



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Wednesday 4 May 2022

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Contents

QUESTIONS.....	1
INTEREST RATE RISE - IMPACT ON TASMANIAN ECONOMY AND BUDGET	1
MS ARCHER - MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES.....	2
GOVERNMENT'S LEGISLATIVE AGENDA	3
MACQUARIE POINT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION - CALL FOR AN INQUIRY	5
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN TASMANIA.....	6
MENTAL HEALTH - GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES	8
GOVERNMENT STABILITY	9
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS	10
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY - CONFIDENCE IN ATTORNEY-GENERAL	11
JBS - REPUTATION	13
HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN	14
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY - CONFIDENCE IN MINISTER FOR JUSTICE	15
FORMER PREMIER'S CHIEF OF STAFF - NEW POSITION.....	17
TASMANIAN ECONOMY	17
MS JANE HOWLETT MLC - ALLEGED CONFLICT OF INTEREST	19
SMALL BUSINESS SECTOR - GOVERNMENT SUPPORT	19
RESPONSE TO PETITION.....	22
CASTLE FORBES FOREST - REMOVAL FROM PERMANENT TIMBER PRODUCTION ZONE	22
MESSAGES FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL	22
HOUSE COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS	22
LIBRARY COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS	22
RESUMPTION OF PROCEEDINGS - BILLS	23
ATTENDANCE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MINISTERS AT QUESTION TIME.....	23
HEALTH LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 2022 (NO. 19).....	24
BILL PRESENTED BY MR ROCKLIFF AND READ THE FIRST TIME.	24
VEHICLE AND TRAFFIC AMENDMENT (DRIVER DISTRACTION AND SPEED ENFORCEMENT) BILL 2022 (NO. 20).....	24
BILL PRESENTED BY MR FERGUSON AND READ THE FIRST TIME.	24
MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE	24
CRISIS IN THE AMBULANCE SERVICE.....	24
YOUTH JUSTICE AMENDMENT (SEARCHES IN CUSTODY) BILL 2022 (NO. 9).....	32
SECOND READING	32
MOTION.....	47
TASMANIA'S STRONG ECONOMY	47
MOTION	61
RIISING COST OF LIVING IN TASMANIA - MOTION NEGATIVED	61
MOTION	83
JBS PURCHASE OF HUON AQUACULTURE - MOTION NEGATIVED	83
ADJOURNMENT.....	95
JOSEPH WILLIAM BRAIN - TRIBUTE.....	95
INTERNATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS DAY.....	97
FAMILY VIOLENCE - CANDLELIGHT VIGIL.....	97
FOREIGN INVESTMENT REVIEW BOARD - DECISIONS.....	99

JOSEF CHROMY OAM - TRIBUTE	101
ASSISTANCE WITH HEALTH ISSUE	102
HOUSE COMPLETION DATA - CORRECTION	103
ROAD SAFETY - SCHOOL CROSSINGS.....	103
HOMEBUILDER GRANT PROGRAM - QUERY	105
APPENDIX 1	108

Wednesday 4 May 2022

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

QUESTIONS

Interest Rate Rise - Impact on Tasmanian Economy and Budget

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.02 a.m.]

Can you please outline to the House the Government's view of the impact of yesterday's interest rate rise on the economy and the budget?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. No doubt there is great interest in the interest rate rise of the Reserve Bank yesterday of 0.35 per cent as it is now. At least I know it, unlike the federal Labor leader who could not even say what the unemployment rate in the nation was, unfortunately for people. How disrespectful would that be?

This is a key cost of living issue, Ms White, as you would well and truly appreciate. There has been no better government that has been sensitive to the needs of Tasmanians when it comes to cost of living, particularly when it comes to down pressure on energy prices. We all remember very well the Labor-Greens days when the energy prices and costs to consumers was at record levels in terms of the impact to individuals.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The politics being played by the federal Opposition with the interest rate has also been called out by Moodys, as I clearly understand it. There will be no bigger defender of cost of living measures and supporting Tasmanians through cost of living than this Government. In fact, when it comes to the last four years, \$308 million in concession support for vulnerable Tasmanians; water, electricity, and rates. Electricity prices are among the lowest regulated in the nation and I have spoken about that before. Last year, households received a 7.11 per cent reduction in regulated electricity prices, and small business an 11 per cent drop.

While we cannot control, of course, the national interest rate, which is set by the Reserve Bank of Australia, we are acutely aware of the impacts of the cost of living on Tasmanians. This is a Government that will always support, stand up for, and ensure that the cost of living measures - whether it be water, electricity, car registrations - downward pressure on all those matters so Tasmanians can be assured that, unlike those opposite, and indeed their federal colleagues, might I say -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker, Standing Order 45. It was a very quick and straightforward question. The question goes to the impact of interest rate rises on the economy

and the budget. I have not heard the Premier address the matter of the impact on the Budget and I ask you to direct his attention to the question.

Mr SPEAKER - As I have said before, the Premier has not wound up. I cannot tell the Premier what to say, but, if you could address the question, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. As Ms White knows, there is a budget on 26 May 2022. All Tasmanians know we have supported all Tasmanians through some of the most challenging disruptive times. When it comes to cost of living pressures, when it comes to supporting small business, when it comes to supporting vulnerable Tasmanians in need, whether that be the impacts of the pandemic or indeed the cost of living measures, Tasmanians know that the Tasmanian Government led by me and indeed as evidenced by our Government of the last eight years since 2014, will always stand up for Tasmanians.

Government Members - Hear, hear.

Ms Archer - Ministerial Responsibilities

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for JUSTICE, Ms ARCHER

[10.06 a.m.]

Can you confirm that you called the Deputy Premier, Michael Ferguson, 'treacherous', and much worse that I cannot repeat, in a meeting where he said he would be standing as the deputy following the resignation of premier, Peter Gutwein. How can you perform your ministerial responsibilities if your relationship with the Treasurer has completely broken down?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, what a bizarre question from the Leader of Opposition purporting to be in a meeting - I do not even know what she is referring to. I can say, absolutely, that I have not said that. First, I will not be lectured on leadership by the twice failed Ms White. Our Government has a strong united team that has a plan and is getting things done in this state.

My friendship with all my colleagues could not be stronger. I am proud to continue in a senior role in our Government, and I thank the Premier for that, as Attorney-General, driving significant legislative and justice system reforms.

It is galling that the party whose leader was told need not apply after the 2021 election is now in this place asking about leadership of all things. It was clear post election that she wanted to put up her hand once again after yet another disastrous election campaign on her watch, stating that 'the fire still burns within me'. 'I feel like there is unfinished business', she said.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Members on the left.

Ms ARCHER - Yet, not even 10 days later she apparently had a change of heart. I quote:

I think this change is necessary to the chances of the Labor Party at the next election. It is about changing a range of things that we do as a Labor Party right across the state.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms ARCHER - Ms White went from fired up to fired, by her own party. I will not be lectured by the twice failed leader, Ms White. Quite frankly, that was a bizarre question from her, purporting -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. You have asked the question of the Attorney-General. You will please allow her to answer that in silence. You may not be liking the answer but you do have to respect the position that you have asked the question and now you should be allowing her to answer it.

Ms ARCHER - As I was saying, Mr Speaker, purporting to know about a meeting that I am not even sure what she is referring to. I can unequivocally state that I did not say that about my good friend and colleague, Mr Ferguson. We have a strong united team unlike those opposite who we still do not know what they stand for and we have the same old failed leader.

Government's Legislative Agenda

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.09 a.m.]

Some of us who want to see a greener, kinder Tasmania allowed ourselves to be optimistic when you took on the top job. Yesterday, that cautious optimism was badly shaken with the first order of legislative business a forestry bill, while a bill to criminalise peaceful protest was also tabled by your divisive, destructive Resources minister.

Premier, like a dog returning to its vomit, your Government seems no different in its assaults on the environment or on peaceful protesters from that of your two predecessors since 2014. Why did you allow Mr Barnett to control the legislative agenda this week and set the tone for your Government as being hostile to the environment and those fighting to protect it?

As a new Premier, passionate about the mental health of our young people, how can you justify this continued attack on their future with this antiquated agenda?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Yesterday, the matters of terms of the validation bill, as minister Barnett well outlined, were well discussed and well debated, and supported by the Opposition for very good reasons: to provide certainty for our forest industry, which employs thousands of Tasmanians. We will not let workers in that industry down, Ms O'Connor. I will never trade away jobs in rural and regional areas. I can give that absolute

commitment as Premier because I have seen the consequences of trading away jobs to stay in power. That was clearly evident between 2010 and 2014 under the Labor-Greens government when we saw regional communities devastated -

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - People came out in huge numbers. I remember attending a rally in Burnie with thousands of Tasmanians, in Circular Head, one of the more vulnerable communities to shutting down our forest industry.

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am a believer in our resource sector: our tourism, our mining, and our aquaculture industries. I will always back them 100 per cent, because that is where the wealth is generated. Throughout Tasmania that wealth generation allows investment in the key services that Tasmanians value: health, education, and housing. We will always support industries such as our resource sector.

Balancing those natural resources is very important. I have always done it in my professional life: growing up on a farm, and valuing our precious water resource, our soils, protecting our water resources, and protecting our soils in a true, balanced natural resource management way.

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is what Tasmania has, in my view, above any other state. Indeed, we are leading the world.

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, you asked a serious question of the Premier. I will not put up with you badgering him right through the answer. You have been constantly interjecting over the last couple of minutes. It would have been eight or 10 times. When you ask a question in question time you are meant to listen to the answer. Please stop badgering the Premier and allow him to answer the question.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Mr Speaker. On the point of order, I simply note that Labor interjected through all the answers and were not pulled up.

Mr SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, that is not a point of order. It is almost questioning the Chair. If you choose to go down that path, I am happy to take you on.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe we have the balance right. I also believe we are committed to continuous improvement in ensuring that we sustainably manage our valuable resources for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

I come to the second part of your question about the workplace protection bill. We have been elected three times with policies to further protect the right of workers and to deter unlawful interference with workplaces. As shadow minister for resources I remember advocating for that policy. All we want, very clearly, is to ensure that the laws of Tasmania support and protect every person's fundamental right to attend their workplace in a safe way, to ensure that people can protest and advocate for change if that is what people want to do.

I have always believed very strongly in ensuring the right to free speech and for people to have their say. However, people also have a right to go to work without interference, without other people potentially endangering their lives, or their own lives, through workplace interference.

This legislation tabled by a minister yesterday reflects what we have said and taken to an election time after time. We will be interested in what the state Opposition and the Labor Party have to say when it comes to standing up and ensuring workers across Tasmania can attend their place of work, so they can put food on the table for their families, in a safe way in a way that does not interfere with their rights to attend a workplace to earn a living and be safe at the same time.

Macquarie Point Development Corporation - Call for an Inquiry

Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.17 a.m.]

The Macquarie Point Development Corporation is, by any measure, a failure. There is no development; the MONA vision is dead. There is nothing to support the northern transport corridor. The workplace culture is appalling, with multiple serious cases of bullying and high staff turnover. Disturbingly, there are questions about financial transparency. After nearly 10 years all we have to show for the tens of millions of dollars invested is a herb garden and a car park. Will you commit to a full, open and transparent inquiry into the clear failings on Macquarie Point so that all Tasmanians can have confidence in the leadership and direction of this vital, once in a generation project before it goes completely off the rails?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her question. There are a number of matters that you raised in there. I am aware of concerns within the workplace. I am advised the chair of the board, the widely experienced and respected Mr Scullin, is managing the situation with the assistance and guidance of the Department of State Growth. It is important for these concerns to be addressed and resolved through - as you would appreciate, I am sure - proper process, which is occurring. I will not be commenting further on the matter. We will leave that to Mr Scullin to manage, as is appropriate, as I am sure you would appreciate.

Macquarie Point is a significant opportunity for Tasmania and Tasmanians when it comes to those opportunities. After a competitive nationwide search, we have just announced that a local business, Hobart Brewing Company, is the lead proponent for the permanent development of the goods shed. Things are happening. This will see and create the unique experience to showcase Tasmania's top producers and event organisers with a brewery, distillery, dining options, live events and festival spaces.

Macquarie Point has reached another milestone, with the first land sale progressing with preferred Melbourne-based developer, Milieu. The escarpment will see 8700 square metres of prime real estate developed for mixed use. We look forward to commencement of works on-site next year. As part of the 2021 state of the state address, we announced funding, an injection of \$78 million to realise a full development potential of Macquarie Point and finalise the site. This allows the corporation to proceed with the request for expressions of interest campaign for the second land release, which will commence this year, as I am advised.

Members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Speaker, those opposite are very negative, but my view is that Macquarie Point is powering ahead, completing the new road and stair link, sewer realignment and archeological works are advancing. The funding deed with TasWater has been finalised and private development is a step closer. The Tasmanian Liberal Government is delivering its plan to develop a once in a life time development of Macquarie Point for Tasmanians to enjoy for generations to come.

Housing Affordability in Tasmania

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.21 a.m.]

The latest Tasmanian housing affordability snapshot by Anglicare has revealed the devastating state of housing affordability in Tasmania. At the time of this snapshot there was not a single property available to rent in the south of the state that was affordable for families on Centrelink, or individuals on a disability support pension. Even people who work full-time are struggling to find a rental, let alone, afford one. This Anglicare report is just one of many reports released over the last few years that all show the devastating reality of the state's housing market, and the profoundly negative flow-on effects this has on the wellbeing of thousands of Tasmanians, not only today, but potentially for many years to come.

In 2018, the then premier Will Hodgman's government, with you as deputy premier, convened a crisis summit in an attempt to urgently respond to this housing crisis. Since that time, the situation has only worsened. If housing affordability was described as a crisis in 2018 by your then premier, Will Hodgman, what word would you use to describe it now?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr O'Byrne for his question. I say very clearly from the outset that we are well aware of the challenges in housing. As I have said before, this is a key priority of mine to ensure, first, that fundamental belief that I have that every single Tasmanian has the

fundamental right to have a roof over their head and be safe. That is exactly what this Government is doing. We have done more in this space than any government before.

We have very clear objectives. We recognise the challenges, Mr O'Byrne. Rapidly rising house prices are not uniquely a Tasmanian issue; they are an Australian issue. Historically low interest rates are creating cheap money, which is fuelling a property boom across Australia and in many parts of the world. While increasing land prices are a national trend, Tasmania is quite clearly in a very strong position, as evidenced by the CommSec report, with a very strong local economy. The fact that our state is one of the safest and most desirable places in the world to live, work and raise a family is also contributing because people are moving here and Tasmanians are returning home.

New homes are also costing more due to high rises in input costs, land prices are at unprecedented levels, and material prices are growing at the highest rate since 1981, recording 12 per cent growth in just the 2021 year alone.

Fortunately, Tasmania has the highest annual wage growth in the country at 3 per cent, moderating some of these housing cost increases. We have a very clear plan, Mr O'Byrne, for a \$1.5 billion investment - 10 000 homes over the next 10 years, taking into account our existing reforms and further action to address this issue. The new statutory authority will be charged with increasing housing supply, delivering more affordable homes and units, and ensuring that we leave no stone unturned to deliver the stock of houses and the services required to cater for growing demand.

We are delivering on a range of measures. It is not just about supply but supply is a very important part of the mix. We are helping less advantaged Tasmanians by delivering those 10 000 new social and affordable houses by 2032. We are expanding the HomeShare housing entry program to allow more low-income Tasmanians and first homebuyers the opportunity to buy their own home. We are investing \$10 million into a residential land rebate to unlock new land supply into the market and extending the First Home Owners Grant, increasing housing supply with our expanded Ancillary Dwelling Grants Program for rentals putting downward pressure on rent prices by reducing land tax, for example. We are increasing the threshold for stamp duty and concessions.

Mr O'Byrne - Premier, have you not read the report? Not one house.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The state has committed to addressing urban renewal as part of the Hobart City Deal and the Northern Suburbs Transit Corridor, and this is currently a work in progress while the City Deal partners are all working together on this initiative. A path to a solution is complex and time consuming, as you would appreciate.

There is a range of initiatives that we are addressing, in the short term, the medium term, and the long term, for example. The Safe Space program in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie is providing immediate shelter for the most vulnerable; including services like health, and mental health screening for those without a home -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Franklin.

Mr ROCKLIFF - an investment of some \$16.8 million. We have 17 specialist homeless services including Housing Connect Front Door, which provides crisis shelters and supported accommodation costing some \$30 million and the Private Rental Incentives Program, a \$2 million investment.

We are aware of the challenges, Mr O'Byrne, and those opposite. We fundamentally believe that it is a key priority of Tasmanians and it is a key priority for this Government. Every single Tasmanian deserves that fundamental right to be safe and have a roof over their head. Not only are we addressing the issue of supply, but I have also provided some examples of the range of measures to address a very complex and challenging situation which is not just in Tasmania, but which every state of Australia is experiencing.

We will always be in the corner of our vulnerable Tasmanians and our housing investment, our vision for housing, our \$1.5 billion investment over the next 10 years, 10 000 homes by 2032 is a testament that this Government cares.

Mental Health - Government Priorities

Mrs ALEXANDER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.29 a.m.]

Over the last few weeks I have spent a fair bit of time meeting with the constituents in Bass, as well as with social service providers, talking about a range of issues. One of the topics that has come up quite a lot is mental health and wellbeing. Could you update the House on the Government's priorities, especially those that focus on mental health and wellbeing? I appreciate that it is not just a Bass issue, but it is important to constituents across the state.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mrs Alexander for her question. I have a considerable interest in this matter. The Tasmanian Liberal Government has a strong plan to secure Tasmania's future. We are committed to focusing on the key priorities as I have outlined and creating more opportunities for Tasmanians. Since 2014 we have worked hard to transform Tasmania's economy, create more jobs, and invest unprecedented levels of funding into areas that matter most to Tasmanians - health, education, housing and community infrastructure. We are continuing to soundly manage through the COVID-19 pandemic, which is an enormous challenge, and prioritise the plans we have put in place to grow opportunities for Tasmania while ensuring Tasmanians have the support and care they need, where and when they need it. That plan is working.

For the ninth consecutive quarter, April's CommSec State of the States report stated that the Tasmanian economy leads the nation, holding the mantle of the best-performing economy and ranking highly across a number of key economic indicators. The report once again confirms the strength and confidence in our economy. We will continue to prioritise creating further diversity and resilience in our economy, backing small business, and leveraging our enviable climate-positive profile through delivering job-creating renewables projects such as Marinus Link, green hydrogen and Battery of the Nation.

Being Tasmanian - and the Tasmanian brand - has never been so quietly powerful. At the same time, we are investing more than any government in Tasmania's history into the areas that matter most, including health, education and housing. It is my plan to lead a government with integrity, that is courageous, accountable and delivers on our commitment. We are delivering and we have delivered in a range of those areas that I have just mentioned. A government that listens to Tasmanians' needs and ensures Tasmanians' priorities continues to be our priority; a government that continues to invest heavily to transform our health system right across Tasmania; to be more responsive and accessible, so Tasmanians can get the healthcare they deserve when and where they need it.

Mental health and wellbeing are things I have personally championed for many years, knowing they lead to a happy and fulfilling life, something I want for all Tasmanians. That is why we will continue our multi-million dollar mental health reforms across Tasmania and deliver the services and care that Tasmanians need.

Our Government has already committed and released the state's first Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy to give our young people the best chance in their early years. Today I can announce that we will take the next step to develop Tasmania's first wellbeing framework. To do this, we will engage deeply with Tasmanians and ensure their wellbeing priorities are government priorities, supported by the right targets, measures, policies and services.

