their skills and continue to develop their leadership capacity.

There is more work to do and the Hodgman Liberal Government will continue to work to reduce economic disadvantage, to enhance economic growth, and to increase the wellbeing of Tasmanian women, girls, and their families.

### **Time expired.**

[3.29 p.m.]

**Ms STANDEN** (Franklin) - Madam Deputy Speaker, the state Budget is a statement of priorities and I take this opportunity to put on the public record that I simply do not agree with this Government's priorities. I am worried that too many people are missing out and not sharing in the prosperity of our state. Through budget mismanagement, the good times, the Treasurer's so-called golden age has been squandered. This train wreck of a budget bares the truth that this Government has plunged our state into debt, wrapped up the credit card and missed opportunities to help vulnerable Tasmanians. It lays bare \$1.1 billion worth of net debt when in fact this Treasurer has promised the people of Tasmania on a number of occasions that we will remain net debt-free. It outlines \$450 million worth of cuts to Health, Education and other essential services and fails to fund wage agreements across the public sector. It raids government businesses and delays infrastructure projects in this so-called infrastructure budget, including schools and health projects, with not one new project to justify the state's deteriorated budget position.

This Budget systematically fails to fund essential services. Not only has this Government failed over the past half-decade to address the deep and ongoing problems in health and housing, disability, jobs, skills and training, further cuts through this budget incompetence will put further strain on essential services in this state.

There is an underlying lack of fairness and inequality in this Budget and that is a deplorable thing. There is a lack of recognition that there is a widening gap between the haves and the have-nots in Tasmania. Low-income Tasmanians and young people in particular are missing out and the complexion of those who are missing out in Tasmania is changing. As TasCOSS has pointed out, across a range of indicators many Tasmanians are now doing much worse under this Liberal Government than they were before Will Hodgman became Premier in 2014. People are simply falling between the cracks. Some 17 000 job seekers and 120 000 Tasmanians are estimated to be living below the poverty line and over 150 000 Tasmanians are living in housing stress.

In Education and Training there are nearly 10 000 fewer TAFE or VET enrolments, reduced from 63 400 people in 2015 to just 54 100 in 2017, and under the Liberals 2000 apprenticeships have been lost. The TAFE sector badly needs an injection of investment.

In the area of jobs and Newstart, there has been an increase in the number of unemployed to nearly 27 000 people in 2018-19 and an increase in the number of people on Newstart. A total 3800 full-time jobs have been lost since the last election and over the past year approximately 4500 fewer women are in work. This is of deep concern given that women on average retire with less than half of superannuation savings compared with men. Women are more likely to end up in poverty as they age and this, together with stubborn rates of family violence, is why older women are the fastest growing demographic in homelessness.

In the area of Housing the number of applicants on the Housing Register has increased from a decade-long low by almost 60 per cent, from 2005 people in 2013-14 to just over 3200 people in 2018-19, and the average waiting time for priority applicants has almost tripled to 56 weeks, which is more than a year.

There has been a nearly 25 per cent increase in the number of children in out-of-home care to just over 1300 in 2018-19. In Disability Services there have been 18 disability service providers that support an estimated 90 000 living with disability who are not eligible for the NDIS who have been ignored in this Budget. This Budget fails the most vulnerable people in Tasmania, particularly women and our young people. There is no vision to improve the lives of future generations. Even though the terms of trade are good and interest rates are low, the Liberals financial incompetence will see the state Budget head into net debt for the first time in 15 years. This means that the Government is prepared to saddle the next generation with a massive \$1.1 billion debt bill.

The Budget does not mention climate change, let alone mitigation measures which, sadly, should come as no surprise when the Premier made no mention of climate change in his state of the state address and the Government just last week voted down Labor's amended motion declaring a climate emergency.

Youth unemployment is at a staggering 14.3 per cent, well above the national average, and a recent Brotherhood of St Lawrence report showed that Tasmania has some of the country's highest rates of youth unemployment on a regional basis. Here in south-east Tasmania we are ranked sixth for the worst national youth unemployment rate of 17.8 per cent compared with the general unemployment rate of 5 per cent nationwide. This should be an issue of shame, not to be celebrated in the context of this Budget. It is unacceptable that on any given night Tasmania's homeless population has swollen to 1600 people, with 38 per cent of those being aged below 25 years.

This Budget is built upon a foundation of sand and busts the myth that the Liberal Party are good economic managers. Labor warned during the 2018 election campaign that the Liberal Party's \$2.7 billion spend in election pork-barrelling was unaffordable, but this Budget continues to prioritise those election commitments and infrastructure projects over people and essential services.

The Treasurer's track record speaks for itself. Every year he has spent more money than he has budgeted, despite his promise that 'over the next four years we will continue to spend less than we earn'. This Budget is based on lies and broken promises. Instead, over the next four years the Treasurer's blown budget will put recurrent services on the credit card and will cost 100 million to service this growing debt. He has no plan to get out of net debt and the cost of borrowing will mean less money spent on health, housing, education and other essential services.

In the area of public sector wages the Government has been locked in wage negotiations now with public sector unions and their members for over a year. It is a false economy to not pay your workforce of nearly 30 000 public servants a wage rise that keeps up with the cost of living. Low wages growth is a major risk to the economy and the proportion of taxpayers earning less than \$80 000 per annum has now increased from 86.6 per cent in 2013-14 to 88 per cent in 2016-17. Not only does decent public sector wage rises contribute to a more buoyant economy, it also sends an important signal of respect and recognition to stretched and demoralised workers. I have been one of these public servants and have spoken with many who are leaving due to increased workloads, expectations and intolerable stress, particularly in the health system where under-resourced paramedics and nurses and allied health workers are being asked to put themselves and patients at risk. It is simply unfair.

This Budget's \$450 million in efficiency dividends will translate to job cuts, make no mistake about that, putting the existing workforce under even greater pressure. As a young graduate, why would you choose to work in the Tasmanian public sector when you can get better pay and conditions interstate? Low morale and vacancy control measures combined mean that there are vacancies in Health, Child Safety, Corrections and the Fire Service and beyond. We are failing to train young people for the current job vacancies, let alone the jobs of the future or retaining our valuable workforce that we have at the moment.

In the area of Health, total funding for health services is projected to increase by less than \$11 million or 0.5 per cent over the next year and just \$5 million the following year. According to the AMA, in the next year alone the efficiency dividend will see a \$14 million cut to the Health budget. Just as a pay rise of 2 per cent that does not keep up with the cost of living is effectively a pay cut, a funding increase that is given on the one hand while an efficiency dividend is taken on the other means an estimated 130 job losses and it is false economy. The Health minister continues to deny independent reports that reveal the annual \$100 million black hole in Health funding, even though his budget has required top-ups in successive years and the problem remains. It has not been addressed in this Budget. The Royal Hobart Hospital Redevelopment is on track to deliver the first patients not actually getting a bed until the middle of next year at the very earliest. Just like in the housing sector there is no short-term fix.

The Auditor-General's report lays this bare. Between 2015 and 2018 there was a 60 per cent increase in adverse events in emergency departments. There has been bed block at the Royal Hobart Hospital for almost 93 per cent of the time between June last year and January of this year. The Launceston General Hospital spent almost 70 per cent of the time during this period at the highest level of escalation, in a state of what he describes as 'almost constant gridlock'.

The number of patients unable to be transferred from ambulances to emergency departments within 30 minutes at Tasmania's four major hospitals has increased by 239 per cent, despite only a 20 per cent growth in ambulance presentations. Sick Tasmanians are waiting nine hours, on average, in emergency departments, but that can stretch for much longer.

According to TasCOSS, the Budget contains no new announcements in public health and funding falls over the forward Estimates to a record low of 1.2 per cent of the overall Health budget, down from 1.5 per cent four years ago. In the past, TasCOSS has called for at least 5 per cent of Health budget spending dedicated to preventative health in order to tackle the burden of chronic disease in this state to have some hope of achieving the Government's target of having the healthiest population by 2025.



There has been a deterioration in the number of patients seen at the Royal Hobart Hospital ED within four hours from 60.3 per cent in 2013-14 to 54 per cent in 2018-19. This is against the Government's own target of 90 per cent by 2022. The elective surgery wait list has increased over 1600 people over five years. The proportion of people deferring access to GPs due to the cost has increased from 6.9 per cent to 8.7 per cent.

On Sunday I hosted a community meeting in Risdon Vale concerned about the imminent closure of the Risdon Vale Medical Centre. I spoke with an emergency department nurse who was literally in tears at the prospect of people from the Risdon Vale community who do not have access to private transport or the money to pay for increasing medical expenses, people who will inevitably delay seeing a GP and put additional burden on after-hours services and the ED. Health outcomes will inevitably decline, increasing tertiary health costs and this nurse was literally in tears at the prospect of that decline in her community.

Over the past year, I have joined with current and past Labor members to warn the Health Minister of this looming crisis. I have written to the Health Minister, I have tabled a petition and I have now convened a community meeting. The community is feeling disrespected by this minister who did not have the courtesy of sending me an RSVP to the invitation to attend the meeting, much less showing up to explain to the community what he has done and what he intends to do to save this essential health service. The people of Risdon Vale have been left in the dark. They are angry. They are frightened and yet the minister appears to be doing nothing.

I have spent most of my working life empowering people to make their lives better. It is the reason why I joined the Labor Party, to give a voice to the voiceless and a hand up to those needing help. I was looking forward to speaking about new measures this Government has put in place for my electorate of Franklin and in my shadow portfolio areas of housing, environment, parks and heritage and climate change.

However, there is little to celebrate. I believe we should always be looking after our most vulnerable, our most disadvantaged and our most at risk. Regardless of the circumstances that someone is born into everyone deserves the same access to having their needs met, such as in health, housing and education.

Further, I believe that we should be investing in our communities and into our people a healthy and strong population that would, after all, ensure growth in the rest of Tasmania's sectors. To me, a budget is an opportunity to enhance our community. This Budget is not enabling these things to happen. This Budget is prioritising infrastructure, but doing so at the expense of many Tasmanians who are struggling every day with the cost of living.

The Government has ignored major areas in favour of a big spending infrastructure budget without a single new project, increasing net debt and denying hardworking Tasmanians a fair pay rise.

In the area of housing, every day I hear stories from Tasmanians who are living without a roof over their heads. They are living in their cars, couch surfing, living in tents, sleeping in shipping containers: they are homeless. Housing Connect should be a front door but the question is the front door to where?

Cindy has lived in the same Housing Tasmania property for almost 20 years. She was told earlier this year her home would be demolished and she will be moved. She does not know when; she does not know where she is going to go. Her daughter has been on the priority housing list for a number of years; she has complex mental health issues and she is couch surfing. She was offered a job recently and does not know whether she can take the job as her housing situation is so unstable. Cindy also has another daughter, a son-in-law and three grandchildren. They live in private rental accommodation which is going to be sold. Cindy's son also rents privately. She has been told that his home is to be sold. This is a whole family who are in very precarious housing. This Budget has nothing for them. How can they afford a deposit to take advantage of savings on stamp duty? How are they going to benefit from the measures this cold-hearted Government has put in place for landlords? They are not. They will remain homeless and nothing the Treasurer announced in his budget is going to help them.

It is not going to help Nikki either who is still unsure of where she and her four children will live once her time runs out in emergency accommodation. There is nothing there for her and her children.

I recently heard about another family who have been living in carpark, caravan parks and sleeping in their car for more than two years. During the tourist season they are evicted from whichever caravan park they are living in and sleep in their car.

Tourism is a major part of our economy, I accept that. What I do not accept is a government that ignores the basic human rights of its people and that is, to have a roof over their heads.

There are many more stories. I could fill this whole speech with stories that people tell me every day about the struggle they endure to find and maintain a safe place to live. These are the human faces of our housing crisis.

They could be me and my family or you and yours. The system is broken. We do not need money spent on giving tax breaks to property owners. We need money spent on building roofs to put over people's heads so they can live with dignity and stability.

Last year the minister stood in this place and proclaimed that in 12 months his government would have built 900 homes in 12 months. The clock is ticking, minister. Where are those homes? You can subtly change the language to say 'lots and homes' but you do not fool me. You are certainly not fooling Cindy and her family, Nikki and her children, or the thousands of other families who need somewhere to live.

You can tell them to call an 1800 number but what does that do? I will tell you what it does: it puts stress on workers who are trying to do their best but without the bricks and mortar to house people, they can do nothing. It certainly does not get you 900 homes in 12 months. It gets nothing.

Everyone knows there is a crisis in housing and homelessness in this state. We are in the midst of a perfect storm with pressure from public housing wait lists, private rental, increases in private rental and so on.

In his Budget speech, the Treasurer announced the Government's investment in the Affordable Housing Action Plan 2 bringing forward \$20 million in expenditure for affordable housing. The trouble is, there is not a single dollar extra for affordable housing or for housing support programs announced in this Budget.