Wellbeing can mean different things to different people. It includes health, education, safety, housing, living standards, environment and climate, social inclusion and connection, identity and belonging, good governance and access to services. Having a set of wellbeing indicators will help prioritise where we need to invest more of our time, energy and creativity to make a real difference to Tasmanians who currently are not sharing in our prosperity in the way they should.

Putting wellbeing at the heart of our approach will also lead to improved whole-of-government consideration of complex issues and ensure a cross-agency approach is taken when developing policy and service-delivery proposals. The development of the framework will include community consultation and will be launched later this year.

My vision for Tasmania is simple: to be a place where everyone is valued, everyone is included, encouraged and supported to be the best they can. I firmly believe through initiatives such as a whole-of-state wellbeing framework and bold, ambitious and responsible budget management, we can lead both with our hearts and our minds to secure a future for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

Government Stability

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.34 a.m.]

Unprecedented leaks from within your Government direct to the Labor Party claim your Attorney-General and wannabe deputy called your actual deputy, Michael Ferguson, 'treacherous', among other vile things, in a meeting following the resignation of Peter Gutwein.

Government members interjecting.

Ms WHITE - Mr Speaker, may I ask the question without the Government members running some kind of protection racket for the Premier?

Mr SPEAKER - You certainly can.

Ms WHITE - I appreciate that, thank you. With the premier Tasmanians chose gone, a third of the Cabinet gone and three MPs elected on a countback, this clearly is not the stable Government Tasmanians were promised just one year ago. How can you claim to provide the stabilities that Tasmanians voted for when there are clearly massive divisions in your Cabinet and across your Government?

Recognition of Visitors

Mr SPEAKER - Premier, as you are coming to your feet, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of TasTAFE students.

Members - Hear, hear.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. I also acknowledge our TasTAFE students.

Mr Speaker, I am very proud of our team. This is the strongest team since 2014. It is a team that cares for all Tasmanians and a team that I value. I value their input and am including them in the decision-making process collectively, because we are here to support each and every Tasmanian. We have been elected to do a job and this is an experienced team, not only in terms of parliamentary experience but lived experience as well. I am very proud of them and back each and everyone of them to the hilt.

The member starts casting aspersions and getting back into that personal politics, which I have to say I will rise above. I am not going to engage in that behaviour because the people up there and all Tasmanians expect more from our elected representatives when it comes to the behaviour in this place, the personal attacks in this place, the attacks on families in this place. They all expect a lot more. Before the member starts throwing mud at this side of the Chamber, I say have a look at your own backyard.

Can I say how enjoyable it is as Premier to get out and about in rural Tasmania, meeting and talking to people, listening to their aspirations and needs for their local community, such as the Huon electorate, where I have spent a great many hours.

Ms White interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You asked the question, I am answering it. I spent a great few hours with Aldo Antolli - what a great candidate he is.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Mr Speaker. You have made rulings in the past in terms of answers needing to be relevant to the question that was asked. I do not believe the Huon electorate was mentioned in the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER - As you well know, questions are wide-ranging and the response can be wide-ranging provided that the Premier has a point to his explanation. I am sure he is making that through his answer to the question, so I will allow it. The Premier is talking about Tasmania and Huon is one electorate, so that is the reality.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I acknowledge, Mr Winter, that the question did not mention the Huon, but it is relevant because you spoke about our team and I am looking forward to Aldo joining our team. In case people are a bit confused, Mr Speaker -

Ms White - I love how you have to distract.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In case people are wondering why I am speaking about an election in Huon, for those who might have missed it and they are googling it right now, what is going on with the Huon electorate? I suggest they google Bastian Seidel. When you google Bastian Seidel, what will probably come up is the word 'toxic'. That is not due to some ill-informed, anti-aquaculture discussion. That is due to the Labor Party's culture. Bastian Seidel was a great local member and a smart person who was a GP, and elected in 2020. There is no-one representing the Huon electorate now. In fact, there is meant to be an election in 2026, but not now. There is a reason for that. The Labor Party chews up and spits out good people.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Dr Seidel is a good person. He described the culture over there as toxic. What I have with my great team is a culture where every single person of my team feels valued. They do feel included. They are encouraged and supported to be the best government that we can be and the best members of parliament that they can be. That is the culture that I have when it comes to my team. It is not the toxic culture that you are responsible for, Ms White, for your team.

Commission of Inquiry - Confidence in Attorney-General

Ms WHITE question to ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Ms ARCHER

[10.42 a.m.]

Earlier this year, you groaned when I asked a question on behalf of a victim/survivor. You refused to apologise for more than a fortnight and in the process lost the confidence of victim/survivors in your fitness to be the minister responsible for overseeing the commission of inquiry and the implementation of its recommendations. Victim/survivors continue to speak out against you, a list now including your own brother. How can anyone have confidence in your ability to oversee the commission of inquiry if victim/survivors do not?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is interesting, is it not, that after one question going to the economy, that the Leader of the Opposition has stooped to personal attacks this morning?

Ms White - Questions of integrity, I would argue.

Ms ARCHER - She has even made things up in this Chamber and she should be held accountable for misleading parliament.

Ms White - They are matters of integrity.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Ms White, I warn you the same as I did Ms O'Connor. You have asked a question of the Attorney-General. Please do not badger her while she is answering your question.

Ms ARCHER - She throws around privilege in this place, constantly misleading parliament, making things up. Now, she is stooping to the level of personal politics. I will not be discussing personal family matters. I ask that members opposite respect that and refrain from referring to any member of my family in this place. It is off limits.

What I will say, as I have stated in parliament, I am sorry for the impact this matter has had on victim/survivors. In terms of child sexual abuse, we cannot change what has happened in the past but we can shape the future and make it a safer place for our children. That is exactly what we are doing as a government. It is exactly why we established the commission of inquiry, to bring these matters to light to ensure people in our care, even when members opposite were in government, that they are safe and protected and supported through this process or any person coming forward with their story.

The commission of inquiry is now underway, with hearings commencing this week. While there will undoubtedly be more distressing stories to come, we will allow this process to take its course independent of government. It is our intention to adopt all the recommendations from the commission of inquiry. We, and I, continue to encourage all survivors of child sexual abuse to come forward and seek support. Our Government will always consider feedback on ways to better support our victim/survivors.

Our record, and indeed my record in this place, in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse speaks for itself. I can run through a raft of recommendations from that royal commission that have been implemented, in both civil and criminal changes: changing the limitation period so that people can take civil proceedings; implementing the national redress scheme; and establishing a register for approved counselling and psychological care providers. There is the support out there for victim/survivors to come forward, to either seek redress or seek damages. Additionally, I have also amended the Evidence Act to extend prerecording of audio-visual evidence in criminal matters to include all victims in sexual abuse prosecutions regardless of their age at the time of the prosecution.

As I have said to members opposite, I encourage them to get out of the gutter. Get out of the gutter in relation to these matters. Have a look at the record of our Government. Have a look at my record in terms of legislative and justice reforms in this place since I have been

Attorney-General after the 2018 election, a significant period of time. I thank the Premier for continuing to have the confidence in me to implement these reforms.

Do not get personal on these matters. Each of us in this place has reasons or personal motivations for pursuing these reforms. Get out of the gutter.

JBS - Reputation

Dr WOODRUFF question to ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Ms ARCHER

[10.47 a.m.]

The corporate protein colossus, JBS, owned by the two Batista butchers of Brazil, has been exposed internationally for a litany of scandals. The ABC program, *Four Corners*, documented their self-confessed bribery and corruption, price-fixing, environmental damage and illegal deforestation of the Amazon, as well as their appalling record of workplace negligence, including in Tasmania.

The Batista brothers are on record confessing JBS's rapid global corporate expansion, including into Australia and the United States of America, came from cheap finance obtained by bribery of 1800 officials in Brazil. They were fined \$3.2 billion USD and jailed for that crime in Brazil. The use of the proceeds of crime to fund a venture is illegal. JBS has been convicted of that crime in the United States. Will you refer the purchase of Huon Aquaculture by JBS to the Australian Federal Police for investigation of criminal activity?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I appreciate that she is trying to connect this in some way to be within my portfolio responsibilities, but I do believe that this is a matter that comes under the portfolio of Primary Industries and Water.

However, I will say that foreign investment in Tasmanian industry often brings much-needed capital, technology and innovation into our state. It enhances the productivity and competitiveness of Tasmanian agriculture. Australia has a robust foreign investment framework to ensure that it benefits Tasmania, and I have every confidence in the Australian Government's ability to assess foreign investment proposals.

This is a federal matter. I appreciate that the Greens here are clutching at straws to try to connect it to my portfolio, but I do not see that I have responsibility for this matter.

Dr Woodruff - I am trying to get the Government to take action.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Ms ARCHER - If Dr Woodruff has a concern, she is quite able to make that type of reference herself -

Dr Woodruff - Why would not you be concerned?

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff

Ms ARCHER - to authorities if she believe she has evidence that requires a prosecution.

Housing Investment Plan

Mr ELLIS question to MINISTER for STATE DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION, and HOUSING, Mr BARNETT

[10.51 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the Tasmanian Government's plan to deliver the biggest ever housing investment in Tasmania's history, and how the Government will work with stakeholders to help deliver the plan, including unlocking more land? Are you aware of any other alternatives?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I say what an incredible honour it is to be appointed as Tasmania's Housing minister. I take the responsibility very seriously. I acknowledge the work of the former minister who sits behind me now as Treasurer. I also acknowledge my parliamentary secretary, Lara Alexander, and acknowledge her vast experience in this area.

As the Premier has made very clear today, Tasmanian families deserve a roof over their heads, they deserve a safe and secure home and, while we are implementing the largest social housing building program in history, there is still a lot more to do. We have a strong economy. The housing market is positive for so many Tasmanians, but I acknowledge that many Tasmanians are still doing it tough. I want to listen and understand the problems many vulnerable Tasmanians face and, as the new minister, I have begun these conversations. I am humbled and impressed by the commitment and the goodwill of the housing service providers, the stakeholders and the people supporting Tasmanians in need.

Last week I had a roundtable with Lara Alexander with Anglicare, Catholic Care, City Mission, the Mayor of Launceston and the Deputy Mayor of Launceston. The commitment and goodwill around that table was substantial and I acknowledge that. I thank them for meeting and sharing their thoughts and views. The challenges facing many Tasmanians need a collective solution, so we need a true partnership across governments, federal, state and local, across the community and for all members of parliament here.

To foster this collaborative response I will be convening a ministerial reference group which I expect to meet regularly to seek their advice on any gaps or challenges that remain, and to work for collaborative solutions. This group will take on work of the group that was convened after the housing summit in 2018, as was raised by Mr O'Byrne earlier, and it will help guide our policy settings and provide critical feedback to government. Over the coming weeks we will work to identify the membership of the group and the terms of reference.

The collaboration will be viable as we move to establish the new housing authority which will be aiming to commence prior to October this year. There is a lot of work to do and we must work in partnership with the housing and not-for-profit sectors. The drafting of the legislation to set up this new authority is underway and I look forward to bringing that forward to this House in the not too distant future.

I know that the housing market is tight and that more houses are needed. That is why we have a \$1.5 billion plan for 10 000 homes by 2032, outlined by the Premier this morning, the former minister, championing this great initiative. We have already built 237 homes in the last year, adding 28 social houses and dwellings and supported accommodation on average every month. There are 1169 long-term homes under construction with 110 places for homeless accommodation to be completed by June 2023. That is a total of 1500 homes by 30 June next year. That is the target and we are on track but there is a lot more work to do and we are going to build on that momentum.

Today I am very pleased to announce that I am advised that new housing supply orders will be tabled in this parliament that will open up significant parcels of land in Warrane and Burnie. We are talking about 100 new houses, thanks to that initiative of this Government, opening up more opportunities for more homes. These lots are in addition to the new land unlocked through our headworks holiday which has already created over 1038 new residential lots across the state. We have committed an additional \$15 million to the headworks holiday to unlock even more land for Tasmanians. At the same time, we are actively identifying opportunities for infill development and urban renewal through the Hobart City Deal, and we have approved more than 180 granny flats for long-term rentals under our Ancillary Dwellings Program.

Mr Speaker, there is a lot more work to do and I want to conclude on the fact that we need the support of all Tasmanians. We have three safe-space services and outreach support services and they are critical, \$30 million a year, and it was great to be with the Launceston Women's Shelter last week to double the capacity of that home and facility. We are committed to affordable housing and the challenges, we are taking decisive action, but we know there is a lot more work to do.

Commission of Inquiry - Confidence in Minister for Justice

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.56 a.m.]

Victim/survivors include the Minister for Justice's own brother, Paul Nylander, who is his own person and has given me permission to speak about him in this place. Your minister's attempt to shut that down is disrespectful to him and his right to be heard, because victim/survivors, including Mr Nylander, have publicly stated that they do not have confidence in the Minister for Justice's ability to oversee the commission of inquiry. This process is supposed to be about listening to victim/survivors after far too many years of being ignored and let down. Are you listening to them when they speak about their concerns about the Minister for Justice? Have you spoken to Mr Nylander personally? Given the concerns raised by victim/survivors about the Minister for Justice, who will you appoint to oversee the implementation of the commission of inquiry recommendations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. There could not be a more important topic and matter for discussion than that of protecting our children and young people from child sexual abuse or any form of abuse. That is why we set up the commission of inquiry. We have not hesitated to go where no other government has gone before and establish the commission

of inquiry because when it comes to the safety of our children in institutional settings, we need to do far better. We have to take responsibility for our failures, and governments of all colours have failed our children.

As minister for Education, I recognised that and set up that independent inquiry with Mr Smallbone and Mr McCormick. That considerable work is now in the hands of the commission.

It is important that we not only listen to survivors of child sexual abuse but importantly ensure they have the confidence to bring forward their voice in the first place and be heard. It is important that all our public servants also feel safe in bringing forward matters of considerable interest to the commission of inquiry, and I want to assure them, that every single Tasmanian should feel safe, supported to express their view and to recount their lived experience, as hard and as challenging and as traumatic as that could possibly be.

Some may choose not to and that is their right, but as Premier I want to make it very clear, that we need to ensure there are no barriers for people wishing to detail their lived experience. We can only acknowledge the failures of all governments of all colours for decades to ensure that we learn from those failures moving forward, which is why we have set up the commission of inquiry, where we do move forward to ensure that the systems we have are in place, that we have improved upon, and that we will need to continue to improve upon.

Despite all the work that our Government has done in recent years, led by our Attorney-General, I am sure there are still gaps. We will have no hesitation in ensuring that those gaps are addressed, and the recommendations of the commission of inquiry are implemented.

I have been asked whether we will implement the recommendations. Of course, we will implement the recommendations. As Premier I am committed, and I am committed in openness and transparency and accountability to ensure that it is my responsibility as Premier and with this Government that there is a mechanism where we can ensure there is oversight to ensure those recommendations are implemented. I will be seeking advice on ensuring the best way for that.

Governments change, and there needs to be the constant, irrespective of the colour of government, that our victims and survivors of abuse have the confidence that the recommendations of the commission of inquiry which we expect to be handed down in the middle of next year are implemented in full.

I have spoken to victims and survivors, just a few days ago. Questions were put to me around ensuring that people felt safe to bring forward their lived experiences, as traumatic as they are. I provided those assurances at what was an incredibly insightful, heartfelt and meaningful meeting and discussion that I had over the weekend. So, I give that commitment.

Mr Speaker, I recognise I have gone on for a little longer than expected, but it is important, and I want to reinforce this. We need to take any barrier away to ensure that our victim/survivors come forward with safety, detailing as traumatic it is their lived experience, and also have the confidence that when they bring those traumatic experiences forward that this Government will implement those recommendations in full from the commission of inquiry report.

Former Premier's Chief of Staff - New Position

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.05 a.m.]

You claim you want to lead a government with integrity but yet another leak from within your Government says that you intend to give the former premier's Chief of Staff, Andrew Finch, a golden handshake and a plum new job as the person responsible for the \$750 million floating stadium and potentially all of Tasmania's other stadiums too. Is this true? If so, how much is the payout and what will the salary of the new role be?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Mr Finch, the former premier's Chief of Staff is currently on leave as he was seconded from the State Service to Ministerial and Parliamentary Service. He will be returning to the State Service. As a government we are looking at options in relation to a suitable position in line with his employment contract.

You speak of payouts. I am not aware of a payout but Mr Finch has much to contribute. Mr Finch worked alongside former premier Gutwein for two years - some of the toughest years that this state has seen in generations. I want to ensure that Mr Finch's skills are well utilised in the public service.

Tasmanian Economy

Mr TUCKER question to TREASURER, Mr FERGUSON

[11.07 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the Government's strong plan to create a nation-leading economy? Are you aware of any alternatives?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for his question on this important matter.

From the outset, I take this opportunity to congratulate our new Premier on his appointment and leading the Government of conviction, accountability and integrity that he has outlined to Tasmanians. I believe Tasmanians are embracing it. Our whole team does. To set aside that awful negativity, what a united and strong and experienced team we have.

Our Government is very proud of our island's achievements in recent years. I thank the former premier and treasurer, Mr Gutwein, for his incredible work and his work ethic, which has really assisted Tasmania to lift. Instead of lagging the nation, we lead the nation. Businesses are feeling confident, resulting in more jobs and investment in our beautiful state. As Treasurer I am energised by the optimism that I see around Tasmania, not just in the business community but importantly in families, in communities and in community organisations. People believe that we can aspire to do more and great things, just like those mighty JackJumpers. It is a totem for how our state economy is going. We can do it.

As the Premier has outlined already, employment is now at the second-highest level on the state's record. I say the second-highest because the highest occurred only earlier this year. We now see more than 260 000 Tasmanians in work, confirmed by CommSec -

Ms White - Where is BPI at? Highest in 20 years.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - which has been rubbished, sadly, by members opposite who are just desperate for grubby politics. They have dismissed the CommSec report which showed that Tasmania is the nation's leading economy, not once, not twice but for the ninth consecutive quarter. There are a lot of reasons to be proud to be Tasmanian. The report says that Tasmania holds the mantle of the best-performing economy. That is based on strong performances across a whole range of indicators, backed up as well by the *Deloitte Access Economic Business Outlook Report* released recently for the March quarter:

Tasmania outsprinted the rest of Australia - and most of the world - through COVID, and it has navigated the early months of opening up well.

Deloitte's forecast economic growth of 5.6 per cent this financial year, which will be highest economic recovery in the country and our highest economic growth on record.

Recent Australian Bureau of Statistics also demonstrate our booming exports and strong housing construction. It says that:

In the December quarter we saw like a Don Bradman kind of result for housing completions - 999 -

Ms White - Population decline. People are leaving because they cannot get a house.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - Here in Tasmania in that December quarter, never before seen, and in the 12 months to February 3700 new homes completed, not just in the pipeline where there is about 4000, but completed. There is a lot of reasons to be proud of Tasmania.

If you live in south-east Tasmania you will be breathing a sigh of relief at not the duplicated roundabout but the new interchange that is open to traffic. That was interfered with by the Labor Party who tried to slow and stop that project but it opened to traffic yesterday. A big thank you to the Morrison Liberal Government for funding 80 per cent of that \$46 million project. Hazell Brothers won that design and contract job, with the opposition of members opposite including the temporary independent Labor member, Mr O'Byrne. It is great to see the men and women of Hazell Brothers, about 48 of them, whose jobs were created delivering that with great support from VEC Civil, those 22-metre spans built in Tasmania by VEC Civil, so there are a lot of reasons to be proud to be Tasmanian.