Pretty easy to hit your targets if you continue to move the goal posts and that is exactly what Premier Hodgman and his Housing minister, Roger Jaensch, have continually done. As the housing crisis has deepened across Tasmania, it is abundantly clear that they have no tangible solution. Let there be no doubt that this Government has failed to adequately plan, to resource or to accurately forecast the complex range of issues impacting housing and homelessness.

In its own Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025 underpinned by two action plans, the Government seeks to achieve two key outcomes to measure the success of the Government's strategies over the decade to improve housing affordability in Tasmania and they are:

1. a decrease in the proportion of low-income Tasmanians experiencing housing stress;  
and
2. a decrease in the proportion of Tasmanians experiencing homelessness.

At the halfway mark, the Government can show exactly zero progress on its own key outcomes. Housing affordability and housing stress has become worse, not better and homelessness remains a visible problem with an estimated 1600 Tasmanians experiencing homelessness every night.

The situation is clearly spiralling out of control. The Government's latest quarterly housing report reported the delivery of only 281 new social housing dwellings, including 29 refurbishments which, while welcome, clearly do not meet the definition of new supply. This is just around 30 per cent of the Government's own target with just three months to deadline. The Premier in his recent state of the state speech repeated his commitment and went further, saying that their second action plan will provide an additional 1500 new affordable homes, increasing the number of new affordable homes to 2400 over eight years.

There is no question that we are faced with a housing crisis across the board, from affordable housing to private rental, social and community housing and crisis accommodation. Access to stable safe and affordable housing is a vital first step towards personal health and wellbeing. Having a home is not just about having a roof over your head. It is essential to everything we value in life. It is the foundation that provides a base upon which to build or to rebuild our lives. It is a basic human right and it is time the minister and the Premier delivered what they have promised.

As the first snow has settled on kunanyi/Mt Wellington and across the state, Tasmanians have once again begun to experience the beauty but for some, the harsh reality, of our cold winter. As I have said, on any given night it has been estimated there are 1600 homeless Tasmanians and many more, I am sure, who are out of sight. Winter is fast approaching and the weather is rapidly becoming cooler and damper and the daylight hours shorter.

Many people have contacted me for help. People are living in tents, shipping containers, sheds, garages, caravans and cars. Then there are the so-called couch surfers, people living with friends and relatives, staying as long as they dare, often burning their relationships before moving on to the next place. Not only do we have over 3200 people on the public housing wait list but we know that on average these families are waiting a staggering 56 weeks to be housed. That is more than a year. Unfortunately, recent reports show the demand for affordable housing is expected to outstrip supply for the foreseeable future, with around 14 000 homes required by 2036, a figure that dwarfs the 2400 dwellings promised by the Government over eight years to 2023. Shelter Tasmania has

suggested that we need to aim even higher, towards around 10 per cent of the housing market comprising affordable homes, but that figure currently sits around 5.5 per cent.

There is not one more dollar in the overall funding available to address the housing and homelessness situation and there is nothing that will address the crisis facing Tasmania today. The faces of homelessness are literally changing in Tasmania. People and families of all ages and all backgrounds are struggling to find and keep a roof over their heads. Safe and secure housing is fundamental to health and wellbeing, educational attainment and participation in the workforce. This is why the Tasmanian Labor Party successfully called for a House of Assembly select committee to inquire into and report upon housing affordability in Tasmania, with particular reference to the experience of Tasmanians in housing stress or homelessness, because Tasmanians need and deserve to know what it will take to get out of this mess.

Understandably, in the media and on social media sites, people have begun to call for temporary solutions like tiny homes, converted shipping containers and the like. The logic is sound, which is that any roof is better than no roof over someone's head, but these temporary solutions must be considered with care and extreme caution because facilities like water and sewerage and location of housing is important. We know there have been past mistakes in relation to urban planning and the availability of support workers and exit pathways for people in these circumstances. We need long-term solutions and to be sure that the short-term options do not trap people or leave them potentially harmed.

In the areas of Environment, Parks and Heritage, I am concerned that this Budget provides funding for infrastructure and increasing visitor numbers but not for the vital staff to manage our reserves to protect our heritage, manage emerging issues like weed management, ensure the integrity of the heritage register, produce waste management solutions and monitor Derwent River water quality. Public trust is at an all-time low in these portfolios and I have met with many community groups that are cynical about the Government's attempts to prioritise infrastructure and visitor spending at the expense of our beautiful natural and built heritage. As an example, housing sector people have talked to me about the \$20 million brought forward for affordable housing being the equivalent to the spend projected in the Budget for the Cradle Mountain experience or the next iconic walk. It speaks to the priorities of the Government that we are not prioritising the needs of our own most vulnerable in this state.

When it comes to the most vulnerable people in our community, those living with disabilities, we must do the most to ensure their needs are met, but unfortunately this is not the case. Tasmania has the highest rate of disability of any state in Australia and this includes the highest rate of autism, cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis. These rates are likely to only increase. Whilst we have more than 10 000 people who are eligible for support for the NDIS in Tasmania, that leaves upwards of 90 000 Tasmanians living with disabilities who are not eligible for NDIS and who rely on services provided by Tasmanian disability support service organisations. While the NDIS has proved to be a life-changing thing for some, there are many more in our community who are not eligible, never will be eligible and who we are failing. Tasmanians not eligible for the NDIS who are living with disabilities still require support for their daily living to participate in community, social and economic life with dignity.

In this place I have spoken passionately about the 18 disability service organisations that stand to lose funding as of 30 June 2019. Under the bilateral agreement with the federal government there is no doubt there is a clear and undeniable responsibility for this Government to provide services for Tasmanians living with a disability who are not eligible for support under the NDIS. I

was contacted by one of these service organisations just this week who said to me that the minister continues to fail to understand and misrepresents the serious risk to lack of viability of disability service organisations. She confuses the time-limited project-focused grant funding with long-term core funding to support people with disability who are not eligible for funding under the NDIS.

In a cross-portfolio area I note that the Government has a target of 20 per cent new public housing being accessible so funding has been brought forward for housing. Disability advocacy groups have argued there is an urgent need for considerably greater investment, and it would be very difficult to disagree with them. After all, approximately half of the homeless population has sustained a traumatic brain injury, highlighting the particular vulnerability of this cohort. All of these decisions of the Government potentially further isolate people with disabilities. It does not take a genius to work this out. One stakeholder said to me that the Government and the minister should be ashamed of how this Budget treats people living with disability. This is a bad-news budget for people living with disability, their families, carers and the workforce that support them.

I applaud the announcement made by the Leader of the Opposition in her budget reply speech around mental health in schools, TAFE, trade waste, health roundtables and repeating the calls in the area of housing that we made last year for the Government to act swiftly before the onset of winter and house those Tasmanians without shelter. The Leader again called upon the Government to seek expressions of interest from local government and private dwelling operators to urgently secure tenure of disused buildings and accommodation and repurpose them for Tasmania's homeless people. I stand ready to work with the minister and this Government to explore these innovative solutions, particularly to address the short-term needs of Tasmania's most vulnerable.

In conclusion, this Budget ought to have been a budget of vision, fairness and equality for Tasmania's public servants and some of our most vulnerable, the 17 000 job seekers, the 120 000 Tasmanians living below the poverty line, young people, women, people with disability, the unemployed, the homeless and the more than 150 000 Tasmanians in housing stress. The face of vulnerability is changing.

### **Time expired.**

[4.00 p.m.]

**Ms COURTNEY** (Bass - Minister for Resources) - Madam Speaker, I rise to contribute to debate on the 2019-20 Appropriation Bill. As Minister for Resources and for Building and Construction, I am proudly responsible for sectors of our economy that have turned the corner since the election of the first Hodgman Government in 2014 and are thriving. I note the Prime Minister calls Tasmania 'the turnaround state' and this has not happened by accident.

Since we were elected in 2014, the Hodgman Liberal Government has turned the economy around and we remain focused on securing a strong future for all Tasmanians. I am proud to stand in this House today in support of the 2019-20 state Budget because this majority Liberal Government is maintaining the momentum and investing for growth. The Budget the Treasurer delivered last week includes record investments in Health, Education and Infrastructure and will support the employment of 10 000 Tasmanians across the forward Estimates.

I am proud to be part of a Government that is: investing \$8.1 billion for health and hospitals to meet growing demand; investing \$7.1 billion for education and training; committing to making Tasmania the battery of the nation and ensuring our state continues to enjoy low-cost, reliable and clean energy; including more money to support a new disability needs-based funding model in

Tasmania; providing initiatives for community development bodies to continue providing important services for Tasmanians; providing record investments in affordable housing and essential services and is focused on investing in our regional communities.

This Budget backs our vision for Tasmania. This Government wants more people to come to our state, see more of our state and spend more while they are here. Our tourism industry is one of our great competitive strengths and economic drivers. Tourism supports 38 000 jobs and we are working to maintain the growth in our visitor economy. We see this tourism-led transformation of our state and the differences are stretching to all regional areas. Any visitor to the wineries along the Tamar River, to Bridestowe Lavender Farm or the once sleepy town of Derby can see for themselves how things have changed in the last five years. We are investing for growth to maintain this momentum. This is why we are launching a \$20 million Regional Tourism Attraction Loan Scheme to provide low interest loans of up to \$1 million for businesses to undertake projects to grow their local visitor economy. We will invest \$1.2 million in a new business events attraction fund to bring major national and international business events to Tasmania.

This Budget also continues to deliver the Government's record \$12.6 million investment in tourism marketing to give Tasmania a competitive edge and to attract new visitors. The rest of the world wants to visit us, buy more of our premium high value products and produce, supported by the state's first Trade Strategy. This Budget invests an additional \$4.4 million to support Tasmania's first Trade Strategy and empower Tasmanian businesses to take their products to the world. These industries employ more than 5600 Tasmanians and, in the 12 months ending March 2019, accounted for more than 50 per cent of Tasmania's export revenue.

Similarly, in relation to the forest industry, the contribution made to Tasmania's economy is growing. In 2017-18, Tasmanian forests produced a total of 5.771 million cubic metres of wood fibre. This was an 8 per cent increase from 2016-17 and a 70 per cent increase from 2013-14. TasPorts 2017-18 annual report states its forestry business grew again this year to more than 3.9 tonnes in woodchips and logs, and this figure does not include veneer, paper newsprint or other wood products.

Under the strategy of this year we will release the first of our annual action plan to provide improved market access and support skills development to assist new and expanding businesses grow trade nationally and internationally. Tasmanian exports continue to rise, and this Budget provides a launching pad to take trade to the next level and keep our economy strong. We are proud of this Budget and, judging the reaction of Tasmanian community leaders, there is much confidence outside these walls of our Government's vision. Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive, Michael Bailey, said, '... is a budget that keeps the economy moving, keeps infrastructure moving, it keeps people working and brings more people into work'. The Small Business Council's Rob Mallett is motivated by what this Budget means for his sector, with small business having the chance to participate in the tendering process for infrastructure projects.

The Property Council's, Brian Wightman, says -

The 2019-20 State Budget's significant investment in infrastructure is necessary to meet the challenges of our growing state and leverage the opportunity for a more prosperous and liveable Tasmania.

He went on to say, 'This budget is easing congestion, and supporting the immediate supply and affordability of Tasmanian homes'.

The Budget also received high praise from the Tourism Industry Council, with Luke Martin saying -

Easily the best tourism budget in Tasmanian history. Investing in our pressure spots, delivering on election promises and stimulating investment in regional destinations

He also said, 'The regional attraction loans scheme is a positive initiative to stimulate new experiences in regional areas'.

As Minister for Building and Construction and Minister for Resources, I am proud of the strong vision this Budget offers these sectors. The Hodgman Liberal Government is focused on maintaining a positive momentum in Tasmania's nation-leading building and construction industry. Our growth in the construction industries has been leading the nation. The Hodgman Liberal Government has been working hard to ensure we have the right conditions in place to stimulate more construction, create jobs and boost the economy in our major cities and our regional areas. I am proud to say that the efforts have been working with Tasmania continuing to experience high levels of construction activity across the state, including recording the strongest growth rate in Australia in a number of key areas in the sector. This is evident in the strong growth of building approvals, dwelling commencements and new residential construction, as well as major home renovations statewide.

The total value of construction and building work done grew 15.3 per cent over the year to March 2019, which was the strongest growth rate in the nation and it is in stark contrast to the 6.1 per cent experienced nationally. The number of first home buyers entering the market continues to grow with 20.5 per cent more first home buyers in the year to March 2019. This was the fastest growth rate in the country. Tasmania also continues to lead the nation in the annual growth of building approvals with a total number and value of building approvals up by 24.1 per cent in the year to March 2019. Greatly contributing to this growth is the value of residential building approvals, which grew 23.3 per cent over the same period, equating to almost \$900 million in value of work done in the year.