I was asked if there are any alternatives. Have a good look at the Opposition today, look where they have been, and look at why Aldo Antolli is going to the polls this Saturday - four years early because Bastien Seidel quit. He did not just quit the Labor Party, but then he quit parliament because he said he could not get anything done in a toxic team. Toxic, Mr Speaker.

There are no alternatives. There is just nasty, grubby politics bringing the standard down, playing personality politics, making stuff up, bringing families into this House - years of negativity and her colleagues talking Tasmania down at every opportunity. There is no alternative budget but, as I conclude, it is a great time to be Tasmanian. Tasmanians can get work now, with an unemployment rate of 4.5 per cent. Not long ago it was 3.9 per cent seasonally adjusted. That is allowing families to work, earn and plan for their futures with confidence. That is exactly what Tasmanians can continue to expect from the Rockliff Liberal Government supported by this incredible team of passionate Tasmanians.

Ms Jane Howlett MLC - Alleged Conflict of Interest

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.12 a.m.]

You cannot claim to lead a government with integrity while the Jane Howlett scandal remains unresolved. You cannot claim to lead a government with integrity while relying on her vote. Will you have the integrity to establish an independent inquiry into the serious conflict of interest allegations against her, or you will try to sweep this under the carpet like your predecessor did?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for her question. Yes, we have had a change or two on our side but your personal attacks have not changed and your attacks on members of parliament's families have not changed. I will not be taking myself or my team down to your level. You moved a motion calling for an inquiry when we last met as a House and I was part of a team that voted against that inquiry, if my memory serves me correctly. You have made no case for a conflict of interest against the former minister for sport, Ms Howlett, and there is no case for an inquiry.

My advice to you, Ms White, is that I know what Tasmanians care about - it is housing, the cost of living and our health services, which are increasingly in demand. They are the kind of questions the people of Tasmania expect Oppositions to ask and expect the Government to be held accountable to, which we are well and truly prepared to do. There has been no case made for conflict and there is no case for an inquiry.

Small Business Sector - Government Support

Mrs ALEXANDER question to MINISTER for SMALL BUSINESS, Ms OGILVIE

[11.15 a.m.]

My interest around this area is because of my passion for the not-for-profit and the social services sector, and my involvement with clubs and associations. It is well known that a big source of fundraising and support for the services is linked to the health of the small business sector. Could you update the House on what ongoing support is being provided for the small business sector?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mrs Alexander for her fantastic question. I will say how much I enjoy working with Mrs Alexander as she has such a strong grasp of commercial matters and is out and about in her electorate. I like working very closely with her.

I also congratulate the Premier on his much and very well-deserved elevation. What a great job he is doing. I will also quickly reflect on our TAFE people who were here. Although they have left, we have people there who are interested in small business. Small businesses are generated across the state from many ways and means, but particularly through TAFE, where we see trades such as digital technologists, hair and beauty, web developers, all sorts of skills coming out of TAFE then going on to start small businesses.

Today I would like to talk about small business from a statewide perspective. We know that it is the powerhouse of commercial activity in Tasmania. Our 39 000 small businesses employ around 100 000 people and they make up about 97 per cent of all business in our state. That is a huge component. That is why our Tasmanian Liberal Government will continue always to stand shoulder to shoulder with our small business sector in Tasmania.

I reiterate and remind everybody that during the pandemic we did that well. Since the start of the pandemic, our small businesses have received more than \$165 million in COVID-specific support programs. Our Government is continuing to support businesses facing challenges as we continue to transition beyond the COVID-19 times, most recently by making funding available through a fourth round of our COVID-19 Business Impact Support Program. The purpose of our program is to provide support for those businesses that are experiencing reduced trading caused by loss of staff due to COVID-19 exposure, or loss of business due to significantly lower than usual customer demand. They are the two pressure points.

I am pleased to report today that in round 1 of the program more than 900 businesses received funding totalling more than \$1 966 200, if I have that correct. In round 2 of the program 760 businesses were approved for a funding total of \$1.685 million. These are big figures and there has been a huge amount of support, but I am not saying that there is not more to do. We are moving into a new era and this Government will guide the sector and support them and continue to do everything we can to support them.

I note Mrs Alexander raised volunteer organisations and the social sector. I could not agree with her more. This part of Tasmania is the part with heart and it works best when small business and our economy is working well. We know we are doing that very well and this Government ought to be congratulated for that.

I remind everybody that round 4 of our current grants opened on 21 April, and so far 291 applications have been approved for funding of more than \$630 000, again, a substantial piece of work. Round 4 closes on Thursday 12 May 2022 so there is still some time to engage with that. Importantly, we have been listening. I have been listening. All our members have been listening. We have been meeting with our constituents. We have been at the local pubs and clubs, listening and engaging our communities. We have talked to small businesses. We have been asking 'How are you going? What more can we do to help you?'

Ms Finlay - Have you been to the north-east? Have you been to King Island? How is King Island going?

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms Finlay.

Ms OGILVIE - After round 1 we made some changes to simplify the application process. We doubled the maximum amount that is available to \$10 000.

Ms Finlay - How many \$10 000 grants have been issued?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms OGILVIE - In addition to our latest round of COVID-19 business impact support programs, we are also assisting our small businesses to access specialist financial guidance and advice through our \$1.2 million COVID-19 Small Business Advice and Financial Guidance Program. I am a huge supporter of this program. When you are running a small business and you go through a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, you might need to refresh your operations. You might need some advice about how to grow, expand, flex, go online - those sorts of issues. This program is well positioned to support that. I urge you to have a look at it.

Crucial support has been increased through the Business Tasmania service -

Ms Finlay - These things were created under pressure from Labor.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms OGILVIE - It is very hard to hear you with the mask. I am sorry. If I could hear you properly, I could probably respond but I cannot so I will not.

Ms Finlay - I am happy to respond to the invitation from the minister to ask her questions.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Bass.

Ms Finlay - She asked me if I could take my mask off.

Mr SPEAKER - Member for Bass, order. Interjections should cease.

Ms OGILVIE - Crucial support has been increased through the Business Tasmania service, and free business advice is provided under the Enterprise Centres Tasmania program, which is a very popular program, available statewide. We know people need a little extra support to navigate the current environment because it has certainly not been easy.

I conclude by saying how proud I am of the resilience that Tasmanian small businesses have displayed right through the pandemic. Unlike the whingeing we hear across here, our small businesses have not been doing that. They have been stepping up, they have been coming forward, they have been flexing, they have been pivoting to online, and they have been making it work. I know it has not been easy. I stand shoulder to shoulder with small businesses, as does our Government, and we are very proud of every single person.

Time expired.

PETITION

Wind Farms - Deferral of Development

[11.23 a.m.]

Ms Johnston presented a petition signed by approximately 300 citizens of Tasmania requesting that the House calls upon the Government to defer all wind farm development in Tasmania until the world's best practice is adopted by the EPA Board and an updated Threatened Tasmanian Eagles Recovery Plan is finalised.

Petition received.

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Castle Forbes Forest - Removal from Permanent Timber Production Zone

Mr Barnett tabled the response to a petition presented by Dr Woodruff on 11 November 2021:

- Petition No. 21 - See Appendix 1 on page 108.

MESSAGES FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

House Committee - Appointment of Members

The following message was received from the Legislative Council:

Mr Speaker,

The Legislative Council has made the following appointments to the Joint Committee of both Houses to control the Parliament House and Groiunds and other Matters:

The President;
Ms Forrest; and
Mrs Hiscutt.

Signed C. M. Farrell
President
3 May 2022

Library Committee - Appointment of Members

The following message was received from the Legislative Council:

Mr Speaker,

The Legislative Council has made the following appointments to the Joint Committee of both Houses to manage the Library:

The President;
Ms Armitage;
Ms Forrest;
Ms Howlett;
Ms Rattray; and
Mr Valentine.

Signed C. M. Farrell
President
3 May 2022

Resumption of Proceedings - Bills

Mr Speaker,

The Legislative Council having taken into consideration the Message of the House of Assembly requesting resumption of proceedings on the following Bills of the last Session, has agreed to resume proceedings on the said Bills at the stage at which they were interrupted by the prorogation of Parliament on 5 April 2022:

Criminal Code Amendment (Bill No. 4); and

Land Tax Rating Amendment (Bill No. 6).

Signed C. M. Farrell
President
3 May 2022

Attendance of Legislative Council Ministers at Question Time

Mr Speaker,

The Legislative Council desires to inform the House of Assembly that it agrees to the request of the Assembly in its Message dated 3 May 2022 and has granted leave to Members of the Legislative Council who are Ministers of the Crown to attend the House of Assembly if they think fit so as to respond specifically to Questions without Notice seeking information of the kind covered by the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly.

Signed C. M. Farrell
President
3 May 2022

**HEALTH LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 2022
(No. 19)**

Bill presented by Mr Rockliff and read the first time.

**VEHICLE AND TRAFFIC AMENDMENT (DRIVER DISTRACTION AND
SPEED ENFORCEMENT) BILL 2022 (No. 20)**

Bill presented by Mr Ferguson and read the first time.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Crisis in the Ambulance Service

[11.31 a.m.]

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

That the House take note of the following matter: crisis in the ambulance service.

From the outset of speaking of this matter of public importance this morning, I say that I continue to be frustrated by this Government coming in here each and every day saying that they are investing more in health services and improving access to better health services no matter where Tasmanians live, right across Tasmania, when it is simply not the case. This is devastating, particularly for rural and regional communities across Tasmania, and this Government needs to take responsibility and they need to do better.

Tasmania has the worst ambulance response times across the country. That is disgraceful. Those response times have increased by 30 per cent since this Liberal Government came to office in 2014. I want to get an update today from the minister on a number of areas when he makes his address. I want to understand what he is doing, for example, at Ouse, where we have seen a significant disruption to general practice there with there not being a GP in that local community. What are you doing to make sure that that community gets access to general practice, but more importantly, what about the greater impact this will have on the provision of emergency services and ambulance services that are provided across that community?

Earlier this month there was a terrible tragedy in Tasmania where an elderly man in the north waited seven hours for an ambulance and when the ambulance staff arrived, that man was dead. I put on the record my condolences and thoughts to the family and loved ones of that elderly gentleman. This is simply disgraceful. Ambulance Tasmania and the minister have given an undertaking to investigate this case but we want to understand what actually happened here. How was this allowed to happen? When that investigation takes place, will that be made public? It is critical that we understand what took place and why this happened and, most importantly, what will be put in place to ensure that it does not happen again.

It is a disgrace. We see volunteer firefighters being called out to attend patients across communities. Not so long ago we saw police officers having to respond to an unresponsive child in the northern suburbs of Hobart. This is an ambulance system that is in crisis and this

Government is doing nothing about it. You only have to look across Tasmania, whether it be metropolitan stations or our rural and regional stations, to see they are all under increasing pressure. They have fatigue alerts across many stations, they have unfilled shifts, and they have significant staff shortages. We have had reports from volunteer ambulance officers about the state of the professional development they receive and the support they receive from this Government.

We had a comprehensive policy at the last state election around improving access to emergency care across Tasmania. That involved providing greater support and resources to our volunteer ambulance officers and ensuring that there are more double branch stations across Tasmania. We also made a commitment to employ 144 more paramedics. The Government said they have recruited 243 new paramedics across the state. What would be more interesting is to understand how many have left since they have come to government.

The other really alarming thing that has been brought to the attention of Tasmanians in recent times is the resilience scan that was done - the internal survey by Ambulance Tasmania - that showed that a third of the 323 paramedics interviewed said they had experienced depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder. This is an indictment on this Government. What are you doing to better support our hardworking paramedics? I put on the record today my thanks and gratitude to all our paramedics working across Tasmania and to our amazing volunteers who work across our communities, often on their own, doing an amazing job responding under extraordinary circumstances under incredible pressure. I extend my thanks to them.

I want to understand what this Government is doing about the culture within Ambulance Tasmania. Culture starts at the top. It starts with the government of the day and it is time that this Government started taking responsibility for that. It was not until there was an RTI lodged that more information about that resilience scan was made publicly available to the Tasmanian community. Tasmanians deserve to have information presented to them, particularly when it is of such a concerning nature as this - about the health and wellbeing of our paramedics.

This Government's budget management is not working for Tasmanians. The services this Government is providing are not delivering to Tasmanians. You cannot get the basics right, particularly when it comes to emergency care across our communities. We want to see more consultation with volunteer ambulance officers. We want to see more consultation with the unions responsible for representing our paramedics and volunteer ambulance officers across Tasmania.

We want to see action on bed-block. The LGH has the worst bed-block in the country, closely followed by the Mersey Community Hospital. What is this Government doing about it? Years ago, under the former failed minister, Michael Ferguson, we had an Access Solutions meeting. We have not had much since then when we looked at Access Solutions and accessing emergency care through emergency departments because this is part of a wider systematic problem that this Government is simply not addressing.

The final thing I want to make some remarks on today is around the investment, commitments and announcements made around infrastructure across our ambulance services. The Burnie and Glenorchy superstations are significantly delayed. Four years and three premiers on we still do not have a Burnie superstation or a Glenorchy superstation. Why do we not have those? Because this Government makes announcements but they do not deliver

and they are not delivering for Tasmanians when it comes to emergency services. We want to see a dedicated commitment from the Premier for greater investment in better support and resources for our paramedics and our volunteer ambulance officers right across Tasmania.

Time expired.

[11.38 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Health) - Mr Speaker, I thank the member for bringing forward this very important matter of public importance. First, I thank our very valued Ambulance Tasmania staff and volunteers who do an extremely important job and often, as we know, in very challenging circumstances as they are our first responders.

Ambulance Tasmania is implementing a range of measures to the value of paramedics and Ambulance Tasmania staff designed to improve workplace culture and provide additional support for employees following the organisation's first-ever resilience scan. I am proud of our chief executive, Joe Acker, for taking the lead on that resilience scan so we can have a better understanding of circumstances and the wellbeing of our paramedics and Ambulance Tasmania staff.

It is undeniable that our Government has delivered more funding, more staffing, and more health services than any previous government. As of January this year, we have employed an additional 243 full-time equivalent staff at Ambulance Tasmania since we came to government in March 2014. We have also upgraded ambulance stations around the state and are in the process of delivering new stations in Burnie and Glenorchy.

Despite this, there are ongoing challenges. We are seeing increasing demand for ambulance services. In the 2020-21 financial year, there were 105 327 ambulance responses, an increase of 29 per cent since the 2015-16 financial year. That is why we have introduced a number of initiatives such as the secondary triage initiative. As of April this year, 2120 triple zero calls have been diverted for an emergency ambulance response since the commencement of secondary triage on 22 February 2021.

We have also introduced PACER, a mental health co-response service staffed by mental health clinicians, paramedics and police officers. There are very clear objectives to PACER: improve access to timely, appropriate, evidence-based, least restrictive, mental health care; improve outcomes for mental health consumers by enabling access to the right care at the right place at the right time; significantly reduce the mental health demand on police and ambulance services; reduce avoidable mental health presentations to our emergency departments; and increase the service capacity across the three agencies, working in partnership, promoting into agents of operation, collaboration and importantly communication; reducing adverse outcomes and restrictive practices; improving linkages with community-based mental health supports.

These are the areas of innovation reform and investment that we are doing to improve our paramedic response times, reducing the pressure on our emergency departments. People with serious mental health episodes are receiving care in the community. As you would appreciate, Mr Speaker, the emergency department is not the place for people with serious mental illness. In the first 13 weeks of operation, PACER has responded to callouts to 370 people. The number of conditions ranged from suicidal ideation, psychosis, depression, anxiety, confusion and incoherence. Welfare checks were also conducted. The majority,

73 per cent, were supported to remain in the community. This is the importance of innovations such as this.

As I said earlier, in 2021 at the state election, we committed to recruiting an additional 48 paramedics across the state. As part of our response to COVID-19, we have moved to immediately bring on these positions. We have already filled 44 of these positions; 24 of these additional paramedics represent new crews in Hobart and Launceston, while the other 24 are based in rural and regional areas in Tasmania. However, we have not stopped there. I announced previously that we are also recruiting an additional 11 paramedics which will see stations in Huonville and Sorell upgraded to career stations where a fully qualified paramedic crew will be on duty 24 hours seven days a week.

We have not stopped there. We continue to ensure that paramedics are well supported but also increased in resources. We are investing \$9 million to upgrade our Ambulance Tasmania vehicle fleet and deliver the contemporary equipment that paramedics need. This investment will deliver 30 new ambulance vehicles in the financial year alone. These new vehicles will be equipped with best practice systems, and the build and fit out will be completed in Tasmania.

I will touch on the very serious matter Ms Dow raised about the ambulance response time, the seven hours wait. I offer my sincere condolences to the family and friends of the person who sadly passed away. I am advised that a review of the case is being commenced to examine all the circumstances of the incident, including operational activity at the time, call taking, dispatch procedures and other factors. I am further advised that Ambulance Tasmania has met with the family and will continue to do so throughout the course of the review. A serious incident panel will undertake a root cause analysis in relation to the matter. This is a validated, investigative process designed to identify underlying systems problems that may contribute to adverse patient outcomes. Where system issues are identified, the panel will make recommendations to mitigate and mediate these areas for implementation by the organisation to reduce the likelihood of such serious events ever happening again.

[11.45 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise to contribute on this matter of public importance because access to healthcare is one of the most pressing priorities for Tasmanians across our state - not just now, it has been for quite some time.

I commend the comments made by colleague, the Deputy Leader for the Labor Party, Anita Dow, and the shadow minister for health. In her contribution, she highlighted the challenges that are being faced by our ambulance paramedics and volunteer ambulance officers - the increasing demand that they are trying their very hardest to respond to and to meet - and also the pressures that our hospitals are facing, whether it be our major city hospitals or our regional hospitals as well as access to primary health care in our rural areas.

I note that the Minister for Health and Premier did not respond to the direct question that was asked about what is happening at Ouse, and how the Government is going to continue to support that community. Over 1000 patients have been told that the practice they used to access at Ouse has closed. They have been told to find other places where they can access a GP, which is challenging. That will also put further pressure on ambulance services. People in that community who are in desperate need of healthcare, who no longer have access to a GP, will

rely on the Ambulance Service. They will rely on the major hospitals, presenting to the emergency departments, in order to access the healthcare that they need.

Sadly, there are many people in our rural communities who are in similar situations. They cannot access healthcare close to where they live. This is why it would have been very pleasing to hear an update on what is happening there from the minister today. I spoke with the Mayor of the Central Highlands, Loueen Triffitt, this morning about this situation. She explained to me that the Premier and Minister for Health had offered to get back to her. She is yet to hear from the Government. Yesterday I received a response from the Minister for Health and Premier to a letter I wrote on behalf of the community that outlined the Government's acknowledgement that there is a problem with access to healthcare in the Central Highlands, particularly in Ouse. However, there was no commitment, at this stage, from the Government to address that shortfall in access. In the meantime, those patients are left in limbo.

Our ambulance paramedics are picking up that slack and those volunteer ambulance officers along with them. On this point, and I spoke about it yesterday, but I will repeat it: it is of critical importance that, in the upcoming Budget, the Government provides additional funding for the Ambulance Service as well as our health system more broadly.

The resilience scan, which we finally saw some parts of this year, demonstrates a very poor culture across Ambulance Tasmania. Workers there feel unsupported in the important work that they do, and as though their participation in that resilience scan was worth nothing because no changes have occurred since the Government was provided with the information from the scan.

I commend the CEO, Joe Acker, for taking the initiative to undertake the scan. I implore the Government and the minister and the Premier to do something with the information he now has, that has been garnered through the scan. It shows very clearly the stress our ambulance paramedics are facing, the pressure they are dealing with day to day, the lack of resourcing across our stations. There is a lack of shifts being filled, which means many of them are doing far beyond what would be reasonable for any person to do in that job.

I spoke last night of the paramedic I had spoken to who had just come off a 17-hour shift, and had dealt with some incredibly traumatic incidences during that time. They are not superheroes; they may well be to the people they save the lives of everyday, but we have to remember they are just ordinary people who will do a job because they care deeply about other people and we have to look after them. We cannot expect them to keep working under those situations in those environments without recognising the impact it is having on their mental health and their ability to continue to do their job with the degree of professionalism and passion that they have, without that in some way being impacted.

The Government cannot do a resilience scan and then not take action to address the critical and serious concerns that have been raised by that scan. You should not take waiting until a budget to see some action from the Government on this. It has already taken too long. However, if that is what we have to wait for then I really hope we see some clear commitments from this Government in the upcoming budget to further improve resourcing to ambulance services across the state.

I implore the Minister for Health, who may not have heard my contribution last night, to consult with ambulance volunteers. Our volunteer ambulance officers across the state do a

remarkable job, and they understand that we need to provide additional resourcing to those stations that are facing huge demand pressures. The Government has already announced additional funding towards paramedics for Huonville and Sorell but in doing so you have caused enormous distress to the volunteers who, in some cases, have given decades of their time to support their community by working out of those stations to support the work of those services. They found out about that through the media. There was no prior consultation to inform them that they would be replaced by permanent paramedics and they feel disrespected and are really quite angry about how this has been handled by the Government.

If the minister is going to make further announcements of that nature, I implore him to consult with the volunteer ambulance officers and those stations before the announcements are made public, and to make it clear how valued those volunteers are because without them the ambulance service would fall over.

Time expired.

[11.52 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I will make some opening comments about the terrible death three weeks ago in the Royal Hobart Hospital emergency area. This has been the subject of the conversation today and much media coverage. My heart goes out to the family of that person. There is a coronial investigation underway and we will find out the details. Meanwhile, a family is suffering and other people who will be very closely affected are the paramedics and the nursing staff who were there at the time. I have no doubt that they were all doing their absolute best under very difficult circumstances to provide a high-quality of care as all of our paramedics, volunteer ambulance officer and nursing staff in our hospitals do every single day. Thanks to them, people get fantastic quality of care when they are able to be seen.

The issue here is resourcing. At the end of the day it all comes back to how the money flows. In our health system, since the Liberals came to government in 2014, we have had a serial under-investment in health and funding, every single budget. In the first budget, \$205 million was removed, \$100 million of that was put back in the following year, but there was \$205 million immediately taken out of Tasmania's health budget by the Liberals when they came to government in 2014. That had a devastating long-term impact on all our health services. The ripple effect of that is being felt today.

Since then, the hospital budget, as the former minister, Mr Ferguson liked to say, is bigger every year. Of course it will be; it has to be because the population is getting older. We are all collectively getting sicker as a Tasmanian population. More people will go to hospital. It has to grow but it also has to expand and it has to meet the real CPI. That is what the Liberals have never done every single year.

Coming to ambulances, I want to talk in particular about the minister's comments about the upgrades to Huonville, Sorell, Kingston and Dodges Ferry. The issue here is a bit of smoke and mirrors. The Greens are very supportive of the work of the ambulance volunteer and paid paramedics at those stations, as we are everywhere but we have a situation where we have been transferring volunteer positions to salaried paramedics in these stations. We support that. We know that the professional ambulance association supports that.

The problem is that this does not actually increase the real number of people who are available to drive and work in ambulances. Therefore it does not increase the services available to regional Tasmanians. It also does not help improve the situation of long ramping queues at the hospitals. It has not taken the pressure off the system that we need to have. It is very important that we continue to improve patient outcomes by upgrading the clinical care. We commend the Government for this work. It is very important that we do everything we can to reduce paramedic fatigue and to increase paramedic safety. The issue here is the lack of overall investment that continues to be made in ambulance services in Tasmania. Until we see some real money towards that coming in, in this budget, we will not get the change we need to increase the flow of patients from the emergency department into the hospital so they are not stuck in that terrible limbo land in the emergency area in the Royal Hobart Hospital and in our other hospitals. It also will not fundamentally stop the ramping of ambulances waiting outside the hospital, holding up those crews from being able to attend other emergencies when people ring 000 in desperate need.

That is what we have to do. We have to have more investment in paramedics and volunteers. We can do that. The Greens committed to this last year at the state election. We committed to invest in 224 extra full-time equivalent positions into Ambulance Tasmania staffing, in the first year 119 and two years after that 105. We committed to investing in 27 new ambulances, seven new light fleet vehicles with extra stations as well at Rokeby, the Channel, Ouse and Legana. This is possible. We had a fully costed alternative budget if the Premier and the Minister for Health wants to draw his attention to that. We invested over the forward Estimates \$88 million into ambulance staffing and ambulances and infrastructure themselves.

When the Premier, the Minister for Health, talks about the fact that the Liberals have funded an extra 243 full-time equivalent ambulance staff since 2014 we listened to the ambulance paramedics association last year, and that is why we made that extra investment. That is what they say we need in Tasmania.

Time expired.

[12.00 p.m.]

Mrs ALEXANDER (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I would like to add my comments as well to the discussion on the ambulance service, especially the discussion about how the ambulance service is supported in the state. On a side matter, I have an interest in that. I spent about six years working with the ambulance service in Western Australia. One of my activities at that time was supporting regional centres across Western Australia which numbered about 100 volunteer centres and 10 paid centres. I learnt a lot about their operations and became quite passionate about it.

First, I acknowledge and thank the hardworking staff currently working in our hospitals and in Ambulance Tasmania. Their work is fundamental. It has been a very difficult time for Tasmania and for the country over the last two years.

One of the important things that comes up in analysing how much money has to be put in an ambulance service is basically looking at the methodology and the analysis of how patient flow occurs, especially through regional emergency departments. A number of studies around the world have tried to address this complex issue, which is not unique to Tasmania. It is something faced by the rest of the world. The most recent report that we have seen coming out of Queensland, as recently as 13 April, was an important report that came out with comments

about the ramping time in Queensland being the worst in the country, as well as Victoria. So those challenges are statewide in other states and are also worldwide.

What is important? It is very important that the Government has committed to commissioning a review of the ambulance service demand across the state. This review is paramount because if we make piecemeal adjustments to what we think is a commitment in just the workforce area we may fail to address the ambulance vehicles themselves. How many of the vehicles are allocated for emergency transport and how many are allocated for patient transport vehicles; the state of the fleet as well as what other investments need to be made in actual ambulance stations, location of those stations, population growth, capacity to respond and, as commented on before, what has been provided for the volunteers and the volunteer capacity to support the ambulance service as well as how they support other emergency services across the state?

Volunteers do a fantastic job. I have seen it over 100 centres in Western Australia which are supported by volunteer ambulance officers and their contribution cannot be overestimated. I have also seen the other side where sometimes the need arises to provide paid paramedics in certain ambulance centres simply because a regular servicing of 24/7 from a pool of volunteers becomes quite difficult. The flow of that service may not be provided continuously simply drawing from the volunteer base. Sometimes, supplementation with paid paramedics is necessary and it is in this instance, obviously, that call was made and paid paramedics were introduced in the service.

Having said that, I am sure that Ambulance Tasmania values the contribution of volunteers as well - as we all do here - because they make a tremendous contribution.

In addition to commissioning the review of the Ambulance Service demand across the state, it is also very important to look at additional services that remove pressure on the 000 calls and things like PACER - Police, Ambulance and Clinical Early Response - and secondary triage, community rapid response, hospice in the home and very importantly, the commissioning of new hospital beds. As we know, ramping is directly linked to having the capacity to transfer the flow of patients into the additional beds, so that is extremely important. In addition to that, we understand, and everybody recognises, the work pressures that paramedics and first responders are under.

Investing in our nation-leading health and wellbeing program for the emergency service personnel is very important. I understand that the Government has committed to doubling the funding to this vital service, the health and wellbeing program, with a current provision of \$3 million per year, ensuring that all emergency service personnel and volunteers are able to receive the support that they require through this particular program.

Investing in the ambulance infrastructure is currently happening. As this rolls out, the investment in the ambulance infrastructure across the state, with the new stations planned at Burnie and Glenorchy, it is important, it is happening but obviously future developments will be based on the review of the ambulance service that is happening. Again, it is important to look at response times, which we know are critical.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

**YOUTH JUSTICE AMENDMENT (SEARCHES IN CUSTODY)
BILL 2022 (No. 9)**

Second Reading

[12.07 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill now be read a second time.

This bill addresses concerns raised by The Commissioner for Children and Young People, who I will refer to as the commissioner, following media reports of two separate incidents involving personal searches of youths in the Hobart Reception Prison in early 2019.

In response to these reports, the commissioner undertook a review of the relevant legislation policies and procedures regarding personal searches of children and young people and provided a memorandum of advice which was made public on the commissioner's website. The commissioner provided her memorandum of advice to assist the development of reform to better promote and protect the wellbeing and best interests of children and young people in custodial facilities.

The objective was to ensure relevant legislation, policies and procedures regarding searches are in line with well-established human rights standards and principles and contemporary best practice.

The commissioner's review made eight recommendations to the Tasmanian Government. While the commissioner's review was in part in response to reports regarding the personal searching of youths within the Hobart Reception Prison, it considered searches of children and young people held in custody in custodial facilities generally. These are police watch houses, prisons, including the reception prisons, and detention centres. The review considered the continuum of search types of children in custody from least intrusive to more intrusive, with a detailed review of the legislation and procedures governing searches of young people in custodial facilities.

Our Government thanks the commissioner for raising these issues and I am pleased to inform the House that we have acted on these recommendations.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to minimising the need for intrusive searches in our custodial facilities, whilst balancing the need for searches for safety and security reasons. Searches prevent potentially harmful and prohibited items, such as drugs and weapons, from entering the custodial system and reduce the risk of self harm and harm to others, including staff. I am pleased to advise the practice of routine personal searches has already ceased in all custodial facilities in Tasmania. The extent and nature of the searches being undertaken is determined by individual circumstances and least intrusive principles.

However, this bill drives a paradigm shift, expanding these principles in a consistent way across all custodial facilities for youth, ensuring a trauma-informed approach to keeping children and young people safe in our facilities. It builds safeguards around all search types, with extra safeguards for personal searches, defined in the bill as 'unclothed searches'.

In delivering these legislative reforms our Government has also been responsive to the commissioner's recommendation to invest in alternative security strategies such as body scanners that will minimise the reliance on more invasive search types.

In March 2021, as Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, I was pleased to announce the commitment of \$1.3 million to body-scanning technology in the Hobart and Launceston reception prisons, the Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison and the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. The new full-body scanners will be able to detect objects on or inside a person's body and clothing without the need to physically remove items of clothing or make any physical contact with the person being searched. Scanners are able to provide an instant internal image that can reveal contraband such as drugs, mobile phones and weapons. Body scanners are another tool to support the safety of staff of youth in custody and, importantly, reduce the conduct of more intrusive searches that involve touching the youth or removing their clothing.

I am appreciative of the involvement of many key stakeholders in making these changes. The bill has been developed through an interagency working group chaired by the Department of Justice and composed of senior executives from the Department of Justice, Communities Tasmania and the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. Through this collaborative effort, agencies have responded to the commissioner's advice and public and stakeholder feedback to deliver a bill that is consistent with national standards and international conventions relating to the treatment of young offenders.

In drafting the bill, I am particularly mindful that young people are among the most vulnerable members of our community. Our Government recognises that the way we engage with young offenders must reflect this vulnerability. I also acknowledge that the current legal framework is complex, with powers to search a youth in custody and custodial facilities located in a number of acts. Further, responsibility for different custodial facilities is defined in different acts administered by the Minister for Children and Youth, the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency and me as Minister for Corrections.

I take this opportunity to thank my ministerial colleagues for their support in delivering this bill to the House. We share a commitment to the protection of children and young people in each of our facilities, which has helped us develop the transformative changes in this bill for a consolidated and comprehensive search framework for youth in custody.

I will now outline and address key elements of the bill. Regarding searches to which this bill applies, the bill responds to the issue of complexity in the searches framework highlighted by the commissioner by defining the discretionary power to search a youth in custody in custodial facilities in the Youth Justice Act 1997. This means where a youth is in custody in a custodial facility in Tasmania, the provisions detailed in this bill will apply in relation to those searches.

Custodial facilities are a watch house or detention centre as currently defined in the Youth Justice Act 1997, and a prison defined as under the Corrections Act 1997. This includes the Risdon Prison Complex, Ron Barwick Prison, Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison, as well as the Hobart and Launceston reception prisons, Ashley Youth Detention Centre and certain areas of police stations.

Importantly, this bill does not authorise or apply to body cavity searches. This very rare search type will continue to be subject to existing stringent requirements in other acts. Body

cavity searches can only be authorised by a magistrate such as under the Misuse of Drugs Act 2001, the Poisons Act 1971, or Forensic Procedures Act 2000. The limitations on these searches are defined in those acts and this bill does not alter those requirements.

Regarding authority to search and authorisation, for prisons and detention centres, the bill establishes that the authority to search is the person responsible for the custodial facility, and the officers they authorise. In respect to prisons, the authority is the Director of Corrective Services, correctional officers specified in the director's standing orders and a correctional officer ordered by the director to conduct the search. In respect to detention centres, the authority is the secretary responsible for the Youth Justice Act, the detention centre manager established under the act, persons specified in the secretary's instructions, and a person ordered by the secretary or detention centre manager to conduct the search.

A police officer is also authorised to conduct a search. This power is consistent with the other statutory powers and responsibilities of police officers. However, any police officer or authorised officer must not conduct an unclothed search unless they are authorised by the relevant authorising authority for their facility.

Under requirements as to the gender of the search officer conducting the search, the bill takes a best-practice approach to the required gender of the search officer for particular searches. The required gender means male search officers search male youths and female search officers search female youths. Special provisions apply to youths who are transsexual, transgender or intersex. If their preferred gender is not immediately available, the youth may request a male or female search officer to conduct the search.

A search that does not involve the removal of clothing or any touching is, as far as is reasonable and practical, to be conducted by a person of their own or required gender. Searches that do involve the removal of clothes or touching of a youth must be conducted by the required gender, unless the person in charge of the facility authorises an exception because of the urgency of the search due to the risk of harm to the youth or another person. For unclothed searches this also applies to persons observing the search.

The limited exceptions allowed by the bill recognise that these provisions apply to all custodial facilities including police watch houses, where officers of the required gender may not always be available. However, the exceptions are subject to appropriate safeguards depending on the type of search undertaken.

As to the conduct of search and use of force, the bill establishes decision-making criteria for the type of and manner in which searches are conducted. Searches of youth must only be conducted when a search officer or the relevant authorising authority believes on reasonable grounds that the search is necessary for a relevant search purpose, which I will describe later. Also, the type and manner of search must be proportionate to the circumstances.

The bill includes provisions supporting the implementation of the least intrusive framework in decision-making and conduct of searches, including limitations on clothing removal, completing the search as quickly as possible, providing that any use of force is subject to the requirements of being the least intrusive option, and the youth is afforded reasonable privacy.

The least intrusive framework continues to apply in both the authorisation and the conduct of unclothed searches. The bill recognises searches of youth that involve removal of clothing have the potential to cause greater distress or trauma and that it is the most intrusive type of search. It also recognises that this type of search will sometimes remain necessary for legitimate reasons, including the safety of the youth and other persons.

For unclothed searches the bill requires specific approval from a relevant authorising officer to conduct this kind of search. There are also limitations to the purposes for which an unclothed search can be conducted. Unclothed searches cannot be conducted simply for the taking of items into safekeeping. This was in response to an issue highlighted by the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania during consultation.

In applying these principles, some searches will still involve intrusive acts such as needing to touch a youth when searching, such as for frisk searches when necessary. Technically any touching of another person under a statutory power can be seen as a use of force. The bill makes clear that a search officer must not use force unless it is the only means by which the search can be reasonably conducted, and must be the least amount of force necessary.

Use of force is also subject to other relevant requirements such as considering information provided by the youth and reducing distressing trauma to the youth as far as practicable. This recognises that contact between the search officer and the youth can be necessarily part of some search types. However, the bill responds to the commissioner's recommendations on use of force by effectively making significant force, such as forcible restraint of a youth, a last resort.

To ensure accountability for use of force in searches of youths, the bill provides for reporting requirements for the use of force, other than excluded force, to the person in charge of the custodial facility. For example, this ensures that relevant force will be recorded and reported for timely review.

Relevant search purposes: the purposes in the bill for which a search can be conducted reflect the purposes already defined in acts relating to searches in custody in custodial facilities, including the Police Offences Act 1935, Corrections Act 1997 and Youth Justice Act 1997. That means a search can only be conducted when one of the purposes of the search is associated with: the safety of youth or others, to obtain evidence, to ascertain whether the youth has possession of a concealed weapon or drugs and, where the search is a clothed search, the removal of articles belonging to the youth.

Determination of least intrusive type and manner of search: the Tasmanian Government has listened to stakeholder feedback and has included a hierarchy of searches in the bill. This provides clarity for search officers to enable them to determine the least intrusive search type against a continuum of search intrusiveness.

Informing Youth: the Commissioner's Memorandum of Advice highlighted the importance of youth being informed about searches while in custody, and recommended improvements to operational procedures in this regard.

The bill establishes requirements that a youth is to be informed of the intent to search, informed if an unclothed search is to be conducted, and provided the opportunity to voluntarily

surrender items in reasonable privacy. The bill requires search officers to take into account information provided by youths, including their preferences, to ensure a trauma-informed approach. In practice, for example, sometimes a search purpose might be achieved either through patting down a youth's pockets or the youth removing their jacket to show whether or not their pockets are empty. Some youths may feel more vulnerable being patted down, while others may prefer a pat down to taking off any clothing. This bill ensures their preferences will be considered.

The bill also requires general information to be available for viewing in custodial facilities about search obligations. This will help youth and their representatives know they can ask for more information about search procedures, complaint processes and so on. A facility's search procedures must also be made available online, with any necessary redaction for security purposes.

Register of Searches: our Government recognises consistent search register requirements are necessary to monitor the conduct of searches of youth in custody. The bill requires these searches conducted under its provisions to be recorded in search registers, including the degree of intrusiveness, the use of force, and any other details required by regulations.

The register is to be available for inspection by the Custodial Inspector, the Ombudsman, a person approved by the person in charge of the custodial facility, or a person or body prescribed in regulations.

The Tasmanian Government expects relevant operational procedures may require review on commencement of this bill and intends to engage with key stakeholders as part of this process. As always, this would include consultation, particularly between relevant departments, the commissioner and the Custodial Inspector.

Our Government is committed to further positive outcomes for children and young people through the Tasmanian Government's Youth Justice Reform process being undertaken by the Minister for Education, Children and Youth.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

[12.24 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I am pleased to make representation on behalf of the Labor Party on this bill. I do so noting that the member who would have been doing the bill has COVID-19 at the moment. She is very disappointed that she is not here to be part of this debate. We have had some very detailed conversations. She has asked me to ask a number of questions that I am sure the Attorney-General will be able to answer.