While we do not necessarily measure our success by the number of cranes in the skyline, it was recently that we did have six tower cranes on Hobart's CBD and we will have more in the pipeline with the City Deal signed. Northern Tasmania is also seeing a construction surge, with developments such as the CH Smith redevelopment, the Silo Hotels and Hotel Verge all revitalising the economy and creating jobs. Devonport is being transformed by the Living City development and the level of commercial and industrial activity is a clear reflection of our growing economy. Our building and construction sector is at the forefront of Tasmania's economic growth with a growing population and increasing demand for housing leading to near-record employment numbers throughout this industry. Tasmania's housing sector remains strong with consistent growth in the number of new homes being built as well as the number of first home buyers entering the market over the last 12 months. This is good for the sector and helps broadly underpin our economic prosperity and provides confidence for Tasmanian families and businesses.

The Government is proud of these achievements and we will continue to support this growth by helping to ensure we have the skilled workforce who can meet the growing demand in Tasmania.

In this Budget we are prioritising the need to address current and predicted workforce shortages, and deliver a pipeline of skilled workers to meet demand over the next three to five years.

This funding will support apprentices through the addition of new full-time teachers in allied trades and building and construction, along with three full-time welding teachers into TasTAFE.

We have extended the range of successful initiatives to increase housing supply by a further 12 months to 30 June 2020, including the \$20 000 first home builders grant, and the first home owner's duty concession of up to \$7000 on established homes.

We have committed to a record boost in our affordable housing with \$125 million being allocated to the second Affordable Housing Action Plan, and to significantly increase the statewide supply of new social and affordable housing.

We are investing \$3.6 million into intergenerational infrastructure around Tasmania as part of our commitment to deliver the state's \$13 billion 10-year infrastructure pipeline.

These initiatives show that we are investing today to ensure the delivery of infrastructure and the housing supply that Tasmania needs now and tomorrow.

Our vision is backed by industry bodies including the Master Builders Association of Tasmania that welcome the increased commitment by the Government in the state Budget to support growth in the building and construction industry. The Master Builders Association of Tasmania executive director, Matthew Pollock, said Master Builders welcomes the increased commitment by the Government in the state Budget to support growth in the building and construction industry. The Budget again showed a record commitment to infrastructure investment of \$3.6 billion. This will boost jobs and assure the building industry keeps growing. He said, 'It is great to see a commitment by the Government, not only to a greater investment in infrastructure and social affordable housing programs, but also investing in local talent to deliver these programs'.

This sentiment is echoed by Stuart Collins, executive director of Tasmania's Housing Industry Association, who has welcomed the additional \$2.9 million for apprentices and trainees, reiterating that with the housing industry continuing to perform strongly, it is essential that there is ongoing investment in skills training.

The Government is committed to continuing to make it easier and faster for Tasmanians to build by reducing red tape and streamlining development and building processes. This year's state Budget is all about maintaining the momentum and investing for growth and the planning and building portal project will help underpin this focus by making it easier for Tasmanians to access information about their properties and to apply for planning and building permits. The Australian and Tasmanian governments have now committed more than \$9 million to this project which is due for completion by 2021.

The 2019-20 Budget includes \$6.5 million in funding provided by the Commonwealth through the Small Business Regulatory Reform Agenda, an initiative which aims to support improved government services for small businesses and reduce compliance costs.

As a result of the funding agreement, a number of additional reform projects will be delivered as part of the portal's rollout. These include the delivery of online water and sewerage infrastructure and bushfire zoning spatial data mapping; streamlined statewide online processes for environmental, public health and heritage applications; and the inclusion of an automated occupational licence and registration verification process to improve functionality of the online licence application and renewal process currently available.



As a result of these additional projects, the portal will deliver a single statewide system that integrates all planning, building and related approvals, and provides real-time access for industry and home owners to valuable land development information.

The Hodgman Liberal Government is also dedicated to helping ensure that all Tasmanians are safe at work and return home to their families. We all know that the human and financial costs of workplace injury can be heavy.

Making our workplaces safer ensures our communities and economies are not only better for workers but better for our economy. The incidence of workplace injuries has improved dramatically over recent years and has declined 26 per cent over the nine years to 2017-18. While welcome this is no cause for complacency and every workplace injury is serious and should be considered preventable. Through WorkSafe Tasmania the Government takes an active role in working with industry and the community to improve safety, health and return to work outcomes.

I am pleased that this year's Budget includes additional investment in the WorkSafe Tasmania inspectorate to employ up to five extra workplace inspectors. With a growing workforce and business sector the Hodgman Liberal Government wants to ensure we are investing in the health and wellbeing of our workers into the future.

A strong WorkSafe inspectorate plays a crucial role in ensuring that workplaces comply with their work, health and safety duties and ensuring all Tasmanians are able to return home from work safely every day. Funding of \$600 000 will go towards this commitment. This will allow WorkSafe to increase the size of the inspectorate to meet the unprecedented levels of capital investment by business and government around the state which is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. This investment will enable the inspectorate to deliver better inspection and investigation outcomes for the community to help make Tasmanian workplaces the safest in the nation.

As part of our commitment to improving workplace health and safety we are also taking action on quad bike safety. This Budget is delivering a \$700 000 package of measures to increase safety which includes a 12-month rebate scheme for fitting of approved rollover or crush protection devices to quad bikes on farms and a dedicated campaign to help reduce the number of unnecessary deaths and serious injuries.

Sadly, quad bikes are one of the leading causes of death and injury on Australian farms and Tasmania has not been immune to this trend. Sadly, between 2011 and 2019 there have been 112 fatalities related to quad bikes in Tasmania. Recently I visited the northern Tasmanian farm of the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association board member, Corey Spencer, to discuss the Government's plan for quad bike safety in order to reduce these tragic numbers. Mr Spencer spoke about the TFGA's support for this initiative saying that the funding commitment to address concerns with quad bike safety is to be highly commended. Peter Skillern, TFGA President, also provided support in his response to the Budget stating:

Quad bike safety has been an area of concern for some time. We look forward to working with the Government in addressing this key issue.

The rebate scheme which has been developed to allow farmers to offset the purchase of approved rollover or crush protection devices to farmers' quad bikes will apply from 1 July 2019. This will enable farmers to receive a rebate of up to 50 per cent of the purchase price up to a

maximum of \$500 per device and \$1000 for each eligible farm workplace for an approved rollover or crush protection device.

The Hodgman Liberal Government will also develop a public awareness and education campaign specifically seeking to keep our children safe around quad bikes. Children are at particular risk around general use of quad bikes with nearly one in five fatalities in Australia involving children under the age of 16. This campaign will focus on improving safety for all users but with a particular focus on children through the delivery of three key safety messages. It is critical that all bike users wear a helmet at all times. Children are to be kept off adult-sized quad bikes and no child under the age of six is to ride a quad bike.

Working together with industry, the Government will also develop a code of practice for quad bike sellers to inform all purchasers of new and used quad bikes of their obligations for safe use of these vehicles. We will also continue to work with the ACCC with the intent of implementing a national safety rating system for quad bikes which is likely to be enacted through a safety standard. I am hopeful that we will have that delivered later this year. These measures will ensure that the key safety messages are made directly available to consumers to better inform decision-making and to ensure that owners of quad bikes are aware of their obligations for the safe use of these vehicles. The Government is taking affirmative action to put protection measures in place before the ACCC is set to deliver its finding later this year.

Madam Speaker, the minerals and mining processing industry are key pillars of economic growth in Tasmania. Together, the industries employ more than 5600 Tasmanians and in the 12 months to the end of March 2019, produced over 55 per cent of the state's mercantile export value. To maintain the momentum of this important industry and invest for growth, the Hodgman Liberal Government will continue supporting a number of initiatives to stimulate further growth in this sector.

Continued greenfield mining exploration is vital for the long-term future of Tasmania's mineral resource industry and we are continuing with our 2018-19 budget commitment of \$2 million over four years for the exploration drilling grant initiative. This initiative is a cofunded program with grants of up to \$50 000 for direct drilling costs and \$20 000 for helicopter support, if required, for successful applicants who are undertaking greenfield exploration looking for new mineral targets.

This initiative is an important tool assisting industry to find the next generation of mineral deposit and provide the community benefits and jobs into the future for the mining industry. Two of the expected four rounds of funding have been announced, with 10 successful applicants in round 1 and 11 successful applicants in round 2, sharing up to \$900 000 worth of cofunded drilling grants. We also continue the 2016-17 commitment of \$1.4 million over four years to the geoscience initiative program aimed at reducing mineral exploration risk and attracting additional investment through the provision of improved geoscience information. This initiative allows MRT to provide new data and refined data sets to underpin the next generation of mineral exploration.

The Hodgman Liberal Government has also continued our 2017-18 budget commitment of \$1 million over four years to the mining sector innovation initiative to support projects which address environmental, geoscience and natural hazard issues in the state. This is the result of discussions with the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Minerals and Energy Council which collaborate on many of the projects. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Wayne Ball for the commitment, energy and dedication he has shown the industry for a number of years. I know that we all wish him well in his future and he indeed will be missed. I also welcome

Ray Mostogl to the role. I know he is a very well respected member of the industry from around the Chamber and his appointment will continue the good work as this industry continues its pathway forward.

Projects have already commenced in geoscience and natural hazard acid mine drainage and mine rehabilitation areas. The development of the mineral exploration investment attraction plan is also a part of the government's Mining for Tasmania's future policy. Mineral exploration is a globally competitive enterprise and Tasmania needs to compete for industry attention to ensure the ongoing exploration needed for the future of our mining industry. MRT works with the industry and other areas of State Growth as well as other government agencies to ensure potential investors have the best access to available information. In the 2018-19 plan, this includes a mix of state, national and international level promotions along with a focus of online promotional materials.

While time still permits I would also like to touch on Tasmania's forestry industry which is a pillar of the state's economy and employs more than 5700 people, both indirectly and directly across our state, many of these in regional areas. The industry has revived under the Hodgman Liberal Government and this year's Budget will maintain the momentum and continue to promote investment by industry for growth in the forestry sector.

In early March the Hodgman Government announced a package of strategic infrastructure measures to support the sustainability of the southern production forests which were impacted by the closure of the Triabunna export facility under the previous Labor-Greens government. The Budget contains funding of \$575 000 to help TasRail fund infrastructural works at the Parattah rail siding, providing a new avenue for export markets for the forest industry in southern Tasmania. The funding will go towards an open-access weighbridge and will add to TasRail's significant investment at the Parattah rail siding through the Tasmanian Freight Rail Revitalisation Project.

The general access Parattah weighbridge is the latest investment in strategic infrastructure that will greatly improve the transport economics of delivering forest products from the south to the northern processing facilities and export hub of Bell Bay. Meanwhile, the forestry industry has been provided long-term confidence through the Hodgman Government's announcement of the ongoing availability of Macquarie Wharf as an export port for bulk and containerised wood products.

The forest industry under the Hodgman Liberal Government is growing. The industry has been reassured by the provision of political stability that only a majority Liberal government can provide and we have seen the green shoots of industry expanding rapidly under these favourable conditions. There will be no more lockups under the Hodgman Liberal Government. This promise provides a protection mechanism for the Tasmanian way of life and provides more certainty for industry going forward. This Government will stand up for the cornerstone industries of our state and provide certainty of access to those areas traditionally utilised for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

The Government is progressing well with the aim to double the forest and fine timber and wood fibre processing industry. The production of forest and related products relies on investment by industry. The Hodgman Liberal Government has provided the security of land access and stable progressive policies that provide confidence that is allowing industry to invest.

The resources sectors of forestry and mining are a cornerstone of our state's economy. They provide value in investment in the state and provide a significant number of jobs, many of which are scattered across regional areas. The Government is a strong supporter of these industries and

will continue to work with them to ensure their futures are successful and continue to be positive contributors to our society.

In the minute and a half I have remaining I would like to touch on the commitments to Bass. I am first and foremost a very proud member of the northern electorate. This Budget has provided funding for the Legana Primary School development because we recognise the need for a new kindergarten to grade 6 primary school and we are working with community groups and the West Tamar Council in the best interests of local families. We are also providing Riverside High with \$7.1 million for the completion of modernised facilities.

We are providing \$15 million to open and staff eight beds on ward 4K of the LGH. We are delivering more nursing graduates and more paramedics for northern Tasmania

We are also focused on building strong communities through clubs and associations and growing support in schools. Budget funding will allow the Department of Education to employ regional sports coordinators to help students participate in sport. The aim of the program will be to drive participation and be a key point of contact between families and children who want to play sport and sport leagues clubs looking to organise school sports. Our initiative has received strong support from the AFL CEO Trish Squires, who says it will assist all sports all sports in Tasmania, including football, to encourage children in schools to participate in ball sports.

This Budget also shows a commitment to roads infrastructure in northern Tasmania. We are investing \$75 million for a Launceston and Tamar Valley traffic vision and we will increase the Charles Street Bridge capacity, shoulder widening for the Batman Highway and planning for a second Tamar River bridge. We are investing in improvements in the Bridport and Waterhouse roads and new overtaking lanes at Myrtle Park.

This is further proof that regional Tasmania is enjoying the benefits of strong economic management of both the Tasmanian and national governments. Tasmania is a far better place than it was under the former Labor-Greens government. We are seeing record investment and increased confidence. The Hodgman Liberal Government is focused on providing opportunities for all Tasmanians and we are working in the best interests of every single region of this great state. I commend the bill to the House.

[4.30 p.m.]

**Ms DOW** (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, last Thursday night I was reflecting on the Budget on the way home from parliament as I drove along the so-called four-lane Midland Highway. I could not help but be extremely sceptical about this big-spending infrastructure budget. The theme of this year's Budget is maintaining the momentum and investing for growth. On the face of it, this momentum is a downward spiral, the story of two Tasmanians, the have and the have nots, and the growth of debt and financial instability for Tasmania.

I begin today reflecting on a media release issued by the then shadow treasurer, Peter Gutwein MP, on 7 February 2012. The headline was, 'Giddings Must Rule Out Going into Net Debt'.

Premier and Treasurer, Lara Giddings, must immediately rule out taking the state into net debt in order to solve her government's financial woes.

Tasmanians are already paying the price for the financial incompetence of Labor and the Greens. Going into net debt will only increase this pain.

The Treasurer certainly did not support going into net debt then and there are those two phrases evident in those paragraphs, 'net debt' and 'financial incompetence'. What a difference seven years makes, or does it? We still see the same spin and same lack of credibility from the Tasmanian Liberals. Despite unprecedented international economic conditions, Labor did not take the state into net debt. Yet, in the golden age, the Liberals are taking us back into net debt for the first time in 15 years.

During the 2018 state election, the Liberals made \$2.7 billion of election promises. Labor warned that these promises were unaffordable and we were scoffed at by the Liberals but we knew this election pork-barrelling was simply unsustainable. When the state Budget was handed down in June last year, the Treasurer stated -

I believe that Tasmania is on the cusp of a golden age. We can now leverage the strong financial position that as a government we have worked so hard to achieve ...

Months later, in December 2018, the revised Estimates report was prepared and released during the height of the Tasmanian bushfires. What a different story it had to tell about our golden age. The revised Estimates report revealed significant changes to the budget position. Remember that this came before the knowledge of the implications of a dreadful bushfire event and changes to the federal budget. The Government has clearly squandered the good times, time when money could have been put back into improving the lives of all Tasmanians in the height of the golden glow.

The revised Estimates report revealed that the projected surplus for 2018-19 had been reduced to \$7.3 million, a reduction of \$154.6 million in seven months, leaving little room for unexpected events. The revised Estimates report also confirmed that in 2021-22, the Hodgman minority Government will have taken the Budget into net debt. The Tasmanian budget was last in net debt in 2003-04 when Jim Bacon and Paul Lennon were busy paying off the former Liberal government's debt. This document clearly showed that our fiscal position was compromised and our essential services underfunded and that is why it was released under the shroud of the Tasmanian bushfires. This was a setting for the development of the 2019-20 Budget and the Treasurer was aware of the seriousness of this.

It is important at this point in time to reflect for a moment on the external risks to the budget and I take you to page 41 of the budget documents -

The risks to the outlook for the Tasmanian economy are currently balanced. Locally the Tasmanian economy has been buoyant, but there is uncertainty arising both nationally and globally through lower economic growth expectations.

Internationally, there are concerns over China's future growth prospects, with rapidly growing debt levels and declining imports. China is Tasmania's principal international merchandise export market and an important source of tourists and students, and any significant easing in the Chinese economy may impact a range of businesses and activities in Tasmania.

Global trade levels have been impacted by increased protectionism, including the protracted trade dispute between the United States and China, as well as

disruption in trade flows due to the continuing Brexit situation. These could result in further downward revisions to global economic forecasts.

The final two paragraphs of that section state that -

Tasmania's exports (interstate and international) may also increase by more than expected in future years. The lifting of the fruit fly restrictions will provide a welcome boost to export volumes for affected businesses, and a range of agriculture-related goods and seafood, in particular, have seen strong increases. If the trend is continued, this may stimulate agriculture, fishing and food processing industries across the State. The State's forestry-related industries have also grown significantly in response to improved market conditions, and there may be potential for further expansion.

The next sentence is an important point:

The State's forestry-related industries have also grown significantly in response to improved market conditions, and there may be potential for further expansion.

That is a really important point, given the comments of the previous speaker in relation to the forest industry, relating that to perhaps the government of the time rather than international markets and collapse of the industry.

The levels of the Australian dollar should remain generally favourable, with upward pressure from commodity prices for Australia's major exports, balanced by potential downward pressure arising from shifts in interest rate differentials. This would continue to support Tasmania's exporters and demand for international education and tourism in the State.

The economy and the Budget are related but they are not the same. The Government sets the budget but does not set the national or international export climate. I acknowledge that, through reform and stimulus, a government can influence the economy. The interesting thing is that the Liberal minority government claim responsibility for the strong economy when things are going well and attribute this to their strong financial management. On the flipside, when the budget position deteriorates, the Liberal minority government blames economic headwinds and changes to Commonwealth funding as out of their control, impacting negatively on their budget position.

I again look at the fiscal strategy and the key priorities in the fiscal strategy because they are important and should underpin any decision-making or financial planning for the future of the state. They are as follows -

The following long-term fiscal principles are embedded in the Charter of Budget Responsibility Act:

- (a) manage the State's finances responsibly for the wellbeing of all Tasmanians; and
- (b) provide for the future for the next generation of Tasmanians; and
- (c) prepare for unexpected events by building a robust financial position; and

- (d) improve services to Tasmanians by building a strong economy and efficiently allocating resources to gain the maximum community benefit; and
- (e) formulate spending and taxation policies that ensure a reasonable degree of equity, stability and predictability; and
- (f) ensure transparency and accountability in developing, implementing and reporting on fiscal objectives.

From that, we can see that this Government has a significant challenge before it. This challenge links back to the key priority for the Government, which is that the Government's priority for Tasmania was winning the last state election. That is quite clear. It is not about strategic growth. If they cared about inclusive growth in Tasmania, they would not have waited five years to focus on it.

I am genuinely interested in the approach taken by the Government regarding strategic growth and the \$6 million in the Budget allocated to this cause. The Premier is quite right that employment programs across the state in partnership with the TCCI and TasCOSS are in their infancy. These initiatives and their work will require a long-term approach to change and an ongoing commitment from the Government.

The Regional Australia Institute recently held a hack session to look at new policy approaches to the regions. I want to share and reflect on the key recommendations from that forum.

They were -

#### 1. INVESTING IN 'SOFT' INFRASTRUCTURE - HUMAN CAPITAL AND LIVEABILITY

Regional leaders are calling for regional policy development to be more than the implementation of large infrastructure projects such as road and rail. Instead leaders want education and skills development of regional residents to be a priority. Regional Australia has jobs and the challenge ahead is filling these with trained skilled workers.

While people choose regional areas for economic and employment related reasons, other factors also influence these mobility decisions such as the 'liveability' of the location. Quality child-care, employment opportunities for spouses, and education for children, were all noted as central to ensuring those with the right skills to stay or move to the regions.

Point 2 was governments and regions working together:

Regions want to 'work with' governments - they do not want things 'done to' them. Local knowledge and expertise should be integrated into the policymaking cycle and locally-led solutions should be supported, especially in regards to employment, population programs and the delivery of health care.

Forging such a connection would mean that Government would better understand how regions work, what their issues are, and why they need different policy approaches to our capital cities. Regional policy is starting to experiment with regional city and regional deals - which recognise and validate the priorities of regional leaders.

Point 3 is empowering regions through flexibility and place-based policy:

Allowing flexibility in the way that policies are delivered would bring about better results across diverse regional and remote areas of the country. This requires a rebalancing away from the current emphasis on programs that seek to maximise economies of scale, towards recognising the importance in smaller regional communities of the value of economies of scope - where different services can be bundled together for more effective local impact. This reflects a shift in focus away from the blanket policies that often seek to ease the burden of administrative functions, towards the place itself, and towards the intended outcomes of the intervention.

Some specific ways to help shift this focus include establishing cross-border commissioners and extending regional deals. Regions need different approaches especially where policies are designed to work in areas with large populations, while effective delivery is difficult to achieve where populations are small and dispersed.

#### 4. Shifting the narrative:

When Australia's regions are strong and thriving our nation is strong and thriving. Regional thought and community leaders are optimistic about life in the regions, and about their future. The tired 'country/city' binary simply does not reflect the reality. Australia's regions are diverse, innovative and closely linked to urban and global marketplaces.

I think very much about north-west Tasmania when I say that.

Regional leaders have called for a shift in the narrative of regional Australia in mainstream media and in places of centralised decision-making. The successful development of regional Australia is tied to its story, and that is one where our towns and regional cities represent places where new innovations, healthy families and successful careers are built.

I have a question for the Government in reading that into the record this afternoon. That is, will the Government look closely at each of these recommendations and look at including them as part of their strategic growth strategy for Tasmania?

It is my view that the health status of the community underpins its economic productivity, not an infrastructure budget. Health status is intrinsically linked to its educational attainment and the productivity of local economies. Building roads and bridges does not invest in our people and does not address the long-term structural issues in Tasmania's economy, including our social economic profile. The cynic in me knows that you can cut a lot of ribbons in the lead-up to the next state election through an infrastructure budget.



I want to just take some time, as others have done, to reflect on TasCOSS's post-Budget presentation and some of the key indicators that they referred to in that during the term of this Government.

The ones I wanted to particularly focus on are around TAFE and VET enrolments which have gone from 63 400 in 2015 to 54 100 in 2017. There is some improvement in school retention rates. The number of underemployed Tasmanians has increased significantly also and we know that that is particularly relevant to regional Tasmania. If we look at housing, which we know is a high priority for our state and for our people and access to affordable housing, the average waiting time for priority applicants around housing has increased from 19 weeks to 56 weeks. We are certainly seeing increased pressure on those and there does need to be some more short-term intervention around affordable housing and support services for people in Tasmania.

To date, this Government has been devoid of any real social or economic reform in a time when economic circumstances were such that the Government could have reinvested back into Tasmania. Sometimes it feels like this Government does more to support people who visit our state than those who actually live and work here.

The West Coast Wilderness Railway is a very important tourism anchor in the north-west and west coasts which significantly contributes to the local visitor economy. This line item in the Budget is really all about maintenance of the railway and reinvestment in the railway to ensure it continues into the future. From my understanding, that is core government business and maintaining an asset.

I asked the Government what additional services or funding are in the budget other than the employment program for the people of the west coast and arguably there is room for more investment in tourism product, particularly on the west coast and Circular Head that may require more support than loans from government. I ask the Government again, how will young people on the west coast benefit from your budget?

This Budget is touted as a big spending infrastructure budget. In reality it reprofiles and pushes out a number of key infrastructure promises made at the last state election. In question time yesterday, the Treasurer could not outline one new infrastructure program outlined in the budget. This illusive infrastructure spend is the centrepiece argument that is intergenerational net debt: a future burden to all Tasmanians.

As stated at the commencement of my contribution, the Liberals promised the Tasmanian people they would not go into net debt. This was not true. Despite claiming Tasmania is in a golden age, the Premier, Mr Hodgman and the Treasurer, Mr Gutwein will plunge the budget into more than a billion dollars debt. Because of this reckless spending, Tasmanians will be slugged with over \$100 million of interest that should be better spent on essential services. In addition to this debt, \$450 million of cuts to the Public Service are a core component of the sustainability of this budget. Despite the claim this will target advertising, consultants, and controlling vacancies, it really is code for a loss of jobs in the Public Service. I wonder if we will see fewer glossy documents and brochures over the next three years during these times of fiscal constraint? I seriously doubt it.

Let us get this into perspective. At a time when the Government has been in a very public stoush with public servants, on top of the inability of the Government to bargain in good faith, the Treasurer announced \$450 million-worth of cuts to public service jobs. This is around 1500 nurses, teachers, park rangers or firefighters now being on the Government's hit list. This is also at a time

when we are having incredible difficulty in attracting health professionals to our state and retaining professionals in our public service. Reducing our workforce will not lead to better outcomes for Tasmania, nor will it boost staff morale, which has suffered so much at the hands of this government.

The Treasurer also continues to raid government businesses such as TT-Line and MAIB to prop up his budget position.