I start by noting the second reading speech. As I have often said, there are a lot of debates about second reading speeches and their importance. This one contained a significant amount of detail. I commend the minister for that. I have expressed before my concern about some of the politicisation of second reading speeches, but this is a very descriptive second reading. I appreciate it, particularly given that there may be times when this speech is referred to in the future in terms of stated intent of the bill.

We stand here, almost three years to the day, from the recommendations of the Commissioner for Children and Young People being released on 7 May 2019. We stand here

today on 4 May 2022 debating this bill. I know that the commissioner for children had significant concerns about the delay and wrote to the Government to ask what the progress of that bill was.

I want to give some of the framework of the reason that we are here. The advice that was provided by the Commissioner for Children and Young People was intended to:

[a]ssist Tasmanian government agencies to better promote and protect the wellbeing and best interests of children and young people in their custodial facilities, by ensuring that relevant legislation, policies and procedures regarding searches, particularly strip searches, are in line with well-established human rights, standards, and principles contemporary best practice.

The commissioner referred to, at that stage, the recent 2019 media report relating to the practise of routine strip searching of children at the Hobart Reception Prison, which had led to the provision of the advice, but determined that its scope should be broader to focus on and encompass the circumstances of all children and young people held in custody and custodial facilities who may be subjected to searches, including in police watch houses, reception prisons, and detention centres. Additionally, while the advisers had a particular focus on strip searches, it was necessary to consider strip searching within a continuum of alternative available search types, from the least intrusive to the comparatively more intrusive.

The data released at that stage by the Department of Justice show that in the 2018 calendar year, 218 minors in custody of the Tasmanian Police Service were subject to a strip search by Tasmanian Prison staff. Data released by the Department of Communities showed that a total of 203 unclothed searches were conducted on children and young people at Ashley Youth Detention Centre in the period from 1 June to 30 November 2018. No contraband was found as a result of any of those searches.

That leads to a debate around the value of searches. Civil libertarians have a very strongly held view that no search is appropriate and that these searches were appropriate. Because contraband was not found, it is very clear that there is no reason to have these searches because rarely is anything found. The view of those in the custodial system is that the fact you know you are going to be searched means that you may not have contraband. So, we come from a very diverse set of views when we come to this bill today.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People made very clear that she believed the practice of routine strip searching in custodial settings of children was not acceptable and that a proportioned risk-based approach to all searches would be more in line with human rights, principles, and standards. Explaining the basis for her views, she suggested a way forward, which she thought could be achieved in a way that maintained a promote to the safety and security of custodial environments of children and young people, staff, visitors and others.

One of the interesting things that came out of her work and consultation is that some young people, despite what we may have thought, felt that searches made them a little safer. I think that is something that must be considered. So often we fail to hear the voices of those people who are most directly impacted within legislation.

With that, I want to address the bill. I am a former minister responsible for Ashley, so I carry with that all of the weight and responsibilities of everyone who has been a minister in any custodial setting. I know that I have been kept awake at night quite a lot over the last few years as more and more has been revealed about what has taken place in Ashley, which was the detention centre I had some responsibility for, for a period.

It is important that everyone who has come to this point reflects very much on what they may have done differently and, importantly, always, as we stand here today, what we may do going forward. The responsibility lies heavily on ministers of the day. Their responses to what they were advised, the acts that they take affect the young people in our care. The young people in our care at Ashley, in the vast majority, come from incredibly traumatised circumstances so a proper trauma-informed response is required. I commend again the decision to end Ashley's existence in its current form. As minister I had that view as well and met with staff at Ashley about what a transition model would look like outside of it being the type of facility it was into a more restorative opportunity for people on a short-term stay, so not as Ashley, not as a detention facility, but as a potential support base for young people with trauma.

The other issue around the timing of the bill is that it is being submitted on the same week that the commission of inquiry commences. It has been three years since the Commissioner for Children and Young People made her recommendation, so I understand that waiting any longer to get this done would be untenable because it has taken a while to get here, but it is also a difficult time to be producing this bill as well and there are debates that we may not necessarily be able to have, as we are very careful and cognisant of the wellbeing of people participating in the inquiry right now.

Ms Archer - We have already made the changes. This is just implementing them. It is not like we have not acted.

Ms O'BYRNE - I know. I am saying it is the timing.

There were eight recommendations from the Commissioner for Children and Young People, who has said that this legislation 'broadly reflects the intent' of those. I am interested to hear in the minister's summing up what conversations she has had with the commissioner about what 'broadly' means as opposed to 'absolutely does'. It may be that the recommendations are not able to be directly linked to a place you can point to in the legislation, but that would be a useful bit of information for me to understand and I would appreciate that.

I also wonder if the minister can update us on the number of searches of children and young people that have taken place in custody, including unclothed searches. Given that we probably will not get through this bill today given the other business ahead of us, there will be plenty of time to find the data.

Ms Archer - What time period?

Ms O'BYRNE - When the commissioner made her recommendations, there were 218 searches in that calendar year. There were 203 across the broader report that was given in the commissioner's report. I am wondering what the data has been since then. It would be interesting. I will probably go into some conversation later. I have some questions I wanted to ask around some of these implications.

As I said, the commissioner's office has been consulted and they said they are 'broadly happy'. I am interested to know the difference between, 'Yes, you've done it all' and what 'broadly happy' means. It may be very little, it may be a language thing, but it would be useful to understand.

I know the Police Association had some original concerns but understand that they are supportive of this version of the bill. I appreciate that adding to the workload of police officers is always a challenging thing to do, but when we are dealing with young vulnerable people in care and custody we have to be aware of and respect the fact that there are different expectations, standards and obligations when dealing with an offender who is a minor rather than an adult offender.

That again comes to the question we often raise when initiatives are brought forward by government. This is not to criticise the initiatives or the legislation per se, but we often do not then attach the additional funding that is required to undertake training and the cultural change that will be required because these are patterns of behaviour and ways of working that have existed for a long time. Almost every time we have legislation that is about significant and good reform, when we ask where the funding is to create the required cultural change and training, we are told it will be dealt with internally. I know that internally there is not a lot of money to deal with those things, particularly because there is a lot of legislation that requires training which has not been provided.

I already touched on the issue about young people's voices, but the Child Advocate and commissioner consulted with young people in Ashley to get their views on the current system and changes were made to the draft bill stage as a direct result of those consultations. That is an important thing to note. An example is the hierarchy of searches. As adults, we can assume that what we consider to be most invasive or least invasive might not be the way a young person feels about least or most invasive techniques. The hierarchy of searches in the final bill reflects the views of those young people who were consulted. It is important that we have a continual process of consultation with young people, particularly when we get to some of the other things that will be dealt in regulation, not legislation.

The commissioner has said it will be hard to implement in the bill, especially at reception prisons because staff at reception prisons will need training in child handling practices, so that has to be provided and cannot be done internally. There has to be external funding for this, because we need to be able to see that that training has taken place. If we do have incidents in the future, it will be important to know whether or not the person involved had access to direct training or whether or not that training was just rolled into introductory training or ongoing updates.

The use of force is also addressed in this legislation. The children's commissioner would have preferred to see the words 'last resort' in the bill, but she is satisfied that in principle - and it is in the second reading speech - that it should only be used as a last resort. I understand there has been conversation about the words 'should only be used as a last resort' versus 'last resort'. Can the minister give us an update on what the difference legally is in using 'should be' used as a last resort or 'is' used' as a last resort, and why that would be something you could not put in? That clarity of language actually shapes behaviour, but there may be a legal reason that the minister can advise us around what took place with that.

The commissioner also wants ongoing conversation and consultation on the regulations and any new standing orders for Youth Justice staff and regular briefings. That was touched on in the second reading speech, but could the minister advise how that ongoing consultation will take place and how we can be sure that the voices of young people and the voice of the children's commissioner are engaged in all of those cases as we move forward?

I am always uncomfortable when things are done in regulations rather than legislation, so I am interested in why some of these things could not be dealt with in legislation. One of the arguments that is often used is that it is very cumbersome to come back to parliament to change a bill. Clearly that is not the case because bills regularly get dropped here on a Tuesday and are debated on Thursday. It is not as cumbersome as it might be in other jurisdictions. It may be because that is not the way this parliament deals with legislation these days, because the work would have to be done on regulatory change anyway. I do not think that argument necessarily stands up, so I am interested in why the decision has been made to put some things in regulations and not into the legislation.

I note that there has been a number of changes on advice from the commissioner. There are apparently some gaps that I believe were addressed and identified as well. For example, the data from the reception prison, which would include if a young person was searched when they came into custody, is not necessarily directly and immediately shared with Ashley staff. Before their arrival at Ashley, if they have been searched they may be searched again because that information is not necessarily transferred. I am assuming that the minister can advise what is in place to make sure that takes place because that can be justification for a new search if you had not been aware that a search had taken place before. The bill is supposed to change that because they should only be conducted after the risk-based assessment is conducted. I am interested in how that connection works between the two services. How will the risk-based assessment take place when a child is in Ashley, for instance, to incorporate any other data that may not necessarily be forthcoming? As we know, some people may or may not be in the position of telling me what has occurred in the previous time and making sure that that will be dealt with.

The minister identified that the body scanners that will be eventually installed in some facilities can be part of a less intrusive way of searching young people. The important thing that we are seeing out of this is that there is a system in place that protects their rights through this.

I am pleased about the gender requirements and I commend that work. They will be a significant shift for staff in how they operate on a day-to-day basis, because what happens now cannot continue. As the minister identified in the second reading speech, female officers will search female inmates and male officers will search male inmates, and intersex or trans young people will be able to make the decision if they want a male or female officer. I am wondering how that right will be communicated to the young person. How will they be told what they are allowed to ask for? Is there a delay in being able to provide them of their particular choice? I am assuming that we will obviously have male and female staff available, but when a young trans person identifies either way, we need to make sure that that response is done quickly because a lengthy delay or a failure to give that information clearly could be challenging.

When we were in conversation with the children's commissioner she mentioned the anti-discrimination commissioner, Sarah Bolt, had made a recommendation to the Government that training was needed for police and prison staff in dealing with young trans people. This was

after she had advocated for a young trans person who had gone through the Hobart Reception Prison. Whilst I am not aware of all the details, I am advised that process was pretty horrific, not one that I think anyone in this place would be comfortable with, from what I understand.

I am wondering what movements have been taken regarding training, particularly in dealing with young trans people. I have been listening to some of the public commentary about trans people recently. It is not too much to expect that there may be people within our service who have formed views off the base of some of that. We need to make sure that every young person who comes into our care, for whatever reason, is treated with the utmost respect and their rights are protected. That is a whole another speech but one that probably I need to continue having that conversation about.

Some of the things that came up as concerns were - you can have the best legislation in the world but if you do not resource it, if you do not teach to it, if you do not continually engage with people who are working in the system, you can have the best legislation but no change outcome. The difference between having a legislative framework that is good and on-the-ground implementation of anything can be a massive divide. We have seen it across a number of portfolio areas. Tasmania has often led the way in reforms but if we do not train the staff, if we do not do ongoing training of staff, we do not necessarily have people who are enacting those reforms.

I reflect on the issue about family violence, which I raised a number of times within the parliament. We have phenomenally strong family violence laws but our training of police officers is quite limited. When you are unpicking generational views of the role and the place of women in society, then it is really hard to effect change. It is not because these people are bad people or they are simply that. We have all been shaped where we stand, each of us in this place now, shaped by the experiences and learnings that we have. Unpicking that is really difficult, really difficult.

I have been very concerned about that in the family violence space, particularly because we are asking people to change their view. We still have women who are told that they should have left, women who are asked what they did to provoke him. All of those things are still said to women when they report to police. Now, that is not because we do not have really good structures and very good language about what we should be having; what we do not have is training in implementation.

As I understand it, the police get training on this when they are first trained. If they get a promotion that goes into an area that deals family violence they can get access to training then. The only other time that they get training is if something has happened which identifies that they need training. That is quite dangerous. What we want is to change behaviours, attitudes and culture which actually requires ongoing repetitive training. That is not occurring there. It needs to occur for this as well. It absolutely needs to occur with this as well.

That cultural change that is going to be required is important too. We have had a number of concerns. The 2018 Custodial Inspector's report into Ashley identified a number of concerns. I am not sure where we are with all the implementation of that. I do know if the minister would be able to address that while we are here.

Mr Jaensch - Read the next Custodial Inspector's report.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am sorry, with the mask I do apologise.

Mr Jaensch - I think the subsequent report has reported positively on the addressing of those earlier issues.

Ms O'BYRNE - Thank you. I am happy for that interjection to be on the record.

One of the things that we do have though is that concern from people who have worked in the system, people who have exited the system, the current rules are not adhered to. If current rules are not adhered to we need to have a lot of confidence that new rules will be adhered to. That is a significant change.

It does need to be easily translatable information. The training needs to be presented in a way that is adaptable and understandable. There needs to be protections for young people and staff so that searches are safe for everyone. If searches need to take place, we need to know that staff are going to be comfortable that they are following the framework, that they are following it appropriately, that they have done the right assessment, that they are doing the search at the appropriate level, that risk assessment works. That needs to be really clear.

Ms Archer - That is the purpose of the register.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am sorry with the mask, I do apologise.

Ms Archer - That is the purpose of the register. It is covered in the bill, all of this.

Ms O'BYRNE - Well, actually, no, I will get to the register then. I am happy to skip to that. We do need to understand the process about how these things will be communicated to staff. My whole point was saying that we could have great rules but great rules do not necessarily always give effect to great outcomes. There is other work that needs to be done about that.

With the register, some information has to be recorded such as the reason for the search, the reparative conduct planned, if force was used, and who authorised it et cetera. That is probably the bit I was wondering about. Why is that register handled in regulations rather than have it recorded in the legislation? That would be interesting because I am always nervous about regulations. Regulations can be changed quickly and I know that eventually they get to parliament but there is a lag time so if the minister can explain why those things are being dealt with in regulations that would be useful.

We have been asked to follow up if the minister can detail explicitly how the young person will be advised about the process that will take place so it gives them a chance to hand in their potential contraband before a search occurs.

Ms Archer - Sorry, I am not quite following.

Ms O'BYRNE - These are questions we have been asked to ask.

Ms Archer - They will be told.

Ms O'BYRNE - It is how they are told and the way that is done that I am interested in. It goes to my broader concern. I hope you can answer it because there are often times when we have good legislation with great intent - and I am not saying there is not good intent here. I am not.

Ms Archer - Are you suggesting there needs to be a set of prescribed words?

Ms O'BYRNE - No, I am asking how you are going to do the training. Every time we ask you about training for any regulatory reform you say, 'that will be dealt with internally, there is no additional funding for it, it will just happen'. We need to know that it happens.

Ms Archer - No, you are verballing me there.

Ms O'BYRNE - I apologise if I am verballing you. If you believe that I am verballing you, then I apologise for that. However, there have been many occasions when good reform has occurred and the training is not funded externally for that, that it has to be adapted and adopted into the existing framework. That is a concern that I have. This is a significant cultural change.

Ms Archer - You have asked a question about training. That can be answered. What I do not get is the youths will be advised of all of this. I cannot be more explicit than that.

Ms O'BYRNE - You are saying they can be advised. I would like to know how that advice takes place. We are dealing with an historical construct where young people do not feel that they have been informed. We do not always hear information the same way. If you accept the view of the Commissioner for Children and Young People from before that our views about what a young person might want to have, or want to hear, are different from what they want to have or want to hear then I want to know what is the ongoing process for consultation with young people and the commissioner for children to ensure that is taking place.

Ms Archer - Yes, and that is a separate question. You have asked that question.

Ms O'BYRNE - Yes, but you are interrupting as I am going through this, minister. I am happy to never raise the question but this is the reason the bill comes to the House. I genuinely want to understand this better and if I ask a question and you say, 'that is a stupid question because the answer is over there', then I apologise, but I am still going to ask the questions.

Ms Archer - No, that is not the point.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am not sure what point you are making, minister.

Ms Archer - You have asked about training. You have asked about all those things. I can answer that.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am happy to go into Committee and do this one by one if the minister wants but these are the concerns that I have been asked to raise. I do not know why the minister does not want me to raise them, or does not like the way I am raising them.

Ms Archer - You are verballing me. I will answer training. I will answer all of those things. The question I do not understand, and it is important that I understand and my

department understands, is how the youth are going to be communicated to. If they speak English they will be told in English. If they speak another language they will be told in another language.

Ms O'BYRNE - Is there a prepared written statement that is given? Does someone sit down and explain what each of those options mean? What does that mean? If they speak English we are going to read or say it to them in English or say it to them in English is not really an explanation of how a young person in trauma, in a trauma-informed practice, would get that information. The principal thing at the beginning of your bill was about dealing with people in a trauma informed way. I am wondering what the trauma-informed response will be.

Ms Archer - Okay, have a look at 25H; in the break have a look.

Ms O'BYRNE - I thank the minister for jumping in there. Yes, 25H, they are given an opportunity to surrender. I am wanting to know how you see that working? I have no problem with it being there. What I am asking is how it works in practice?

Ms Archer - I think it is very explicit but we will do our best.

Ms O'BYRNE - I look forward to you advancing that.

They are the key things and I am still standing after the minister's response. I am not quite sure why she is annoyed with me. I apologise if I have annoyed her somehow today but -

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms Archer - I am only trying to understand the question because if I do not understand it my department may not understand it.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'BYRNE - When I ask questions I look over to the staff. If they look confused I try to explain a little better. When they nod I assume they have understood -

Ms Archer - Sorry, Mr Speaker, but I need to understand it.

Mr SPEAKER - I understand that. If the question could be put clearly so the department understands it, then we can move on. At this point, Ms O'Byrne has the call.

Ms O'BYRNE - We will be supporting this bill. I am very interested in the answers to the questions. The bill is the responsibility of Ms Lovell in the other place so she will be spending a bit of time on it there.

I commend the work coming to the House. I am concerned it has taken so long. I am a little worried that because it has taken so long we are now dealing with it in a time when we are also dealing with the commission of inquiry, which will make a number of other recommendations. I am aware that we are dealing with it when there have been some very distressing histories told, where there is significant stress for people who have been in custodial care as a minor, or are family members of those who have been in custodial care as a minor, and for the staff who have been there. My greatest concern is ensuring that what we do here

does not become tokenistic; that we actually get the change I think was intended by the legislation.

Mr Jaensch - It is already happening.

Ms O'BYRNE - The minister interjects that a lot of this is happening. I am assuming he will be making a contribution on the bill - I do not want to verbal you - and is happy to detail some of those things.

We are dealing with things in a heightened sense of awareness, with a heightened sense of responsibility of where we have not got it right over the years. Minister, I am not saying that any of you are more to blame than anybody else, but we do not have a safe system for young people in care. That has been evident by the stories that have been told by young people who have exited our care. We need to get this right and this is a significant part of that.

In closing, I will touch on the use of force. The Commissioner for Children and Young People would have preferred for there to be no use of force at all. The definition of force creates some things that can be forceful - to assist a child to remove a jacket. The framework of what constitutes force can be quite a large range. We are dealing with people who are vulnerable, who are often in heightened states of distress, who may be reacting in a way that is also extremely unsafe. Providing the best framework for their safety and the safety of staff is important.