I will take some time at this point in my contribution to reflect on what the Budget is delivering for Braddon, which is this glossy document.

There is no real new investment other than support for the Cradle Coast Authority, which I strongly support. They are committed to doing the work this Government has comprehensively neglected in regional economic development.

The Project O family violence awareness program is also welcome. I congratulate the girls on their work across the Wynyard and Smithton communities. It is pleasing to see the Government continuing investment in a Labor-led initiative of child and family centres and what a remarkable difference they make to our communities and for our young children aged zero to five, and also their families, which is so essential.

Road infrastructure projects are a feature. Many announced for some time with no real progress to date such as the Cooee Crawl Study and Master Plan and the Marrawah to Detention Road and the West Coast roads. The Burnie Court also is not fit for purpose and requires significant investment and has been pushed out. Is this still a priority for the Government?

There are some great projects on this list, borne out of the hard work of local communities and local government. These communities deserve them to be funded in a timely manner. With exports continuing to grow, investment in the Burnie Port master plan is absolutely essential and this is an omission from the Budget.

I welcome investment by the Government and acknowledge the planning minister in the Chamber here today in the policy and planning unit in my shadow planning portfolio. That is most welcome by the sector.

I hear the catchcry from the other side of the House so often 'are there any alternatives'? There most certainly are and they were outlined very eloquently by our Leader yesterday. Labor is committed to working with all Tasmanians and values the economic opportunity available in our regions. We have been travelling around the state, understanding what is important to Tasmanians.

Our industry advisory councils are up and running and overwhelmingly they are telling us that skills and training to align with our key industries and a long-term plan to underpin the infrastructure plan in the state is what is really needed.

Labor knows that future investment in Tasmania will rely on a highly skilled workforce and that is why yesterday we announced a policy regarding free TAFE. This Government heralds itself on the success of its year 11 and 12 extension rollout, which is important, but what about the other part of the story? There are 2000 fewer apprentices in Tasmania, high youth unemployment, particularly in our regions. Our young people and those transitioning from traditional industries must be given every opportunity to participate in the local economy and to contribute to their local communities.

We understand the importance of investment in preventative and primary health and the opportunities the health industry provides in rural and regional Tasmania. Labor's \$10 million free TAFE policy will provide 5000 students with the qualifications they need to find jobs in our fastest-growing industries. Building and construction and hospitality businesses simply cannot find the qualified staff they need, with Australia's oldest population and highest rate of disability, aged care and disability services, facing similar problems.

Labor will provide free TAFE courses across the building and construction, hospitality, aged care and disability service sectors. There is a glaring omission around the sporadic skills and training packages which have been announced in more recent times during the federal election in a by-election, where I live, around an ad hoc approach to skills funding, and those programs have missed a focus on aged care and disability services, which are certainly a leading sector for growth in regional Tasmania, where I come from. The second aspect of this policy is in relation to the Ag Career Kickstarter which will provide a subsidised training pathway for workers to gain basic skills which will set them up for a career in agriculture.

Trade waste is an ongoing concern to small to medium enterprises across the state, particularly in my electorate of Braddon. Yesterday Labor launched a grants program to assist businesses to upgrade their trade waste infrastructure and prevent them from closing down. The \$5 million grants program would prevent businesses and jobs in Tasmania going down the drain. Small businesses employ tens of thousands of Tasmanians, but many of them are facing upfront costs of up to \$30 000 to comply with new trade waste requirements. At the same time, community groups and sports clubs, most of which are staffed by volunteers, have no idea where they will source money for the compulsory installation of grease-traps.

A number of small businesses have expressed that they are so concerned that they are considering walking away rather than taking out loans to pay for the new equipment. It has been two years since Treasurer Peter Gutwein promised to fix the issue when the state Government took over TasWater, but nothing has been done. Under Labor, any registered business in Tasmania, including those connected to community groups and sport clubs, would be eligible for grants. The grants would be competitive and the funding provided based on the greatest need. This is a fair and equitable policy. Labor understands the importance of successful and vibrant small businesses right across Tasmanian communities, employing locals and contributing significantly to our local communities.

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that the experiences of children and young people across the state today are very different to those that I experienced as a child. I am pleased to be part of a team that as a future government we would appoint mental health workers in every single state primary and high school across the state. Mental health is equally as important as physical health, and impaired mental health compromises other aspects of wellbeing such as housing and educational attainment.

Labor will also convene health roundtables and we will be inviting the government along to attend, along with all other key stakeholders that this parliament agreed should be at the table. The Labor Party is serious about finding solutions to the health crisis in this state and we will sit down with anyone who is willing to work with us to make sure all ideas are considered.

I want to finish with the following quote from the TasCOSS website that says that every morning in Tasmania 16 000 children wake up to a life of poverty. This goes to the heart of the

economic profile of Tasmania. The fact is, the lives of these children will never change if we do not have a government with the heart or courage to undertake significant economic and social reform but also work in partnership with local communities.

Building bridges and roads most likely will not help these kids, as often they do not have a reliable car or enough money to put fuel in their tank. What hope does this Budget offer these children? The wellbeing of our people and our communities is not defined by a government's ability to deliver a surplus, and we would do well to reflect on this more often.

[4.55 p.m.]

**Mr JAENSCH** (Braddon - Minister for Human Services) - Madam Speaker, as noted in last night's advisory to members, the Government intends to deal with the disability services amendment bill today and we will call this on next for debate, so on that basis I will make my remarks on the state Budget when the debate resumes tomorrow, if I may.

Madam Speaker, I move -

That this debate be adjourned until tomorrow.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **SITTING TIMES**

[4.56 p.m.]

**Mr JAENSCH** (Braddon - Minister for Human Services) - Madam Speaker, before I call on the next order of the day, in order to provide sufficient time for debate on the next bill to be completed today as flagged by the Leader of Government Business last night, in according with standing order 18A, I move -

That for this day's sitting, the House should not stand adjourned at 6 p.m. and that the House continue to sit past 6 p.m.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **DISABILITY SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 10)**

### **Second Reading**

[4.56 p.m.]

**Mrs PETRUSMA** (Franklin - Minister for Disability Services and Community Development - 2R) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

In July 2017 the Hodgman Liberal Government endorsed a recommendation for an independent review of the Disability Services Act 2011 be undertaken, with a focus on the act's operational effectiveness since implementation. The Government convened an independent review committee

with an independent chair and a broad membership including consumer, advocacy and provider representatives.

Specifically, the review was tasked with considering:

- the operational effectiveness of the act since implementation;
- interoperability of the act with other legislation; and
- issues with the act that have arisen as a result of the Tasmanian Bilateral Agreement for Transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

During the transition to the NDIS, the policy framework is complex and evolving. For this reason, the review was intentionally limited to an initial review of the current operations of the act, and the Government will undertake a broader review of the act once the transition to the NDIS is complete.

The committee was supported by an independent consultant, Fae Robinson Futures, to undertake public and stakeholder consultations, analyse feedback and assist the committee to prepare the final review report. The review of the Disability Services Act 2011, Report of the Review Committee 29 June 2018, was tabled in Parliament on 5 July 2018.

The committee's final report identified a number of recommendations requiring legislative change. The Tasmanian Government has accepted the recommendations from the review and has proceeded to act on all of them. Several recommendations are the subject of this bill. Some recommendations need to be deferred until the NDIS operational landscape is more clearly defined, at which stage a further review of the act will be undertaken, while other recommendations will be actioned at a policy level by the Department of Communities Tasmania.

In regard to this bill, the committee found that the principles in section 5 of the act were high-level directional statements that did not align well with the general principles in the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (NDIS Act), or the declaration of rights affirmed in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The committee therefore recommended better harmonisation of the act with the NDIS Act and the convention, and the bill, for that reason, substitutes a new section 5 that adapts the principles espoused in the NDIS Act.

The review also identified that the act does not explicitly identify the rights of children. The new principles inserted by the bill address this issue, making it clear that the best interests of the child are paramount, and that full consideration needs to be given to protecting the child from harm, promoting the child's development, and strengthening and preserving positive relationships between the child, their family members and other significant persons in their life.

The committee also found that the administration and enforcement of restrictive interventions under the act was inadequate and poorly understood and recommended that the act be amended to allow the granting of interim authorisations of restrictive interventions. The bill therefore introduces an amendment that inserts a new section 41A which permits the Guardianship and Administration Board to grant a provisional approval of a restrictive intervention. Provisional approvals under the new section 41A remain in effect for up to 90 days, covering the interim period before an application is heard and determined.

The insertion of an amendment allowing for interim orders also provides additional protection to people with disability by ensuring that formalised processes are in place and providers of supports to people with disability are regulated. The amendment will also lead to more national consistency and will ensure that providers with interim orders in place also have in place a behaviour support plan and are reporting to the NDIS commissioner every two weeks on the use of the restricted practice.

The committee also recommended improving the scope and effectiveness of information-sharing provisions to better align the act with the NDIS Act to assist with the transition of clients to the NDIS. In particular, the bill amends the definition of 'information sharing entity' in section 50(1) of the act to include the National Quality and Safeguards Commission.

The committee also recommended the consideration and implementation of a number of more specific stakeholder requests for change. While some of these actions have been deferred until the NDIS operational landscape is more clearly defined and the transition to the NDIS is complete, the following proposed changes can be implemented in this bill:

- removal of references to the purchase of strategic and operational plans, as these documents are now available via the Department of Communities Tasmania website;
- amending section 28(3)(a) of the act to clarify that a person with a disability has the right to have another person present when interviewed under section 28(2);
- replacing obsolete references to the Mental Health Act 1996 with references to the Mental Health Act 2013; and
- including references to the Chief Civil Psychiatrist where appropriate.

Madam Speaker, I thank the chair and members of the review committee for their passion and commitment to improving the disability services framework in Tasmania. The changes to the act included in this amendment bill will improve the administration of the act and will ensure that Tasmania's disability services framework is better aligned with the NDIS Act while we transition to the NDIS.

I commend the bill to the House.

[5.02 p.m.]

**Ms STANDEN** (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I rise to make a contribution on behalf of the Labor Opposition in relation to the Disability Service Amendment Bill. As shadow spokesperson in the lower House for disability, I thank the minister and the department for a comprehensive briefing on the bill and note at the outset that we have no major problems with this and would be pleased to support the bill.

I thank the minister and the department for the briefing that you provided me and the shadow minister for disability, Joanna Siejka, who joined in that briefing. I flag from the outset that we have no major problems with this bill and would be pleased to support it and do not anticipate flagging any amendments or moving into Committee at this stage.

In the space of the transitional arrangements to the NDIS I will take the opportunity to make a couple of points to put on the record. The Opposition notes that one in five Tasmanians are living

with a disability, the highest of any state in Australia. To us, this highlights the importance of preventative measures. Disability service organisations perform a vital role in supporting people living with disability, their families and their carers. The Disability Services Amendment Bill provides a framework for funding of services, researchers and individuals, specifically related to specialist disability services either funded or provided by the Tasmanian Government, and continues to apply to funders during the transition to the NDIS.

In terms of the review, we understand that this is being conducted by an independent consultant and a review committee and that the scope of the review looked at the operational effectiveness of the bill, its intersection with other legislation and issues that have come up as a result of the Tasmanian bilateral agreement for transition to the NDIS. We understand that the review will continue once the full NDIS rollout has occurred.

In terms of the changes that the bill is proposing, we understand that the process identified what can be done now at a policy level and what needs to be done in line with the NDIS in future. The changes proposed in the bill are mainly administrative but some are more significant, in particular a change to the principles to align with the NDIS and the rights of persons with a disability and the inclusion of rights of children with a disability. Second, that the bill introduces provisions for the Public Guardian to make an interim order with regard to restrictive interventions.

We understand that a number of policy developments at a departmental level have been identified as requiring attention and are listed in the report of the review committee, and we trust that that will be addressed.

In terms of the points I wanted to make, it seems to me that the changes introduced through this bill are relatively uncontroversial and administrative in nature. We will continue to watch the next stage of the review following the full roll-out of the NDIS and we will also follow the process of the policy changes at a departmental level.

This amendment bill also relates to the bilateral agreement between the state and federal governments regarding the NDIS. This clearly states that the state Government must continue to provide services to people living with a disability who are not eligible for the NDIS. I have been on the public record a number of times talking about the needs of the 18 disability service organisations servicing upwards of 90 000 people living with a disability who have yet to be given funding certainty by the state Government beyond the end of this financial year. We understand that this bill does not restrict the Government from continuing to fund these services so we look forward to a continued commitment to them.