I hope that this bill goes a long way to dealing with that. I imagine that over the next bit of time we will have number of other recommendations about ways to deal with it. The Government has said that they will be adopting the recommendations of the commission of inquiry. This one has taken three years. That is a long time. The minister is looking at me again, saying 'I am going to tell you about all the things we have done in time'. I am pleased for you to have that on the record.

Some of the things we have heard most recently are also very concerning. We need to fix that. I know there is a move away from ministerial accountability across parliaments but ministers are, at the end of the day, responsible for the children who are in their care at that time. We have to take that seriously. I have reflected on my time and wondered what I could have done differently. I am sure ministers now are reflecting on what they could have done differently. I hope we get to a point in a legislative framework where we can go 'we did what we could do and we did it well'. If we just do something that sounds great and we do not resource it, or do the cultural change work, or provide the education and we do not make sure that children's voices are heard then we will fail the children who go into our care tomorrow, and that is not acceptable.

[12.55 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, the Greens strongly support the Youth Justice Amendment (Searches in Custody) Bill 2022. We recognise that while it has taken some time for this legislation to come to the House, it rightly puts the rights of children and young people in youth custody front and centre. We are dealing with them as we come into the system.

We all know that most of, if not all of the children who end up in places like Ashley Youth Detention Centre were born with a massive eight ball behind them. Their lives to that

point where they reached the gates of Ashley or the remand centre have been filled with trauma, disadvantage. In most cases that disadvantage is intergenerational.

How we deal with kids when they come into the system can make all the difference to whether or not we break the cycle for those young people. We all know that for a century at Ashley Youth Detention Centre, we did not break the cycle. What we did as a state, effectively, was almost guarantee that those kids never had a chance. We almost guaranteed that many of those young people would end up in the adult detention centre at Risdon.

I believe this legislation is founded on the principles of the Rights of the Child. I commend the Commissioner for Children and Young People for her outstanding work and advocacy on this issue.

Ms Archer - She did a lot on this bill.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, I know. Indeed, when you have a look at the advice and correspondence from the commissioner, her recommendations are embedded in the legislation.

Ms Archer - I forgot to say she issued a media release wholeheartedly supporting it. I can read that.

Ms O'CONNOR - What we want to achieve is to keep children and young people out of the system in the first place. We acknowledge that the Government has been undertaking a significant body of reform work on youth justice and making sure we do have a therapeutic response to children and young people who end up in the system, and that the response is trauma-informed.

The minister for children and young people knows very well the Greens' position on Ashley Youth Detention Centre, which for a century brutalised children and young people who came into that place and effectively embedded the trajectory of suffering and compounded damage to them.

Slowly but surely, we are together as a parliament, putting in place reforms that provide a much better, more compassionate and intelligent response to children and young people who come into the juvenile justice system. We have had a commitment from government, after long advocacy, for Ashley Youth Detention Centre to be closed and be replaced with two therapeutic facilities, north and south. While I recognise that the Attorney-General is not the minister for children and young people, I hope that during the response on the second reading we can have an update on the closure of the Ashley Youth Detention Centre, and more detail on the timeline for the facilities that will replace Ashley.

We would also like an update on the replacement for Many Colours, One Direction and a bush therapy program that has a tailored, therapeutic, response to juvenile defenders and kids who are in trouble.

Debate adjourned.

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

MOTION

Tasmania's Strong Economy

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Agrees that Tasmania has experienced significant economic growth since the Tasmanian Liberal Government was first elected in 2014.
- (2) Welcomes news that CommSec's April 2022 State of the States report ranks Tasmania's economic performance the best in the country, for the ninth quarter in a row.
- (3) Recognises that the strong economy is creating jobs, and the number of Tasmanians in work is currently at its second-highest level on record.
- (4) Notes that since the Tasmanian Liberal Government was elected in March 2014, 27 100 jobs have been created.
- (5) Further agrees that a strong economy not only creates jobs, but allows Government to fund and invest more into the things Tasmanians care about most like health, education, housing and community infrastructure.

It gives me great pleasure to speak on the motion today. When I travel around the state, and particularly in my home region of Braddon and the north-west, west coast and King Island, there is a quiet optimism in Tasmania and our regions. Our businesses are confident and they are looking to grow because our economy is strong and there are jobs available. Unemployment is at near record levels, the second highest on record. I know the Treasurer in his contribution in question time this morning noted that the record level was actually not too long ago, in fact earlier this year. Why is that? It is because our economy is strong and a strong economy means that more Tasmanian families can work, earn and plan for their future. It allows government to fund services and invest more into things that Tasmanians care about like health, education, housing, law and order, community, safety and community infrastructure.

Since coming to government in 2014, the Tasmanian Liberal Government has done the hard work to rebuild the budget and our economy after the disastrous Labor-Greens government which took our state backwards. I am very proud of this Government's achievements, as I know all our team are but, more importantly, I am proud of the results that have been earned by the hard work of Tasmanian workers, their families and our businesses. I know the new Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, is determined to continue this work as the Tasmanian Liberal team take action to secure our future.

Tasmania has experienced significant economic growth since the Tasmanian Liberal Government was first elected, and that is no accident. Our record is there for all to see and the

Australian Bureau of Statistics demonstrates this. In the space of just seven years, state final demand is now more than 25 per cent larger than when we first came to government. That is despite the impact of a global pandemic which created the worst global recession we have seen in decades.

Over the year to the December 2021 quarter our economy grew at 5.8 per cent, which was the second highest in the country. Gross state product in 2020-21 was more than \$34 billion, which was 16.1 per cent larger than the size of our economy in 2013-14, in the dark old days before this Government came to power. In 2020-21, our economy grew at 3.8 per cent, in the pandemic year, which was the highest rate of growth in this state since 2007-08 and the second-highest growth rate in the country. It was more than double the national growth rate over the same period.

In the 12 months to February 2022 our exports are nearly two-thirds higher, hitting a record \$4.55 billion. I will take this opportunity to thank the west coast in particular and especially our mining and mineral processing sector, which contributes more than 60 per cent of those record exports. Many people do not realise that Tasmania is a mining state. The work that is done on the west coast, one of the most prospective regions on the face of the Earth, as well as our mineral processors that process the resources mined here, like Nyrstar, or process resources mined elsewhere, like Bell Bay Aluminium and TEMCO, are contributing to a strong economy, more jobs and more export dollars that are brought into the state and help pay for the essential services relied on by Tasmanians.

I have spoken at length in this place about the importance of backing those industries and backing those jobs. In the Tasmanian parliament we need to make sure that we all get behind that industry because it is important for the future of Tasmania and the future job prospects of young people. I know Ms Dow opposite is a member for Braddon as well and understands the importance of the west coast. I encourage her to speak truth to power in the toxic Labor Party room and to back our workplace protection laws which we introduced into this place yesterday.

There is an enormous choice coming up around Tasmania, but certainly a huge choice on Saturday for the people of Huon, that fantastic region that is so productive in terms of our farmers, our foresters and particularly our fish farming. Radical activists have stopped at nothing to disrupt businesses exactly like those which are such important employers of young people in the Huon. A vote for Aldo Antolli over the weekend will help deliver the support in the upper House which has frustrated this Government's attempts to bring in the sensible, measured and proactive workplace legislation which the Tasmanian people have voted for time and time again.

We have a mandate from the last election to bring in these laws. It may be frustrated by some of the left-wingers in this place who just want to see these industries die but I encourage the people of the Huon electorate to make their voices known on Saturday, that they support our productive industries which are providing jobs and opportunities for young families right across that region.

Private new capital expenditure grew 30.7 per cent over the year to the December 2021 quarter, the highest growth of the states. That is an enormous increase. The important thing about private new capital expenditure is that it is a leading indicator of future economic growth and future productivity. When businesses have the confidence to invest in new plant and equipment it is based on a belief that things will get better and will continue to improve for

their trading conditions in the future. You do not go out and spend big money on that new logging truck if you believe the forest industry is going to be crippled by a rogue Labor-Greens government. You go out and invest new money in that log truck because you believe that the forest industry has a bright future in Tasmania, particularly under the stewardship of the Tasmanian Liberal Government.

It increases the productivity of our workers, which we know is the best long-term guarantee of higher wages and greater prosperity for all those people, right down to the level of tradespeople who are able to invest in new equipment that will help them do their job faster, easier and better, with less strain on their bodies. That increases their productivity and increases the services the Tasmanian people get from our businesses, which are continuing to improve.

As people and businesses invest for the future, there are more jobs. Right now there are 261 700 Tasmanians in work. As I mentioned before, that is the second-highest level on record. In fact, since coming to government, we have been a part of creating 27 100 new jobs. The unemployment rate is 3.1 percentage points lower than it was in March 2014.

In the two days since this parliament has returned for the Second Session of the Fiftieth Tasmanian Parliament, we have seen the whingeing and complaining from those opposite about the state of this economy, which is setting record after record in terms of unemployment. I wonder what their alternative is to record low unemployment?

We certainly know that when they were given the option of trying to manage this state, we were a state in crisis. We were a state in recession. Those opposite believe that this Government is presiding over some sort of doomsday scenario. The Greens described it as the fall of Rome. You can only imagine what they thought of the time when, under their watch, Tasmania's unemployment rate was 3.1 percentage points higher than it is today. That is, thousands upon thousands of jobs destroyed.

We have turned that around. The most important thing is that it provides opportunities for young people to stay in Tasmania and to build a future and to contribute to our society. It is easy to manage government services when your approach to paying for that is making all the young people leave and reducing pressure on our services that way. We chose a far better path by providing opportunities for young people so that they can stay in Tasmania, they can have their babies born in hospitals on the north-west, they can send their children to schools down the Huon, and they can contribute to our economy, to our society and to our community. That is what a strong economy does. It encourages people to be part of the Tasmanian story, to be part of the Tasmanian future, rather than an approach which sends people away and alienates them from what could have been a bright future here.

I turn now to the results which are backed by expert commentary on this. For the ninth consecutive quarter, Tasmania's economy leads the nation, according to the latest CommSec State of the States report in April 2022. The report said:

Tasmania holds the mantle of the best performing economy, ranking highly across a number of key economic indicators.

That, again, confirms the strength and confidence in our economy as we continue to transition to living with COVID-19. It is a fantastic result. It is thanks to the strong actions

we have taken to rebuild our economy since coming to government in 2014, and following the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also testament to the fantastic work of those in our private sector who are employing young people, who are taking on people to contribute to their businesses. It is also a testament to workers in our economy who are working hard, doing overtime, saving up to buy a house, getting extra training so that they can get ahead in their lives for their families.

Tasmania took out the top ranking based on strong performances across a number of key indicators including relative equipment investment, construction work - a shout out to all those tradies around the place - retail spending, relative economic growth, dwelling starts and unemployment. Tasmania is ranked first on equipment investment with an investment of 62.5 per cent higher above what is regarded as normal, our decade business average, as our businesses invest to grow. Tasmania is ranked second in the country on construction work, retail spending, relative economic growth, and third on relative unemployment and dwelling starts. Retail spending is 16.9 per cent higher than the decade average. That means for the high streets in Devonport, Ulverstone, Burnie, Latrobe and Wynyard, people are spending their hard-earned money. They are contributing to the jobs for people young and old who work in our retail sector. It means they are spending it locally and supporting our communities and our economies.

Retail is one of the fantastic drivers. It provides many jobs for people in that industry. I note our new member, Simon Wood, has a strong history in retail and knows an enormous amount about the contribution that family businesses in that sector can make, particularly in regional parts of Tasmania - such as Launceston in his case. I know many of the retailers across the north-west, west coast and King Island.

Construction work is 22.7 per cent higher. That demonstrates the confidence of Tasmanians and businesses to spend and invest. You do not build a new factory on a whim. You build it because you believe that there is a long-term bright future for your business and the people who work in it. You do not choose to build a new home in one of our fast-growing areas of the state such as Latrobe, Port Sorell, down here at Sorell, or New Norfolk. You do not make that decision on a whim. You take the opportunity to save up and to invest, to build a deposit and to put that into the home that you want to raise your family in.

That 22.7 per cent increase in construction starts speaks to a massive increase in people's willingness to take a stake in the future of Tasmania. Building a house is about putting down roots. It says that this is the community I choose to live, work, raise a family and potentially retire in. This is the place I want to make my own and where I can contribute. I might help volunteer with Vinnie's Outreach, or the soup kitchen, the surf-lifesaving club or the fire brigade. Each one of those new construction starts is people taking a risk and taking a stake in the future of our state.

The CommSec report found that unemployment in Tasmania is 20.6 per cent below the decade average, which is an outstanding result, particularly considering the difficulties of the past two years; truly the most extraordinary set of circumstances that any of us here have had to live through.

The fact that in the largest terms of trade boom in Australia's history, which was between 2011 and 2013 during the failed Labor-Greens government, our economy was producing 29.6 per cent fewer jobs than it is currently as we come out of the worst global recession we

have seen for decades and a global pandemic that forced people to stay at home rather than go to work. The fact that we have been able to deliver that result speaks strongly of the confidence Tasmanians have to invest in this place and the framework that we have been able to setup, which is delivering a strong economy and more opportunities despite the difficulties that our state, our nation and the world has faced.

Temporarily Independent Labor member for Franklin, David O'Byrne, often likes to justify the failure of the last Labor-Greens government on the global financial crisis. It happened in 2008, before the Labor-Greens government was elected in 2010. He was of the view that this recession, which was far shallower than the one the world has just lived through, was of somehow greater impact to the Tasmanian economy than what we have just lived through. He used it to justify all manner of failed policies when he was shadow treasurer, and one of the supposed 'key economic minds' of the White government. The fact that he could not see any way that Tasmania in 2012 could get through a global financial crunch that happened four years earlier but it is not good enough that this Government is delivering record low unemployment despite the fact that the world has just lived through the worst global recession of many of our lifetimes, speaks to the failure of ideas from those opposite, and the strength of the confidence that has been delivered by this Tasmanian Liberal government.

The report also observed that Tasmania has the fastest wage growth in the country at 3.0 per cent over the year, which is very positive for workers. As I said earlier, it is testament to the investment which our businesses are making in capital equipment that is enabling workers in Tasmania to perform their jobs better, to increase their productivity, which is the best driver of long-term growing living standards and future wage growth.

The Deloitte Access Economics Business Outlook report for March 2022 quarter observed that Tasmania outsprinted the rest of Australia and most of the world through COVID-19 and it has navigated the early months of opening up well. There are those who probably could not have believed that in their lifetime such a thing would ever have been said: that Tasmania 'outsprinted' the rest of Australia and most of the world.

Certainly, all the young people who fled our shores under the Labor-Greens government would have thought it inconceivable that less than a decade later Tasmania would be leading the way, not just in our country, but right around the community of nations. Tasmania is the place that young people now want to come to, to have opportunities.

I was fortunate over the past couple weeks to spend some time with young people in grades 10 and 11 as part of the Frank MacDonald Memorial Prize. They are excited about their future in Tasmania. These are smart young kids who are doing fantastic things in the humanities and across their studies. They see a future for themselves in Tasmania. It was not all that long ago that those people would have been saying their first opportunity was to leave, and they would take the opportunity to never come back.

There is a strong economic and employment growth forecast over the next four years, noting our booming exports and a strong construction pipeline. That is from the Deloitte Access Economics Business Outlook. That will create certainty for businesses and set up Tasmania for years to come. Deloitte also forecast economic growth of 5.6 per cent for the financial year 2021-22. Let me say that again: a forecast of economic growth of 5.6 per cent. That is staggering. We are living in a tiger economy, the Tassie tiger economy. This would

not only be the highest economic growth in our nation, but our highest here in Tasmania on record.

The fact is that we have whingeing and complaining from those opposite. They are yet to produce an alternative budget, and yet to come up with credible ideas to improve the lot of people in Tasmania. While things are so positive and businesses have so much confidence, and there are so many opportunities for young people to take part in the future of this economy, this society, and our communities, this speaks to the difference between those competing visions for Tasmania and the choice that Tasmanians will have.

I also want to speak about our booming construction sector. It is a sector that is very close to my heart as I have said here before. I am the son of a plumber and the economic future of my family goes back for generations based on the strength of the construction sector. The strength of our economy and confidence in the future is seen through our building and construction sector. As the Treasurer so cleverly put it, 'we have a Don Bradman number in terms of our homes - 99.9', and perhaps there was a 0.4 in there somewhere of a house that is on its way completed in -

Mr Ferguson - It was 999 in December.

Mr ELLIS - Yes, absolutely. I think Bradman was 99.94. Perhaps there is a 0.4 of a house out there sitting somewhere that we could put on the numbers there completed in the December 2021 quarter. This was the most completed in a quarter for almost 30 years. Tasmania was the strongest state for growth and engineering construction in the December quarter.

This is perhaps something that not many people get to see. They do not necessarily get the chance to be a part of it if they are just going about their daily lives but the engineering construction sector on the west coast and the north-west has been stellar of in recent times. The mine at Renison Bell, the tin mine on the west coast, is one of Tasmania's most strategic mining assets. They are doing major work to increase the life of that mine and to produce more resources. I had the pleasure of being 700 metres below the surface with the Treasurer and the Resources minister a few months ago. I saw the work being done in that mine. It is incredible how much development is going on there. That mine was discovered more than a century ago when you go right back to the alluvial tin days. To think it is able to continue to produce, and that is happening because people have confidence in the future of mining in Tasmania, and it will not be shut down by radical activists like the Greens.

People do not necessarily get to see the building and construction work that happens in a place like that because it is tucked away. In this case it is deep underground but it is developing the next generation of opportunities for young people to take part in the mining sector by developing those drives.

Another fantastic example of the engineering and construction work that has been done and just completed in the recent past was BioMar, a fantastic facility at Wesley Vale. This is a story of Tasmanian renewal and rejuvenation. If you look at the time when the forest industry was effectively destroyed by the Labor-Greens government, there were particle board factories and paper and pulp factories throughout that area and the particle board factory was shut down and was an eyesore. It was doing nothing, just sitting there decaying under the previous government. Our Government came in and invested in building up that facility.

As our aquaculture industry has grown, the need to produce more feed for that industry locally has also grown too. We were able to attract the investment of BioMar to come into the north-west of Tasmania and to build a world-class fish feed facility that is powering the next generation of protein production here on the island. Tasmania has the gold standard aquaculture industry in this country. It is the one industry where Tasmania produces more than any other state in the nation. We have been able to support the rejuvenation of that facility as the aquaculture industry continues to go from strength to strength and to attract all those different businesses from throughout the supply chain that is spread around the world, to come and be based here in Tasmania. To employ the tradies, the boilermakers, the fitters, the carpenters, to build and refurbish that facility and then to be able to employ the process workers to take part in the highly skilled jobs of the manufacturing sector as it now exists here in Tasmania, as well as our world's best farmers who contribute so much of the feedstock that goes into a facility like that, that is what an increase in the engineering construction sector means for people around Tasmania.

It is also the new UTAS Burnie Campus that is bringing the university into town, a beautiful new facility, and it is giving opportunities for young people to train, to learn and to take their career to the next level. They can do that in the city of Burnie. They can do that on the north-west coast and they do not have to leave their families to take a part in that. That is the engineering construction sector at work. Demonstrating the strength of that sector, there was a massive \$1.69 billion increase in engineering construction work completed in 2021. That is a new 12-month series record.