I understand that those 18 disability support organisations still have not heard what money they will get from the state Government. There was some talk of some \$570 000 mentioned before the Budget but there has been no communication to disability service provider organisations. I understand that the minister's office has indicated to service providers that they should know about this funding and what proportion might be allocated in the next day or so. I suspect the minister's office is in the process of drafting letters. However, it is at the eleventh hour. As a former community sector organisation manager this is a terrible state of affairs for these organisations, probably literally some of them working off the smell of an oily rag with people on short-term contracts who are worried about the future of their employment.

It is a terrible indictment that these organisations are in the dark as the end of the financial year approaches. Their funding has been cut to shreds in relation to this transition. They are concerned

for the service provision they are able to offer to their client base into the future and no-one has had the decency to tell them to what extent that funding is to be cut; \$570 000 between 18 organisations is not going to cover much in any case. That is on average less than \$30 000 per organisation, though I understand that there is no pro rata cut-up. It is unclear to me and no doubt to these organisations what is at stake here.

I reiterate that ILC funding which can provide short-term grant funding opportunities for some of these organisations may provide a funding stream into the future, but there is a continued obligation in my mind of the state Government to continue to provide services for people living with disability who are not eligible for the NDIS and therefore the funding future of these organisations is at stake. I welcome the minister's reassurance as to what provisions the state will provide to continue those vital services for some of our most vulnerable Tasmanians.

[5.10 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on the Disability Services Amendment Bill 2019. This was my first legislation as a minister, the Disability Services Bill. I am not aware if the minister is aware of the history -

**Mrs Petrusma** - I was the shadow. We worked together on it quite well.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Yes, and I remember you working toward us not implementing the legislation. The history of the structure of the legislation, as I was told by the department, was that this was in some ways a mechanical bill that was designed, as it says, as the framework for the funding of service providers. There was a push from me and my office to put some of those principles that are in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into the legislation. At the time, it was not supported. I am very pleased to see this legislation now reflects the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

For anyone who has not been in to look at the UN convention, it is a profound legal document that established the rights-based principles for people living with a disability. It requires state parties who sign up to it to, for example, recognise that discrimination against any person on the basis of disability is a violation of the inherent dignity and worth of the human person. It recognises the diversity of persons with disability, recognises the need to promote and protect the human rights of all persons with disabilities, including those who require more extensive support. It is clear that persons with disability should have the opportunity to be actively involved in decision-making processes about policies and programs including those directly concerning them. The principles in the legislation that establishes the National Disability Insurance Agency are reflective of the UN convention.

My first question to the minister is, what level of consultation through Fae Robinson Futures was undertaken with people with a lived experience of disability? This act is about the service providers, or it was as it was originally enacted, but at its core it is about the services we as a community fund and deliver to support people living with a disability. A foundational principle of the National Disability Insurance Scheme is that people living with a disability have choice and control over the services and supports they receive.

There is no question that some of the foundational principles of the National Disability Insurance Scheme have been eroded under a conservative government in Canberra. We have a new minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which is a positive, Stuart Robert. I quote from Senator Jordan Steele-John, who was able to work collaboratively across the parliament to



have the Prime Minister agree to establish a royal commission into the care and support provided to people living with disability in institutional settings. The Productivity Commission found that the NDIS would require 10 000 direct employees by 2019 at full roll-out, which is only a few short weeks away, in order to manage funding and eligibility for the roughly half a million people in Australia living with disabilities.

Prime minister Abbott arrived and the then Social Services minister, Mitch Fifield, created a cap of 3000 employees. Mitch Fifield is a graduate of the IPA, which is a right wing think tank that does not support stronger investment in public services, so we had a 7000-person reduction in the staffing for the NDIS. The thinking was that those other 7000 positions, or a portion of them, would be outsourced, but that was emblematic of an undermining of the philosophy, the principles and the funding for the NDIS. When you speak to people living with disability who have accessed the scheme or who have a plan, there are some people who are really happy with the plan, the services and supports they receive. Then there are people who are left waiting months for a plan to be finalised and are being told, well, this is what we have for you; this is what you will have to accept. Those foundational principles of choice and control have been undermined.

As Senator Steele-John says, one of the most consistent complaints from participants is that after their needs are assessed they do not have the opportunity to view draft service plans before approval by the NDIA, the agency that administers the NDIS. They can only restart the planning process if they discover errors. He says -

You wouldn't buy a garden shed before you were able to actually see it, yet they expect you to sign up to an NDIS plan that would cover a year or more, with all your complex support and community engagement in there, without actually seeing the plan. And that's driven, partly, by the IT system not being able to function.

The minister today has a good heart and a good heart for people living with disability. I am sure there are still ministerial councils the minister attends where the NDIS is discussed. I do hope that the treasurers of the various jurisdictions are not also at the table of those ministerial councils because, going right back, one of the problems we had there was the influence of the treasurers on those foundational principles and the architecture of the scheme. There is no question that the scheme itself, its implementation, was rushed to an extent. That is why there have been some of these issues with the scheme. It was rushed with the best of intentions by the minister at the time, Jenny Macklin, because, as she said at the time, 'We are here to serve the people of Australia and to acknowledge that people living with a disability right now are being denied the services that they need and this is impacting very negatively on their lives'.

The NDIS has suffered as a result of conservative governments in Canberra. I hope the minister is able to influence the federal government in relation to the roll-out of the scheme because it is actually disgraceful that \$2.6 billion of the forecast surplus from the re-elected Prime Minister, Scott Morrison - but this is before the election - and it was actually founded on an underspend from the NDIS.

This amendment bill only deals with some of the recommendations that came out of the review. I had a quick look at those recommendations and I think it only deals with a small number of the recommendations of the review. It is a small number, so I ask the minister what the plan is to further strengthen the Disability Services Act in Tasmania. I cannot see anything in this amendment bill about ensuring appropriate inclusive engagement of people with disability to be included in future

disability services legislation. I cannot see anything in this amendment bill about ensuring workers in the disability sector in Tasmania are held accountable to an appropriate code of conduct.

Minister, I am very happy for you to correct the record in relation to some of the concerns that I have on behalf of people living with a disability, their families, carers, and the services that support them. In fact, there is not anything in the amendment bill that more clearly defines the role of the senior practitioner to act independently in relation to matters under Division 4 of the act. That is the division that gives them powers to undertake investigations and to give directions. I would like the minister to provide some clarity on when, for example, those changes will be made that better clarify the senior practitioner's role.

I understand that one of the issues raised by stakeholders in the consultation process was in relation to the approval to carry out restrictive interventions and to provide a capacity for an interim order to be made that a person have restraints. One of the questions relates to the new section 41A to insert 'in the principal act' which talks about the provisional grant of approval to carry out restrictive intervention and it steps out the process where the Guardianship and Administration Board may subject to subsection (2), which is below here, grant provisional approval to carry out a restrictive intervention of a type referred to in the following clause in the principal act.

This is the amendment that enables the Guardianship and Administration Board to request the senior practitioner to provide an assessment. My question to the minister is, will this assessment be detailed and in writing that deals with the following matters: what are the best interests of a person with disability?

The consequences to the person with disability, of a restricted intervention of that type, is carried out in relation to the person. The consequence to the person with disability or other persons if restrictive intervention of that type is not carried out in relation to the person with disability. Any alternative method reasonably suitable and able to be used in relation to the person with disability to control the behaviour for which the type of restrictive intervention has been proposed, the nature and degree of any significant risks to the person with disability if the restrictive intervention is carried out and the extent to which carrying out the restrictive intervention will promote or reduce the safety, health and wellbeing of the person with the disability.

On paper, that looks like a reasonably thorough process. My concern is that the legislation then allows that provisional approval to stand for 90 days. So, what we are saying in this amendment is that through a newly-established process the organisation that is in place to act on behalf of, or in some instances a person living with a disability, can now seek an interim restrictive interventions order that is in place for three months. That is a long time. That is a long time to empower the state or a funded organisation that is not part of the public service to carry out restrictive interventions on a person. What we are saying through this amendment is that we can have a new process that requires only one person to provide an opinion to the Guardianship and Administration Board that can stay in place for 90 days.

I am concerned about this clause. I would like the minister to explain why this model is being put forward, why 90 days has been established as the time frame for an interim order to be in place, what level of consultation there was with, for example, Advocacy Tasmania, Speak Out Tasmania, any other organisation that advocates on behalf of people living with a disability. What consultation was carried out about this provision? That is serious; it is a very significant change to the original legislation. It requires much more explanation on the minister's part because, of course, there are

situations when a form of restraint or an intervention keeps a person safe or it keeps someone who is supporting them or caring for them or people who are doing so, safe.

In narrow circumstances there are arguments for restrictive interventions but they are very narrow circumstances. A number of people in this Chamber will be aware of the horrific history of Willow Court and Royal Derwent. For any person here who has not taken the opportunity to walk through that place I strongly recommend that you do if you want to understand how far we have come as a society and what we used to do to people with a disability, what we used to do to children, and what we used to do to people with mental illness, where interventions and restraint were standard operating procedure by the state. We have to be very careful when we legislate to empower government or its delegated organisation through this provision with the right to restrain someone living with a disability.

This legislation specifically relates to the specialist services that are provided to people with disability and the minister has talked about an ongoing review process. My question in part reflects one of the issues that has been raised by Ms Standen. Once there has been full scheme rollout what services will the state fund? What application will the Disability Services Act have following the full rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme? We have heard from stakeholders, from organisations that have been advocacy organisations for a very long time that they are living in financial limbo and there has not been clarity from the state about how they will be funded into the future.

A grant round which is survival money if they are lucky enough to get it is one thing but what is the state's thinking about the long-term systemic needs of every Tasmanian living with a disability? We can have those reassurances and that temporary response but ultimately there has to be some firm agreement between the state and the Commonwealth about these services that fall outside the NDIS as it stands right now.

I was pleased to hear that there has been money allocated to those advocacy organisations, those three specific advocacy organisations - Speak Out, Advocacy Tasmania and the Association for Children with a Disability, but there are a whole lot of question marks about what happens in the future and what responsibilities does the state see itself having to people living with a disability?

One of the problems we find in this place in advocating for someone who is dissatisfied, or who feel mistreated by the NDIS, or short-changed, or they are waiting and waiting, is that when the issue is raised with the state Government and with the minister the finger points north to Canberra. That is problematic because the state contributes towards the NDIS and the state must take and hold on to responsibility for policy for that whole suite of Tasmanians who live with a disability. We have demonstrated in our alternative budget how it is possible to fund disability advocacy services, and that includes organisations like TasDeaf, Guide Dogs for the Blind and the Brain Injury Association of Tasmania. It is possible to provide that funding. It depends on what your priorities are. We were disappointed not to see funding in this year's state Budget for individual advocacy for people living with disability.

There are people in the community right now, including Michael Small and Fiona Gilding, who work on promoting the rights of people living with a disability, to create an organisation that gives people living with a disability their own voice. In this parliament we are, through no specific fault of our own, breaching that principle of 'nothing about us without us' through which people with disability are given their own voice to advocate on their own behalf. The state should fund and support those efforts for those people living with a disability to have their own voice and their own

organisation so that they can speak on behalf of other people with disability and advocate for their own needs and for systemic change.

I hope the minister or her advisers have taken down my questions. The minister referred to some recommendations that needed to be deferred until the NDIS operational landscape is more clearly defined. On behalf of people living with disability and the services that support them, what is that time frame? The National Disability Agreement was signed in 2012 and it is now seven years down the track and there is still enormous uncertainty about what the operational landscape will be for people with disability.

What level of consultation was undertaken with people with disability, service providers and advocacy organisations about the operation of the act? Where did the restriction interventions time frame come from? What was the genesis of a 90-day interim restrictive intervention order, which could feasibly see a person with disability subject to a level of restraint for a prolonged period in a government estate or Commonwealth government-funded service? I am quite concerned about that clause. I believe it is problematic and we need to have a really clear understanding of where that came from.

The act is improved as a result of putting those principles in the front. Could the minister also explain the clause 8 amendment, which amends section 36 of the principle act, use of an unauthorised restrictive intervention prohibited? It talks about the Chief Civil Psychiatrist and the Chief Forensic Psychiatrist. Could the minister explain for the House the difference between those two roles and how they interact with the operation of the amendments we are debating today? That would be helpful to me to understand. Could the minister explain in more detail to provide more certainty to organisations that fall outside the NDIS what the actual long-term plan is? Does the minister foresee a future where the Disability Services Act applies to state government-funded services? What is the future of this legislation, in the minister's view?

We are quite comfortable supporting the improvements to the legislation that instil those UN principles that certainly the Greens in government wanted to see in the legislation seven years ago. However, we want a clearer explanation of those questions we have asked here today.

[5.35 p.m.]

**Mrs PETRUSMA** (Franklin - Minister for Disability Services and Community Development) - Madam Speaker, I thank both members for their contributions. I appreciate the National Disability Insurance Scheme is a once-in-a-life-time reform and that it has had tripartisan support in Tasmania and in every state and territory across Australia.