The Government's COVID-19 management over that period should not to be forgotten. During the 2020-21 year that was referenced that was when many other states, particularly Victoria, were actually shutting down construction sites. They were preventing people from going to work because, sadly, they could not keep on top of COVID-19, whereas here in Tasmania, through the strong actions of this Government we have been the least locked down society on the face of the earth. We have been able to prevent deaths of people due to COVID-19, particularly during 2020 when the disease was particularly devastating.

Ms O'Connor - That is so disrespectful to the 40-odd people who have died since December. Let us gloss over that.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ELLIS - Tasmania has been able to lead the world in our COVID-19 response. We all know some of the unhinged comments that have come from Ms O'Connor who has decided to interject. The references to eugenics were simply disgraceful. Those of us who come from families -

Ms O'Connor - You are saying that to people with disabilities.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Ms O'Connor, order.

Mr ELLIS - who fled regimes that were guilty of eugenics, disgraced, to know that is what you think of this Government which has led the world.

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ELLIS - It is a sad indictment on those who would do nothing but whinge and complain. We believe strongly that the strength of our COVID-19 response, increases like that, enabled people to keep their jobs.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Mr Ellis is misleading the House. Tasmania has the highest per capita COVID-19 transmission rate in the country.

Mr SPEAKER - What is the point of order, Ms O'Connor?

Ms O'CONNOR - The point of order is that Ms Ellis is misleading the House.

Mr SPEAKER - It is not a point of order.

Mr ELLIS - Tasmania has one of the lowest death rates from COVID-19 of any place in the world. That is what this is about. We have been able to deliver a strong health response to COVID-19 and a strong economic response to the COVID-19 recession which devastated the opportunities of young people in other parts of the world. We have a strong plan to continue this momentum.

There is a significant pipeline of work ahead. The latest Infrastructure Tasmania 10-year infrastructure pipeline forecasts more than \$22 billion in planned infrastructure investment. That is the most substantial capital program in Tasmania's history. I think of some of the enormous transformative projects which are potentially coming down the pipe in the north-west. I am thinking of the Burnie and Devonport port redevelopments which will transform opportunities, not just for those working in the construction sector who will be able to take part in those projects for years to come, but also all those businesses that utilise the port services in those particular ports. These ports account for more than 90 per cent of our container freight in Tasmania, and an enormous amount of our total volume of freight going out.

I am talking about businesses like Cement Australia which utilises the port in Devonport, and businesses such as Forico, Toll and SeaRoad, who see that the investment that has been put in place by the Tasmanian Government in that pipeline of work will enable them to improve their supply chain competitiveness in what are cut-throat global industries, to be at the leading edge of supply chain performance around the world. That is what those investments do. They drive opportunities for young people to take part in that part of our economy, to get the good jobs that come with freight, mining, forestry, agriculture and our other productive industries, and also enable consumers in Tasmania to reap the benefits of more efficient shipping that comes from more efficient ports to be able to process the containers that carry the goods and services that we all consume as part of our families. That will help put downward pressure on the prices of those goods coming in.

That is what that long-term pipeline of work will help to achieve and give those businesses the certainty to invest long term and to take on apprentices. As any construction business will tell you, you need the long-term certainty of work coming in to be able to take on someone for a four-year apprenticeship, like my plumbing and gasfitting apprenticeships, and three-year apprenticeships in the boilermaker and carpenter space. You need to be able to say to that young person who walks in your door looking for an opportunity, 'Yes, I can take you on for the next three or four years and the years beyond that because I know that there is a

10-year infrastructure pipeline of work that has been supported by the Tasmanian Government, that will be bolstered by private investment coming into that space and yes, you will have that opportunity to get a good job, get a great trade and really take on life with all its many challenges and opportunities'.

What does a strong economy mean for government services? When we came into Government in 2014 we did the hard work to rebuild our budget and economy after the Labor-Greens disaster which could not manage money, could not manage our economy and started cutting services relied on by Tasmanian people. A strong economy means more Tasmanian families can work, earn and plan for their future. It allows governments to fund services and to invest more into the things that Tasmanians care about most, like health, education, community safety, law and order, housing and community infrastructure.

We all know the dark days under Michelle O'Byrne, a failed former health minister, where they were sacking a nurse a day for nine months and closing wards in our hospitals. They simply could not keep the health system working because they had destroyed the budget. That is the difference between this Government that knows how to manage money and can deliver the confidence in our services long term, and that rabble over there that could not look after the budget, could not manage our economy, and then inevitably saw things fall flat.

Our plan, working closely with the federal Liberal Government, is vitally important for every Tasmanian. We will invest a record \$10.7 billion into our health system and a record \$8 billion into education, skills and training to enable more Tasmanians, those apprentices, to get the jobs that will support and drive our economy forward. That is what a strong budget position and record employment enables: record investment into health and education.

When you see a recession, you also see those services cut and our state go backwards. That is the record of a Labor-Greens government here in Tasmania, and that was the record of the Labor-Greens federal government which sat between 2010-13. Enormous damage was done and I hope we never go back there. We have seen already the Greens at a federal level canvassing what sort of horses they will trade in any government with the Labor Party and sadly, as always, it does not look good for Tasmania. We know what it looks like. It looks like a \$200 million cut to forestry innovation, and why? Simply because the Greens now have it in their mind that any time the forest industry gets an investment that will create jobs, it must be against Greens ideology and must be opposed.

We do not believe in that kind of nonsense, Mr Speaker, and we are very proud of that partnership we have had over the last eight years with the federal Liberal-National government. We have been able to deliver an enormous amount for Tasmanians when it comes to a strong economy, better services, more investment and continuing that record of looking after Tasmanians, which can only come when you are able to deliver a strong economy.

It also includes an ambitious \$5.7 billion infrastructure program to support jobs and build better, safer and more connected communities. I know the amount of work that has been done in my neck of the woods between Wynyard and Marrawah on the Bass Highway is unprecedented. It works right across the board, whether out at Tagari, in dairy country out there, or upgrading around Boat Harbour at the school, whether it is Myalla Road or Mella Junction. That is for communities to be able to keep them safe, get to work on time and get home safely. It is so that the fire brigade that operates at Boat Harbour, which I used to be a

member of, is not having to go out and sadly have to be involved in cutting someone out of their car because the road was not safe or upgraded to the standard we want to see.

That is what the investment from the federal Liberal Government, which invests 80 per cent of that major upgrade on that road, was able to deliver. This Government has put in 20 per cent as part of our contribution and delivered that long term. The work that has been done in partnership together is transforming lives and keeping people safe and connected.

In conclusion, my contribution here today has largely reflected on the strong economic results of Tasmania's nation-leading economy. I am proud of the achievements of Tasmanians and our businesses over the last few years, truly some of the most difficult to be in business in recorded history, and proud of the fact that we have once again been ranked the best-performing economy in the nation by CommSec. That is fantastic news and something which all Tasmanians, particularly those in the Tasmanian parliament who claim to speak for and represent those people, should be able to welcome and embrace with open arms. I hope that we see support from those opposite in this motion.

The Government has a strong plan to continue to grow our economy, to support investment and to grow jobs. At the end of the day, only a strong economy allows Government to fund and invest more into the things Tasmanians care most about, like their health, education, community safety, law and order, housing and community infrastructure.

I support the motion before the House.

[3.10 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, what a pretty ordinary contribution from Mr Ellis from Braddon.

Ms O'Connor - It was nicely puffed up.

Ms DOW - It was. He might have come to this place elected on the back of Adam Brooks, but he does not need to come in here and continue on with Mr Brooks' rhetoric around Labor-Greens governments because it is disingenuous and it really does not suit him. He does not deliver it well.

There are 56 Tasmanians who have died from COVID-19 since the pandemic commenced across the world. That is 56 Tasmanians whose families and their loved ones have been left devastated by that. Even if Mr Ellis does not acknowledge that, I put on the record my sincere condolences and thoughts to the families and loved ones of those 56 Tasmanians who have died. I cannot believe the dismissive nature of his comment today.

Ms O'Connor - He was so glib. He moved straight on to infrastructure after another person died.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor. You do not have the call.

Ms DOW - We will not be supporting this self-congratulatory motion. As I said, it was an appalling delivery from Mr Ellis.

Mr Ellis, I am from the family of a logging contractor. My dad worked as an electrician in a pulp mill all his life. I understand the importance of traditional industries. My family's livelihood was built on those traditional industries. I am a member of the Labor Party, the party of workers. That is why I marched proudly with workers last Sunday in Devonport during May Day celebrations. It is why I attended the International Workers Memorial Day in Launceston last week - to pay my respects to those workers who were not able to return home safely to their families or those who have been injured whilst at work.

We do not need to come to this place and be lectured by you about the value of workers and the significant contribution they make to our industries, to our economy and to Tasmania. Tasmania's economy is built on the good work of our workers and our working class. We will not be lectured by you on that.

Now to the motion before the House. It is interesting that this Government always goes to the economy. Things are not looking so bright for the Tasmanian economy right now. They would like to think that it is, but it is not. They always go to this old chestnut. They never talk about the structural deficiencies across our economy, across Tasmania, that are impacting significantly on the quality of life of Tasmanians, on the ability for them to get a roof over their heads, to own their own home, to get a job, to get access to the skills and training that they need. Quite clearly, this Government has not delivered when it comes to those key structural parts of our economy across Tasmania and so, we will not be supporting this motion.

It is a ridiculous motion from Mr Ellis. It is quite telling that the Premier is not even here to defend this motion and that he has put Mr Ellis in the House to speak on it today. It is also telling that the Premier earlier today in question time made an admission that this Government has not got it right when it looks to the wellbeing of Tasmanians, that they are looking at a wellbeing framework across Tasmania. It sounds a lot to me like the amazing work that is being done in New Zealand by Labour Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, around a wellbeing budget. That is an admission that you have not got it right and that your economic management is not working for Tasmanians. It is quite absurd that you come in here today with all of this rhetoric, Mr Ellis, when that was the position that the Premier put earlier during question time.

The first point of the motion is not factually correct. Economic growth has been lower under this Government than it was under Labor. An average of 2.2 per cent under you, and an average of 2.4 per cent under Labor. The only thing that is significant about that is how significantly lower it is under the Liberal Party. If the economy had grown at 2.4 per cent, rather than 2.2 per cent, Mr Ellis, the economy today would be \$600 million bigger. Since 2014 that is a cumulative impact of nearly \$5 billion of economic growth. That is the significant cost of the Liberal Party's significantly worse economic management.

As for the CommSec State of the States report, what that showed is that Tasmania is well on its way to losing its top spot. Mr Ellis failed to mention that today in his contribution. That is right, the economic 'B team' of the Rockliff-Ferguson Government is well on its way to sending Tasmania's economy backwards.

In Mr Ellis's contribution today, there was no mention of the Deloitte's report that came out only the day before the CommSec report, specifically in relation to Tasmania. It found that price pressures are mounting fast. Income per person and employment growth is expected to trail the national average.

Recently people have been leaving Tasmania in droves. That is our young people, Mr Ellis. Your catchcry is that people want to come to Tasmania. People are leaving Tasmania. They cannot get a house. They cannot get access to employment or the skills and training that they require. They are leaving, under your Government. The data is there to back it in. You only have to look at the most recent analysis from Lisa Denny, which quite clearly talks about that demographic shift and how that has changed significantly since before the pandemic. She attributes that to a lack of housing across Tasmania, and of course this Government's lack of ability to plan strategically for growth across this state, and that there is a need to review the population strategy that the Government has in place right now.

Currently it is not working. They have not planned appropriately for the growth that occurred prior to this time. That has had dire consequences. It means that people cannot get access to the services, to the infrastructure, to housing and so they are leaving Tasmania to become residents of other states where they can get access to those things.

Tasmania has the lowest employment to population ratio of any state by a country mile. The forecasts in the Deloitte report were not great either: state final demand - we are well below state budget projections from next year; inflation will be far higher than the budget forecasted; population growth will be well below budget forecasts; expected four years of a falling housing investment across the state; two years of falling business equipment investment; and three years of stagnating industrial production from 2023-2024.

It is typical that you come in here to distract from what is really happening with your Government, a government that is in disarray and in chaos, to put forward this factually incorrect, self-congratulatory motion that has no basis and quite frankly is a waste of our time debating today in the House, particularly when you look at what is happening across health, housing and education in this state. I will get to education in a moment.

This Government is not getting the basics right. When it comes to economic management that could not be clearer. Our economy shrank last quarter when all other states grew. As I said, people are leaving the state in record numbers. Renting is unaffordable, buying a house is unachievable, and social housing is unobtainable. Business confidence is down; interest rates are up, and the Liberals have racked up record debt and we have nothing to show for it. No improvements to services. Ask Tasmanians about their experiences of the health system, of getting a house in Tasmania.

Consumer confidence is down and prices are rising twice as fast as wages. Record inflation means businesses are facing cost pressures and quoting risks that they have not seen in decades, if ever. Tasmanians are going backwards, which means Tasmania is going backwards. Now we have a weak, new Premier leading a weak economy. That is not what Tasmanians voted for 12 months ago when we had to have an early election. If this new Premier is serious about the economy and good economic management, the first thing he needs to do is acknowledge that there is a problem. You get to do that as a government. He needs to then follow his backflip on unfair energy charges by back-tracking on his new bin tax which will put rates up, and the new water charges that will put bills up over \$400 over the next four years. Tasmanians simply cannot afford that, Mr Ellis. He needs to outline how he is going to deliver a long list of delayed infrastructure projects and deliver them within their original budget.

In his contribution today Mr Ellis went to the Burnie port. How much longer do we have to wait for investment in the Burnie and Devonport ports? He talked up the road infrastructure investment on the highway to Marrawah. We committed to that too back in 2018. That community has been waiting for that infrastructure investment for far too long from your Government. There is a series of projects that have been delayed under your Government.

He wanted to talk about the timber industry and the importance of innovation and employment opportunities. What happened to the Hermal mill at Hampshire, Mr Ellis? It has gone terribly quiet. It was a huge election announcement. There were 300 jobs promised to the local community at the 2018 state election by your Government. I reckon it would be lucky for there to be 10 in the factory out at Wynyard where they have set up shop. What happened to that? We have seen very little industry development under your Government.

You talk a lot about hydrogen, about renewable energy and about the forest industry, but what have you done to support the growth of those industries or support R&D or innovation?

Mr Speaker, I spoke before about the importance of education. For us the fundamentals of a strong economy are built on the building blocks of good educational outcomes, good health outcomes and housing. They are key pillars of an economy and people's ability to get ahead and the productivity which is achieved across local communities. They are all areas that this Government is failing in.

You only have to go back to this great document they produced back at the 2014 election where they talked about their plan to attract investment and create jobs. They talked about making population growth a priority and the important contribution that population growth makes to a strong economy. They were talking about it then, they are still talking about it now, and our population is declining.

The other thing they spoke about was the importance of education. They had some great objectives in here around NAPLAN and achievements against NAPLAN in their first six years of government. This is another area in which this Government has miserably failed. Educational outcomes in this state have decreased under this Government. If people do not have the knowledge, the foundational skills, the numeracy or literacy, they cannot get ahead. It is a fundamental building block of an economy and a society. We know that if people have poorer education outcomes they have poorer health outcomes. There is an increased burden on the state through the need for increased health services. We have poor health literacy. There are significant numbers of Tasmanians who live in socioeconomic disadvantage, but you never hear this Government talking about those Tasmanians getting ahead.

As I said before, this Government has failed to address the structural deficiencies across our economy. They talk big about these key economic indicators that are in the CommSec report. I hope in my contribution today I have certainly cleared up that much of what they presented today is not factual. They have come in with this self-congratulatory motion at a time when they are in complete disarray and chaos to distract from what is really happening on the other side of the House.

I will read a paragraph from Lisa Denny's report around educational outcomes in Tasmania. It says:

Following the findings of the analysis, the report discusses the economic and social implications of declining literacy and numeracy skills for young Tasmanians in terms of engagement in learning, successful school completion, participating in further education and training and securing meaningful work, as well as the broader implications for the workforce, industry, development and economic growth for Tasmania.

In her summary, this was a really important point she made:

Given the lifelong and long-term costs of the Tasmanian education system failing to equip all Tasmanian students with the literacy and numeracy skills required to fully participate in our economy and our society, it is surprising that there is not a greater level of outrage expressed by the industries, business community and community groups, who bear the cost of this failure, particularly when it is entirely preventable.

How powerful is that?

I will now reflect on a couple of comments Mr Ellis made about our electorate and particularly the west coast. There is no doubt that the mining industry is critical to Tasmania's economy but also to our west coast communities and the employment it offers there and across our state. However, the fact is that the west coast is crying out for a jobs hub, which I might add was one of our policies at the last state election. This Government put one in Burnie, expecting it to provide outreach to Circular Head and down to the west coast, which is simply unacceptable. How can that jobs hub be resourced adequately to provide those support services?

If you were doing such a great job at linking people to skills and training and employment opportunities across Tasmania, there would not be the need for jobs hubs in communities. Clearly that is an area you have failed in as a government. Local communities have taken it upon themselves, such as what is happening in Sorell, which is an amazing project there with SERDA. You have not done a good job at connecting people to employment, particularly across regional and rural Tasmania where it is very difficult to get access to a TAFE course.

You came in here with your new legislation around TAFE, which is really an industrial relations instrument. It was not about increasing access to skills and training for rural and regional Tasmanians, which is what is desperately needed. The care economy and the aged care sector is an important part of our economy. As our ageing population continues to grow, there is going to be a huge need for investment in skills and training for people to provide care to our ageing Tasmanians closer to where they live, but your Government has done nothing about that. It is a tremendous opportunity for employment growth across regional areas.

You should have a talk to Richard Colbeck about that one. There are tremendous opportunities, particularly in our electorate of Braddon, down the west coast and Circular Head, linking people to employment opportunities in the care economy and the opportunity to provide outstanding care for ageing Tasmanians, no matter where they live. That is a huge opportunity. Of course that will relieve pressure on our hospital system, where we know that there is bed block, where people are waiting for aged care placements or care packages in the community.

As I said, we will not be supporting this ridiculous motion put forward by Mr Ellis. I am disappointed that the new Premier is not here defending this motion that he sent Mr Ellis in to do for him. When it comes to economic reform you do not have a good track record. You only have to look at your failed attempt at water and sewerage reform, and local government reform. What about planning reform? We do not hear much about that these days. You have not delivered on planning reform. That is a significant contributing factor to the housing shortage across the state because you have not done the work, you have not made the investment in the regional land use strategies that needed to be reviewed across the state.

Councils do not have the tools they need. The TPC does not have the tools it needs to be making these decisions. You have left it once again to local government when it is your planning reform that you should be owning and supporting councils to implement. That is not happening. There has been no communication about that and planning is certainly not simpler, faster or cheaper under this Government. What is happening with planning reform across the state? Perhaps Mr Ferguson could provide an update to the House about that. Local government reform: you have had three ministers since the beginning of the year with responsibility for local government. The sector is in the midst of reform.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Rising Cost of Living in Tasmania - Motion Negatived

[3.31 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I move that the House -

- (1) Acknowledges -
 - (a) the serious financial pressure being placed on Tasmanian households by the rising cost of living;
 - (b) that the most acute pressure is currently being felt with basic, nondiscretionary expenses such as fuel, housing and utility bills;
 - (c) wages are not keeping pace with the cost of living; and
 - (d) that this pressure is felt equally by business owners.
- (2) Notes -
 - (a) the National Rental Affordability Index shows Hobart is the least affordable capital city in the country for renters, while house price increases of nearly 30 per cent in 2021 have put the dream of home ownership out of reach for many Tasmanians;

- (b) a report by ANZ (Australia New Zealand Banking Group) has shown consumer confidence in Tasmania is now negative and inflation expectations are the worst in 10 years;
 - (c) two recent surveys by NAB (National Australia Bank) and Roy Morgan Market Research Company have shown Tasmania has the lowest business confidence in the country;
 - (d) business investment in Tasmania fell nearly 10 per cent in the December 2021 quarter, nearly three times more than in any other state;
 - (e) Tasmania's domestic economy shrank by 1.5 per cent in the December 2021 quarter; and
 - (f) Tasmania's population has declined for the last two quarters, with record numbers of Tasmanians moving interstate.
- (3) Calls on the Premier, the Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP, to fulfil his predecessor's promise to implement legislation to reduce petrol prices, scrap the bin tax and tell TasWater to amend its plan to significantly increase water bills.