Going through the concerns raised by the member, I will start with the Disability Reform Council, as the member for Clark has her own experience with the Disability Reform Council. If there are challenges in Tasmania, there are challenges in every state and territory. What I appreciate most about the Disability Reform Council is that every state and territory is united in trying to fight for a better National Disability Insurance Scheme because the same issues crop up in different areas.

**Ms O'Connor** - Do you still have treasurers of the various states and territories at the table?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The treasurers are part of the DRC but the ministers responsible for disability are usually there fighting because they live and breathe the issues on the ground. There have been challenges with the NDIS. I acknowledge the wonderful people here today who are

trying to fight and are champions for trying to ensure the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Tasmania is rolled out, keeping in mind the needs of the participants as well as the service providers.

Some of the changes that will be happening in future are that there will be new NDIS participant planning pathways to make sure people with disability have a single point of contact with the NDIS. The major change is that they can choose to be in a longer NDIS plan of up to three years if their disability is stable. In the past, as you would appreciate, it has been yearly; too quick. A new NDIS community connectors program will be introduced to support and assist hard to reach communities including indigenous Australians, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and ageing parents of children with disability, so they can navigate the NDIS and get the services they or their children need.

A new NDIS participant service guarantee will be introduced, which will set new standards for shorter time frames for people with disability to get an NDIS plan and to have their plan reviewed with a particular focus on children and participants requiring specialist disability accommodation and assist with technology. Further, \$45 million is being committed over three years to develop a national disability information gateway including a website and 1800 number to assist all people with disability and their families to locate and access services in their community. We have been consistent about that, trying to bring in changes that put the participants and service providers at the forefront.

With regard to who was consulted on the bill, the review provided a range of opportunities for people across Tasmania to contribute their views about the act. Significant efforts were made to connect with people with disability who use specialist disability services, their families and carers and providers of specialist disability services to understand their experience of the act, how well it delivers safe quality services, and how it aligns with other legislation and supports transition to the NDIS. Information processes brought the review to notice of stakeholders and set out the options for written submissions, face-to-face consultations, online surveys and/or direct contact with the consultant.

Six consultations were conducted in the north-west, the north and the south of the state with people with disability, their families and carers, service providers and the public. The review committee and NDAC also provided expert input into the review and dedicated discussions with the consultant. These provided a diversity of experience and opinions that helped to inform consultations with people with disability, their families and carers, service providers and the wider community. The consultant also met with the interim commissioner for children and young people and the discussions considered the impact on and implications of the act to children and young people.

An expert stakeholder roundtable was convened to provide input to the assessment and evaluation of the information gathered. Attendants included representatives of Carers Tasmania, the Department of Education, Equal Opportunity Tasmania, the Ombudsman and Health Complaints Commissioner, the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Bapcare. I can also indicate that the committee members on the chair included Barbara Hingston, the chair, but also Donna Bain from Self-Help Workplace and as the provider representative for National Disability Services Tasmania. It also included Jane Wardlaw as a consumer representative, Jenny Dixon from Speak Out Advocacy Tasmania, Natasha Street from NADC that is also a consumer representative, Ingrid Ganley from Disability Housing & Community Services, Charley Hodgson, the senior practitioner from disability and community, Bruce Patterson from the legislative review and legal support; and Karen from the Department of Justice.

With regard to the review, it was intentionally just a short review because we needed to wait for the NDIS Act because there was continual movement in that space about different legislation and different frameworks being released. We will start to commence the scope of the next review from July. It needs to be undertaken because the NDIS Act is also being reviewed by the federal government in the second half of 2019 and a key objective of the NDIS review is to streamline NDIS processes to cut red tape for participants and providers. As part of this review, a new NDIS participant service guarantee will be developed and legislated in close consultation with people with disability, their families, carers and supporters, as well as state and territory governments.

Under the NDIS Act, one of the issues at the moment is that the only requirement placed on the NDIA was to make an access decision within 21 days of receiving all information required to make that decision. While that was appropriate for the transition phase, with all the complexity of rolling out the NDIS to 460 000 people, it is no longer fit for purpose, with the NDIS at maturity. The new standards that will be coming into place as part of the participant service guarantee will reduce the time taken for people with disability to access the NDIS and have their plan approved and implemented.

Specific service standards will be also be enforced for children with disability and participants requiring specialist disability accommodation and assistive technology. This will ensure that children in need of assistance will be provided with immediate support. These are all significant and positive changes that we need our own Disability Services Act to reflect. As well, our comprehensive review will consider changes to the Guardianship and Administration Act and any impacts of the establishment of the NDIS quality and safeguards commission in Tasmania which starts on 1 July, including any operational interface between authorised and restrictive interventions and monitoring behaviour support plans consistent with the feedback we have heard from our initial review - both from providers and people living with disability, families and carers - we want to ensure a comprehensive, successful consultation period that takes enough time to consider all their issues and also to go around the state so it thoroughly considers the national and state level changes that are happening with regard to legislation.

With regard to the restrictive interventions issues, recommendation 9 of the review was to provide for interim authorisations of restrictive interventions subject to appropriate safeguards. This has been achieved by an amendment to the DSA to permit the Guardian and Administration Board to provide a provisional approval of a restrictive intervention of 90 days to cover the interim period before an application is heard and determined by the Guardianship and Administration Board.

**Ms O'Connor** - My question was about the 90 days.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The 90 days is consistent with the NDIS Act and the whole aim of this is to align with the national framework that is coming into place.

**Ms O'Connor** - Can you confirm that the NDIS Act allows for an interim intervention order by a single person for three months?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The insertion of the amendment allows for interim orders and provides additional protection to the person with disability by ensuring that formalised processes are in place and providers of supports to people of disability are then regulated. As I said, it achieves some national consistency and ensures providers with interim orders in place also have in place a behavioural support plan and are reporting to the NDIS commissioner every two weeks on the use

of that restricted practice. With this change, they have to report every two weeks on the use of that restricted practice.

**Ms O'Connor** - By interjection, so we do not have to go into Committee, does this amendment require a service provider to notify the Commonwealth NDIS commissioner or the state senior practitioner? What is the accountability metric here?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The restrictive practice is required to be approved by us so they have to report to the Commonwealth every two weeks in regard to the use of that practice.

**Ms O'Connor** - What role, then, having issued the interim order, does the Guardianship and Administration Board have?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It will provide a stronger legislative basis for existing practice. The senior practitioner and the Guardianship and Administration Board will continue to ensure that the best interests of the person with disability is considered, including any consequences to the person, any alternative method reasonably suitable and able to be used, the nature and degree of any significant risk to the person and the extent to which carrying out the restrictive intervention will promote or reduce the safety, health and wellbeing of the person. At all times, any approval of restrictive interventions must be the least restrictive approach for the person.

**Ms O'Connor** - So the Guardianship and Administration Board, following the approval of an interim order, does not have a role - is that right?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - This provides provisional approval to cover the interim period before an application is then heard or determined by the Guardianship and Administration Board. It permits the Guardianship and Administration Board to provide an interim approval before they hear the full approval, so it actually provides surety to the person with disability rather than what is currently happening at the moment.

**Ms O'Connor** - Once the full rollout has happened, what will the state actually be responsible for funding?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - In regard to your question about the references to the Mental Health Act being amended, references in section 36(3) and clause 50(1)(d) of the DSA are out-of-date references to the Mental Health Act 1996. The bill actually updates these references to instead refer to the Mental Health Act 2013 and add a reference to the Chief Civil Psychiatrist in addition to the Chief Forensic Psychiatrist. The Chief Civil Psychiatrist was established as a statutory position under the Mental Health Act 2013 so it is just to update the act in that regard.

The Tasmanian Government will be responsible for disability support outside the scope of the NDIS, including advocacy, continuing support and mainstream children's therapy services.

**Ms O'Connor** - Is what the state will be responsible for, finalised in the intergovernmental agreement? Is that locked in?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Under the bilateral agreement, our commitment is the \$244 million we provide every year that is indexed. Outside the agreement, we are responsible for continuing support and mainstream children's therapy. I do not think advocacy is mentioned in the bilateral agreement, but we are doing -

**Ms O'Connor** - That has been the problem.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Yes, but we recognise that individual advocacy services are essential for people with disability, which is why we are funding them outside any requirement to do so.

**Ms O'Connor** - You will not be funding the systemic advocacy services?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - System advocacy is covered by the federal government under the National Disability Advocacy Program and some funding has already been given to organisations in Tasmania for the advocacy services under the National Disability Advocacy Program.

**Ms O'Connor** - They are really concerned about their future funding, despite your reassurances.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I do not want to name organisations, but the organisations have received money under the National Disability Advocacy Program: Speak Out and ACD have, as well as under ILCs, and we have committed to funding individual advocacy services in the future.

In regard to the member for Franklin's question about the ILC, I recognise this is a different way of working. We are committed to making sure they do have bridging funding until each of the four core rounds of the ILC program are rolled out, ensuring funding until that process is finished. That is our commitment to the ILCs. I can indicate they will receive their letter this week informing them that we are committed to making sure they will receive their bridging funding before 30 June, before their current state funding ceases.

We recognise the ILC program is challenging and confronting for the organisations. My commitment, after each main ILC funding round, is to meet with any of the organisations that want to and that have made an application for each round, to hear that they have been successful so that we can then work out the next funding round. We are committed to supporting these organisations through this process. The Department of Disability and Community Services has been working with these organisations over the last three years and has done a body of work to help these organisations through the ILC funding process. The ILCs are there to support everyone who has a disability. We are very committed to going through that process and to be there with these organisations throughout that process. We recognise that ILCs, as recommended by the Productivity Commission, are there for everyone with a disability and we want them to work well and as they are supposed to in Tasmania.

We have been encouraged that Tasmanian organisations are receiving grants and it is something I can assure you the department and I have been advocating with the NDIA, as have the federal minister and new federal minister. We will keep on banging the drum in regard to the ILCs to ensure Tasmania receives its fair share of the money and that we do get the support that people with disability in Tasmania need. That is the commitment I give to this House; that the department and I are very committed to making sure we receive the ILC funding in Tasmania that is there for the participants.

**Ms Standen** - Can you indicate the amount of funding in that envelope and the time frames? You have talked about bridging funding. As I understand it there are ILC funding rounds but I am not sure about the timing. The bridging funding: will that be for a discrete time and on what basis are you making the allocation of funding?



**Mrs PETRUSMA** - We are committed to allocating the bridging funding to organisations through to December because we have been assured the ILC funding rounds will be commissioned in that time. I will be going to the federal government to make sure Tasmania receives equal funding but we are committed to supporting the existing ILC-type organisations through to December until the ILC rounds, the commissioning process, is completed.

**Ms Standen** - Is it \$570 000 on the table? Is it a pro rata allocation for the 18 organisations?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is not pro rata because some organisations might have only received around \$1500 and some received a lot more. It is pro rata of what they would have received but it is equivalent to what they would have received to December this year under the state Government. If their grant was \$100 000, to December it would be roughly \$50 000, whatever the pro rata of the time and the amount of money they were funded under the state Government.

**Ms Standen** - Is it \$570 000 on the table?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is more than the \$570 000.

**Ms Standen** - Can you indicate how much?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is being sorted out at the moment but it is more than the \$570 000. For the organisations that are continuing on as ILCs, it is more than \$570 000. We are still working with organisations because some organisations have indicated that by 30 June they may no longer be an organisation because they see a different pathway. We are still working with organisations but our commitment is to fund the organisations through to December.

**Ms Standen** - Are you indicating that some organisations may not be viable moving forward?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - No, it is nothing to do with viability. This is what they have indicated to us. It is definitely not due to anything any government said to them. This is their own choice.

**Ms Standen** - It is an uncertain time. Thank you, minister.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Before we conclude I would like to say a quick thank you to all the people who have been involved with development of the bill. I particularly acknowledge the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and staff in the Department of Communities Tasmania and the Department of Health for their part in the bill's development. I also thank those community sector and peak organisations that provided feedback as part of the review of the act and everyone's efforts are sincerely appreciated. I commend the bill to the House.

**Bill read the second time.**

**Bill read the third time.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

[5.59 p.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

**John Geering - Tribute**

**Bridget Archer - Tribute**

**Ross Hart - Tribute**

**Mr FERGUSON** - (Bass - Minister for Health) - Mr Deputy Speaker, there are two issues I would like to address this evening, both of which are close to my heart but very different in their nature.

I would like to share with colleagues of this House someone whom many on the other side would never have met, someone who, for our side of the House, we will never forget.

That is to acknowledge the passing of a dearly loved member of the Liberal Party, Mr John Geering who passed away last week. John was a wonderful member of the Liberal Party, a wonderful Tasmanian and a wonderful Australian.

Many who have known John will be able to speak of the warmth of his spirit and the generosity with which he would treat anybody, friend or political opponent. He was a very gentle member of the Liberal Party and a kind man who passionately believed in what the Liberal Party stands for but had a winning way of communicating with people in a very down-to-earth affable approach.

He was quite well-known on polling booths on election day, absolutely charming the other side of politics, even if they were not going to vote Liberal.

For a member of the Liberal Party, John was one of those rare people who kept giving. He attended meetings, attended fundraisers and he was a dear friend and a kind person who would always be concerned for how I was going, and Julie and the family as well, through our political journey.

My Bass colleagues would share these sentiments. Ms Courtney and Mr Gutwein held him in the same regard I do. John and I had a special friendship and I share a quick anecdote that might bring a smile. In the lead-up to the federal election, my face and name appeared on some advertising, which was interesting. John, in his last hours actually did get to vote; he was so concerned that he would be able to vote for me. This is something that his daughter shared with me on Sunday and for which I will be everlasting and very grateful.

I will not be able to attend his funeral tomorrow, so I wanted to place these words on the record of our House. I wanted to honour him as a husband, as a father, as a grandfather and as a great-grandfather and ensure that his beautiful wife, Norma, understands that our side of politics really loved John, and we love and care for her as well. We send her our best wishes as she grieves for a wonderful man.

The second thing I bring to the House is to congratulate Bridget Archer for being elected as our federal member for Bass. It is not completely official yet but given that tomorrow night northern members will be departing for home, I wanted to put it on the record tonight that I applaud her efforts and we await the final declaration. It looks mathematically insurmountable for a different outcome to occur other than Bridget Archer MP, our federal member for Bass.

As of today, Bridget is 585 votes in front and that is as a result of a 5.8 per cent swing to the Liberal Party which also saw, importantly - which the record must remember - Bridget Archer on

primary votes alone was 5000 votes ahead of the nearest rival. I congratulate her and wish her well on behalf of myself and my colleagues here.

Bridget is a successful person in her own right. She is a successful businesswoman, a farmer, a mayor and a mum. She has a great message for people from George Town which is where she has been the mayor and a councillor. We saw an 11 per cent swing to the Liberal Party in George Town and from where she had her earliest days in Ravenswood, a 10 per cent swing. There is a wonderful message to people in those communities that you do not only have to be from the big smoke to make it.

I acknowledge the wonderful commitments that Bridget made on behalf of the federal Coalition. It is wonderful to know those commitments will be honoured as a result of the election of the Scott Morrison majority government in Canberra.

That sits around health, infrastructure which is going to be fantastic, some service improvements that families will applaud, sports infrastructure, road infrastructure, not the least of which is the biggest lick of cash for the north east - Tasman Highway, Sidling Road - that has seen in living memory. The northern hub is going to be a wonderful project, together with the Launceston City Council.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge Ross Hart's contribution to the people of Bass over the last three years. Again, I acknowledge that it is not official yet, but was in Ross' position in 2007 and it is a pretty horrible feeling to lose your seat. We must not overlook the service Ross has provided to our community since he was first elected in 2016.

We certainly had our differences but I want to put on the public record I have a special acknowledgement for Ross because I have worked with a lot of politicians in my role as Minister for Health, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management and Ross is in the very small number of MPs not from my party who has worked with me in such a way, sometimes behind the scenes, getting results for his constituents. He always wrote back to me and said thank you for helping that person. While perhaps not successful on this occasion, Ross should be acknowledged for his efforts on behalf of the constituents who raised issues with him. I always like to take the opportunity to acknowledge former members perhaps that are part of my journey to get here as well.

In so doing, I remind people like Ross, and others, that we value public service - after all that is the business we are all in - and that defeat does not mean disrespect. I wanted to place that on the record and acknowledge that service this evening.

### **Jobs for Migrants in Aged Care and Disability Training Initiative - Graduation**

[6.06 p.m.]

**Ms COURTNEY** (Bass - Minister for Resources) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise this evening to inform the House about an outstanding program run by the Migrant Resource Centre in northern Tasmania to assist particularly new Tasmanians into the workforce.

Recently, I was honoured to attend another one of their graduation ceremonies in the Jobs for Migrants in Aged Care and Disability training initiative. This is designed to prepare migrants for vocations as service workers in the aged care sector or as support workers in the disability sector.

This program is an initiative and a collaboration between Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania in partnership with Masonic Care Tasmania and St Giles.

Participants receive training and support in a range of areas including first aid, recognising healthy body systems, social inclusion and disability, 60 hours of work placement in disability and aged care and understanding of professional boundaries and personal care.

This program has had four intakes of 13 weeks each and there have been 50 participants over 18 months. The most recent graduation ceremony saw 13 graduates from Afghanistan, Nepal, Sierra Leone, the Philippines, Bhutan, Chile and Thailand. Each one of their graduation ceremonies is a joyful event to attend.

The work placement program in particular enables participants to feel more confident as they enter the workforce and also we see really meaningful outcomes for the number of participants who secure meaningful work post this program.

Among those graduating in the latest cohort was Micsy Cumming from Chile who so eloquently represented her fellow participants with the words:

We are a group of 13 students from diverse countries and backgrounds, languages and cultures but with the same dreams and expectations which are the desire to find a job and work with people with different needs in the aged care and disability sector and make a positive difference in their lives giving a warm support and encourage them to be involved in the community. I trust that we are not going to disappoint you and we are going to put our hearts into our jobs.

From Jerelym Orcullo from the Philippines with these words:

To our motherly teacher, Nancy Pattinson, thanks heaps for your moral support. I cannot imagine handling 13 people with different cultures. You are tough. We will miss you surely.

I cannot commend this program enough to members of the House. Having seen several of these graduation ceremonies it really does create opportunity, friendships, collaboration for new Tasmanians and it is also wonderful to see the collaboration between MRC North and St Giles originally, which is now extended to Masonic Care. In particular, thanks to Mark Deverell and Ian Wright for their input in this and, of course, Ella Dixon, who many in the Chamber would know for her absolute passion to be able to make the lives of new Tasmanians better and more meaningful. I am really looking forward to this successful program continuing because it truly is something we should see around the state.

I would like quickly to read in to *Hansard* the most recent graduates because I promised them I would. Bear with me, please. They are: Asiyeh Heidari, Bhagawahi Biswa, Jamiatu Jusu Tarawallie, Jerelym Orcullo, Joan Vargas, Mani Raj Rai, Micsy Cumming, Nirmala Rai, Parti Man Rai, Sabu Chhetri, Sagar Chhetri, Saithip Paisan and Sarita Gurung. Congratulations to the each of the participants.

I rise to congratulate all the winners of the recent Cement, Concrete & Aggregates Association Tasmania branch Innovation Awards. I had the honour of attending the Tasmanian ceremony and awards dinner last Friday night, which is the ninth time it has been held. I acknowledge the CCAA

State Director, Brian Hauser, and the committee chair, Gary Chapman, for their hospitality and hosting what was a great celebration of the cement, concrete and aggregate industry across Tasmania.

The CCAA understands the importance of celebrating industry excellence and recognising and rewarding innovation in Tasmania. The awards focus on excellence in environmental management, health and safety, community engagement and workplace diversity and inclusion. The awards also showcase some of the ideas and the management strategies that improve environmental and safety outcomes across the industry at large. They capture the importance of business being engaged with and being part of local communities. They also help demonstrate the ways in which industry benefits through the adoption and implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies.

This year there were 13 nominations across four categories and I am pleased to inform the House that Hanson Australia won both the Environmental Innovation Award and the Diversity and Inclusion Award; Duggans won the Health and Safety Innovation Award and was highly commended for Diversity and Inclusion, and Boral won the Community Engagement Award. I congratulate each of the companies that put in applications for these awards because it truly would have been difficult for the judges. I thank all the judges and participants who make this happen because it was wonderful to recognise these Tasmanian industries, companies and people who are making meaningful differences. It was wonderful also to see how much celebration there was of the individuals within each organisation and the recognition that, for each of these industries and businesses, their success is predicated on the amazing people who work within their organisations.

I congratulate the CCAA and the member companies which comprise of 85 per cent of aggregate production in Tasmania and I commend the work they do, particularly supporting our booming building and construction industry. I wish them luck as they embark on the national awards.

**John Geering - Tribute**

**Wayne Bould - Tribute**

**Ray Mostogl - Tribute**

**USS *Frank E Evans* - Fiftieth Anniversary of Sinking**

[6.13 p.m.]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I add tribute to the late John Geering and I associate my remarks with those of Michael Ferguson who, a short time ago, likewise commended and paid a tribute to John, and to pass on sincere condolences and sympathies to Norma. Both my dear wife, Kate, and I have known Norma and John for many decades as part of the Liberal Party in northern Tasmania and they are stalwarts, wonderful people. John was always friendly, cheerful, kind, and sincere condolences and sympathies are passed to Norma and family.

I pay tribute and honour Wayne Bould for his 40 years of service to the petroleum, forestry and mining sectors in Tasmania and to specifically say congratulations and well done for his leadership and advocacy in the mining and mineral processing space. Only today, the President of the Tasmanian Minerals, Manufacturing & Energy Council, TMEC, Ben Maynard, advised that Wayne Bould intended to retire from the role of Chief Executive Officer. I have known Wayne for a number of decades in my role in the Senate, since then being in parliament and more recently as

former minister of Resources and more recently as minister for Energy. I pay a tribute to Wayne for his leadership. He has been involved with the TMMEC as a Director since 2008. He became President in 2012 and CEO in 2014. As Ben Maynard indicated in his release, during that time he has been instrumental in leading that transformation and restructuring of TMMEC and contributed famously and positively. I acknowledge Ben Maynard for his leadership as well. He has been a terrific support and leader in the mining and mineral processing sector. He said -

The Board gratefully appreciates Wayne's passion, wisdom and drive to bring about a number of key changes in the operation of TMEC in support of our industry ...

... promoting the development of sustainable exploration, mining, industrial processing and manufacturing sectors.

He has included leveraging of Tasmania's advance manufacturing sector and he talked about his special involvement in vocational education and training. In short, yes. He has done all of those things but he has done a whole lot more and Wayne is a visionary but he also puts vision into action. He has been well supported by Alison Hilder and others at the TMEC, the TMEC Board and the industry more generally. It is 50 per cent of our exports, mining and mineral processing, in such a key part of our economy, particularly on the north-west coast, west coast and rural and regional parts of Tasmania.

Congratulations, Wayne. You have done a great job. It has been great working with you, advocating and supporting the mining and mineral processing sector and you will be missed. It has been great getting to know you and I wish you every success in the next chapter with your wife and your grandchildren in particular. It was great being able to associate myself with you and have a positive relationship. I acknowledge minister Sarah Courtney's release of commendation and congratulations today as Minister of Resources and put that on the record.

Congratulations to Ray Mostogl who will commence as the new CEO on 3 June. Ray has 40 years of background in the industry. It will be a seamless transition and will do the job really well. He was former president and when I was minister for Resources I put out a release to honour Ray Mostogl on 28 March 2018 when he stood down after seven years as general manager at Bell Bay Aluminium. His was outstanding leadership and the work of TMEC will continue on.

In conclusion I pay tribute in honour of 3 June, which marks the 50th anniversary of the USS *Frank E Evans*, an American Destroyer which ran under the bows of the HMAS *Melbourne*, our Australian aircraft carrier. I note that Malcolm Baird wrote a letter to the editor. Malcolm is a friend of mine, a former Navy man and he was captain of the Royal Australian Naval College at Jervis Bay. He has been a Commodore of the First Australian Destroyer Squadron and Naval Adviser to the Australian High Commission in London. He served in Vietnam, was Commander of HMAS *Sydney* in 1968 and HMAS *Yarra* in 1971 and many other commands. He has drawn this to my attention and I commemorate the special 50th Anniversary of the loss of the ship. They were both exercising at night as part of the SEATO exercise in the South China Sea. Sadly, 74 American sailors died and hundreds of other lives were scarred.

He says in his letter to the editor that such exercises are a normal part of life in the defence force of all peaceful nations like Australia but they are dangerous and, from time to time, fate extracts a penalty. He goes on and says the various services which will no doubt be held at naval memorials around Australia we have an opportunity to give thanks to remember and pause to reflect on the Roman adage *si vis pacem, para bellum*, when translated, is 'if you want peace, prepare for

war'. That is Malcolm Baird from Wanstead Park, Campbell Town, a wonderful man, a navy man from the Royal Australian Navy. I am proud to associate myself with him and thank him for that special reminder.

The 50th anniversary of the loss the USS *Frank E Evans* is next Monday 3 June. All those who have any association with the Royal Australian Navy and HMAS *Melbourne* in particular would have special interest in that matter. I bring that to the attention of this parliament and recognise all those who have been affected in any way, shape or form.

**The House adjourned at 6.20 p.m.**