Mr Speaker, the motion seeks to outline the serious cost of living pressure that has been placed on Tasmanian households. It is not cost of living pressures that are currently in place, but it is what we can see on the horizon. Some of those have been borne out only this week through the Reserve Bank's decision, but some of them are coming next financial year, and I will go through those in my contribution. We are talking about discretionary expenses like fuel, housing and utility bills within this motion. We are also talking about wages that are not keeping up with the cost of living.

We are talking about real wages going down, and that means wage increases are not keeping up with the increases in cost of living for families. That is a reality and it is being borne out in the stats that we are seeing from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. More importantly, it is being borne out by people who we represent in our communities. They are telling, not just Labor members but I am sure they are telling members from every party and the Independents the same thing: it is getting tougher and tougher to balance family budgets. Wages are not keeping up with increases in prices and the economic management of the Liberal Government is not working for Tasmanian families.

The evidence is growing that this is becoming more and more of an issue. There was a time when I was growing up and when I was moving out of home looking to buy my first property, where Tasmania was seen as, and in fact statistically was, one of the easiest places in Australia to buy your first home. Those days, under the economic management of the Liberal Government are long gone. Young Tasmanians are finding it incredibly tough to break into this housing market. It is now a housing market that is the least affordable in Australia when it comes to rental affordability. It is unaffordable for people looking to own their first home as well, which we know is the dream for so many young Tasmanian families. Whilst we have seen the economic conditions that have been established, and we have heard lauded by the

Liberal Government, those are the economic conditions that are making it so tough for young Tasmanian families at the moment.

This is supported not just by the Tasmanians who we are speaking to, but by the growing economic data that is telling the story of a Tasmania that is becoming increasingly hard to live in. We have heard so many contributions in this place over the years about the growing population in Tasmania, but it is no longer true. The Tasmanian population data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, that has been relied on by this Government for so long to talk about the growing Tasmanian population, is now showing the exact opposite to be true.

Yet the Government and Government members choose to use statistics from last year, from 12 months ago now, to try to tell a story that they want, and this is not going to last, because people can see what is happening. Right now, Tasmanians are getting priced out of their own state. They are now leaving Tasmania for more affordable cities across Australia when it comes to rentals, and for higher wages. Tasmania continues to have the lowest average wages of any state in Australia, some 20 per cent below the national average. That means if you are a young Tasmanian earning or getting a job, you are likely to get paid less than your counterparts in mainland Australia. You have the most unaffordable city to live in and rent and the lowest average wages or household earnings, depending on which way you look at it. That is the reality of where we are at.

The motion calls on the House to acknowledge those significant financial pressures being placed onto households. It also notes the actual data. This is not data from 12 months ago as we have heard previously. We are talking about what is happening in Tasmania right now. Some of the most recent data, Tasmania's domestic economy, we heard only very recently, had grown last financial year. As the motion states, Tasmania's domestic economy actually shrank by 1.5 per cent in the December 2021 quarter. That is the most recent statistic. If Government members want to stand up in this place and use data that is out of date to pretend everything is okay, that is not going to work for them.

We have real challenges in front of households and in front of our state right now. Some of these challenges that are coming for Tasmanian households are a direct result of decisions made in this place. Some are a direct result of decisions made by this Government, or their government businesses. Those are some of the decisions that I think are most concerning.

Tasmanians found out last Friday through a media release from the minister for Energy that the Government will no longer go ahead with charging every single Tasmanian household or business for the aurora+app whether they like it or not, whether they can get access to it or not. That was a decision far too late, but welcomed by Labor because it was something we have been campaigning on for some time. Why did it take the minister for Energy so long to realise that his plan with Aurora to charge Tasmanians for an app that they could not use, that was not in line with the expectations of Tasmanians and would increase prices for Tasmanians when they can least afford it?

Why does it take the economic regulator to ensure that Aurora does not keep as much profit as it wanted to, which the minister was apparently happy with, when it came to its determination last week? The economic regulator is apparently more aware of the cost of living crisis for Tasmanians than the Tasmanian Government. Elected members apparently are not aware of the cost-of-living crisis, yet the Tasmanian Economic Regulator is aware.

Water and sewerage prices planned by this Government, through its MOU with local government, to go up by 3.5 per cent every year for four years, \$395 per household on average over those four years. This was planned and signed up to by the Tasmanian Liberal Government. It is a direct assault on Tasmanian families at a time when they can least afford it. Why on earth did this Government direct TasWater through the MOU to try to increase its prices by that much? It is astonishing. Again, the only thing that saved Tasmanian households from that decision was the economic regulator, who said 'no, that is too much TasWater'.

The Tasmanian Government, through its MOU with local government, actually expected Tasmanian households to pick up the bill for 3.5 per cent every year for four years in a combined assault of \$395 per household over those four years. This is out of touch stuff. It is extraordinary that it was attempted by the Government. Thankfully, it was not fully accepted by the economic regulator in the case of the TasWater increases, which allowed for only a little over 3 per cent, but still too much, more than Tasmanians can handle. We know now and we have known for a while that an increase in the cash rate from the Reserve Bank of Australia was likely and that materialised this week with an increase in the cash rate to 0.35 per cent. That is going to have a significant impact across the Tasmanian economy and it will have an impact on Tasmanian households. Depending on the size of their mortgage, this will have an impact on their discretionary spending and that is likely to have flow-on impact through the entire economy.

The incredibly low cash rate that Tasmanians have been enjoying and which has been one of the driving factors of the housing price rises that we have seen was not sustainable in the long term and now we have to deal with the consequences of increasing interest rates on top of everything else.

One of the decisions that has been made by this Government and by the parliament, of course, is the tip tax. This is a tax on every single Tasmanian who has a wheelie bin. Every time you roll your wheelie bin out onto the kerb, this Tasmanian Government is going to tax you. Every time you go to your local tip or waste transfer station, this Government is going to tax you. The problem with the design of the tax, as we have said, is that it will not actually work. The design is so poor it does not provide any incentive for Tasmanian households to actually reduce their waste.

I would have thought the key component of a design like a waste tax, if you were going to do one, would be to try to reduce the amount of waste in a wheelie bin. Yet, it does not matter if you fill your wheelie bin up every week, you stack it to the brim or if you have nothing at all, you will still pay the same tip tax to this Government that was hell-bent on this new tax, after they said there would be no new taxes. This is the new tax that will be felt. It is not well known at the moment but I tell you it will be next financial year, because Tasmanians will start feeling it.

As a former mayor, I know what happened when a previous mayor put up the price at the tip and it is not a welcome thing, particularly from tradies, from Tasmanian workers, from households. That will be felt as well as the other cost of living pressures that have been put in place by this Government.

I said earlier that we have been hearing a lot from members opposite, in particular, over a period of time. Our deputy leader, Ms Dow, earlier referred to Adam Brooks' speeches. She was quite right to make that reference. Sometimes it is as though he is still here. You still hear

that same speech that drones on and on about the Labor-Greens government, but here we are eight years into this term of government and they are still talking about a previous government because they have no achievements of their own - absolutely nothing to show for it.

Again this year, probably it is going to be a record deficit for Tasmania, on top of a record deficit for Tasmania last year and top of a record deficit the year before and we have nothing to show for it. We have infrastructure budgets that only deliver 50 per cent of what they promise. We have an underperforming health system, an underperforming education system. While the spending goes up and up and up, the results get no better.

Across education and health, the results continue to get worse. The Government trumpets spending more, but we get worse results. I would have thought if you were going to spend more and you were going to run record deficits, as this Government has done for three years in a row, you might expect to get better results but we have not seen that.

The issue with the state of the budget is that it will impact on this Government's ability to help Tasmanian families. A strong budget means that you have the levers in place to do great things for Tasmanian people. Every government wants to be in a position where it has a strong budget where it can deliver for Tasmanian people. But their performance of this budget and of this Government in managing that budget over the past eight years has led to a position where we are now borrowing \$2 billion every year and will do so over the course of this current budget, where Tasmanian Treasury and Finance warns this Government, through its most recent Tasmanian Government Fiscal Sustainability Report, that without corrective action the Tasmanian debt could get to \$30 billion by 2035.

When I hear some Government members speak about the budget and words to the effect that the Labor-Greens government had destroyed the budget, what they need to understand, if they ever read the budget or any previous budget, was that the former government left Tasmania with \$200 million in net cash and reserves. There was no debt. The former government left this Liberal Government with \$200 million in net cash and reserves. What has this Government done to that budget? Three consecutive largest deficits in Tasmanian history. It is driving a debt that unless corrective action is taken - and there has been none forthcoming in the last year's budget and I suspect there will be none in next year's budget as well - could get to \$30 billion.

What are we expecting when it comes to the budget? The budget will drive the ability of the Government to deal with these cost of living pressures. The Government has liked to spend, spend, spend over a period of time now, and spend its way out of problems but when it comes to the really serious issues for Tasmanians going forward, the problem is going to be the growing debt. The huge deficits that it has been running are going to limit its options. It has to.

This Government, and government members who I hear speak about the budget with no idea what they are talking about, need to wake up to what is actually within these documents, documents like the Tasmanian Government Fiscal Sustainability Report, delivered by the independent and excellent Tasmanian Treasury and Finance department, which has issued the challenge to the Tasmanian Government through the former treasurer, Peter Gutwein. Now, it falls to the new Treasurer - and I will congratulate Michael Ferguson - to now try to deal with these huge issues.

As I said, page 26 of that document shows a graphical representation of the problem here, a high expenditure scenario that has been modelled by Treasury and Finance showing over \$30 billion in debt by 2035. Even under the forward Estimates, which is the most optimistic of estimates, we will have \$15 billion worth of debt by that time. As I said, in 2014 there was no net debt. There was no net debt when this Government came into power. The debt has been built up by this Government. It was built up, not because of the pandemic, though that contributed to it. The debt was planned before the pandemic. The debt was planned by the Liberals because they have spent, spent, spent.

As I said, as we head towards more difficult economic circumstances across the globe - higher interest rates, higher cost of living for Tasmanians - the decisions that they have made in not making any hard decisions over that period of time, is going to limit their ability to deal with some of these problems that are going to be facing Tasmanians. Over time, we have watched the Tasmanian Government continue to take less and less seriously the Tasmanian budget, continue to take less and less seriously the expenditure problem that has been built up over time. The biggest spending treasurer in Tasmanian history is Peter Gutwein. Former premier, Peter Gutwein, is by far and away the biggest spending treasurer in Tasmanian history, not just in terms of nominal numbers, but in terms of expenditure increases every year.

It looks as though this financial year, once we see the final results, he will have increased expenditure this year by about 10 per cent. On top of an already over-inflated economy we have continued to spend. We are seeing wages not keeping up. There have been so many examples in this place where we have talked about wages, and I am not just talking about the Labor side, but members from all sides of politics have talked about wages being a problem and the relatively low wages Tasmanians are paid being a problem, and it is so right. Yet there is no plan for higher wages for Tasmanians. there is nothing of the sort. In fact, we are now seeing price rises through the CPI increases across Hobart and the rest of Tasmania that are far in excess of wage growth.

When you look at the statistics from the ABS, the difference between wage growth and CPI growth at the moment is startling. The problem we have is that there is no plan from this Government. There is no economic development plan, there is no plan at all for wage growth, there is no plan to rein in cost-of-living pressures for Tasmanian families. There is just rhetoric in this place.

I want to get onto the petrol price promise that former premier Peter Gutwein made to Tasmanians not that long ago. The motion today calls on Premier Jeremy Rockliff to fulfil his predecessor's promise to implement legislation to reduce petrol prices. It would be nice if this Government followed through on its promise to Tasmanians. I remember when the former premier made that quite extraordinary promise that if prices kept going up, he would intervene within that market to ensure prices did not go up as much. That would have been an extraordinary intervention, but it is something he told the Tasmanian people he would do.

It is still the same Government; we have heard that already from the new Government over the last two days. It might not be the Gutwein government, but we have heard that they are committed to the same objectives as the Gutwein government was. One of the promises this Government made to Tasmanians was about reducing petrol prices or stopping the increase in petrol prices. They have funded an app but have gone very quiet on it over the past six to seven months. It appeared as though they were crediting the app with any form of decrease in the price for a while, but as soon as it started going up they went silent on the app. It is as

though the app is no longer a part of their plan at all. I have not heard or seen a media release about it. In fact, they have gone completely silent on it.

What is the Government's plan when it comes to that? Given the cost-of-living crisis that Tasmanians are about to feel when interest rates go up, when we see TasWater bills go up and when we see the impact of the price determination on energy prices, will the Government make a decision on that tip tax, the bin tax? Will it make a decision that it might let Tasmanians off the hook when it comes to that new slug on households? Will it finally come to its senses and redesign that tax so it might actually help reduce waste, as opposed to what it does at the moment, which provides no incentive for Tasmanian households to reduce their waste?

Will it amend its MOU with TasWater? Will it amend the terms that instruct TasWater to go for a 3.5 per cent price rise every year? Will it finally take on board some of the feedback they must be hearing from Tasmanian households about the cost-of-living crisis that is already being felt by so many Tasmanians but is not being recognised by this Government? It must surely come into their thinking when it comes to building the next Budget.

I also want to talk about some of the economic reforms the Government has not undertaken during this eight years, almost a decade, of Liberal government. I want to talk about TasWater a little more because what we have seen since the Government tried to take over TasWater in 2018, and then capitulated and came up with the MOU deal for a 20 per cent stake in the business, is that really nothing has changed. They have now instructed TasWater to increase their prices by 3.5 per cent. They now have the power through the corporate planning process to make interventions. I understand they have not as yet, but they are now in the room when discussing these things. What we have not seen are the promises materialising that came from that process such as the proposal to move the sewerage works from Macquarie Point. They were talking about that back in 2018 as being a critical project for this state and for Macquarie Point. Here we are in 2022, four years later, and I have not seen a development application. I have not seen any change at all. It appears as though the Government's intervention has only been about increasing prices and not about delivering anything at all.

When it comes to the budget and the Liberals' economic management, we also saw over the course of almost a decade of this Government numerous attempts at local government reform. I again refer to the contribution by my colleague, Ms Dow, where she talked about yet another attempt at local government reform. We have seen failures to amend the Local Government Act. That was too difficult so they put that on ice. We have seen attempts to amalgamate councils such as Tasman and Sorell. That was too difficult. People did not want it so they stopped that. Now we have this extraordinary situation in the north and north-west of the state where the councils have now started attacking each other during this process. I do not know many Local Government ministers we have had over the last few years; I have lost count. It has been an awful lot.

The member for Bass and Deputy Premier, Mr Ferguson, is here. He was the Local Government minister for a couple of days or so. He had a little crack at it and moved it on to, I think, Mr Street, and he will have a little crack at it as well. However, after all the ministers and all the attempts at reform, we have still seen not a single change. We have seen no progress on anything at all. We still have the ongoing issue of the charitable rates situation with it being uncertain. The Government has not made a comment on that for goodness knows, a year, maybe? I have not heard or seen anything about what they are planning to do with the charitable rates situation. We have councils at loggerheads over the reform proposals. We

have the Don Challen report which appeared to call for the Government to undertake a reform process which of course it was not able to do. All the while, we still have 29 councils for this state, which is something this Government has said it does not want but after eight years of attempting to reform local government, has made no progress at all.

My colleague, Ms Dow, made a very good contribution. The other thing she mentioned in terms of economic reform was the failed planning reforms. That has been a much bigger part of the growing cost of living crisis in households, rental increases and difficulty buying new homes because of this Government's failed planning reforms. These reforms have been going for almost 10 years, trying to get to this single statewide planning scheme. They have abandoned the endpoint anyway. They said it would be a single statewide planning scheme but it will not; it will be 29 planning schemes at least, and they are so far behind schedule. Here we are, eight years into the process and I think less than half the councils have signed up. Perhaps the Minister for Planning will correct me but I think fewer than half the councils are using that new statewide planning scheme.

What does that mean for households and what does it mean for the cost-of-living crisis Tasmanians are facing? It means it is really hard to build a home. That means there are fewer homes and it means that prices are higher whether you want to buy a house or rent a house. That is a result of the planning reform bungle of this Government.

Ms O'Connor - That is one part of it. You cannot say planning is the reason.

Mr WINTER - I said it is a much bigger part than has been attributed in the public commentary about housing.

Many Tasmanians who want to build their family home, who want to get out of renting, have bought a block of land and found a builder. They want to build a home to get out of the cycle of renting and paying more and more rent but getting further and further behind. Dealing with the Tasmanian Planning Scheme is very difficult. It is not a council issue. If you talk to people from all over the state - all different councils - they say the same thing. It is too difficult to build a home. Talk to tradies about it. It is too difficult to get through the red tape. You are talked to for dealing with the Consumer, Building and Occupational Services (CBOS). If you talk to the planners about it, what they tell you is that there are not enough skilled planners in Tasmania to undertake the work that needs to be done. The regional planning strategies are so far out of date now that it is ridiculous.

We see the Government trying to go over the top of its own Regional Planning Schemes with orders that attempt to quickly rezone to bypass their own planning system. Their own planning system is so difficult for them to manage they would prefer to create an entirely different approvals process for them to go through because they cannot deal with their own red tape. This is blue tape. This is Liberal Party tape that has been placed over the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. We spent eight pointless years trying to get to a position of a single statewide planning scheme that they thought was a good idea in opposition but appear to have abandoned. We now have a single statewide planning system - I think that is what they are calling it - because they have not been able to deal with their own planning scheme. They are now trying to go over the top of it with their own process. This is going to continue for a lot longer.

When Mr Jaensch was the Planning minister, he said that he wanted to have it finished by Christmas last year. It is nowhere near finished, as I understand it. I look forward to Estimates for that one. What that means is that we still have Tasmania's strategic planners trying to work through an enormous amount of red tape to process these new planning schemes. It seems as though many people do not want them, by the way. A growing number of people in places like the south-east and in the south, in the Huon Valley, say the new planning scheme does not appear to be any better.

The Government says it has a plan for the growing housing crisis. It says it will build 10 000 new homes. The rhetoric might have worked in their first year in government but they have been in government for almost a decade. The housing crisis is the Liberals' housing crisis. The cost of living crisis is the Liberals' cost of living crisis. When they come in here and talk about the Labor-Greens government from 2014 or the Labor government from 2008 or whatever they want to talk about, who cares? Tasmanians are struggling right now. They do not need to be told some sort of mythical version of the past by someone who did not live here at the time.

We heard earlier from someone with as little an idea about how the budget or the economy works as I have ever heard. What Tasmanians need is a plan for the cost of living. It needs this Government to take the cost of living crisis seriously. It needs this Government to get out of the ivory tower and speak to people who are doing it tough. We are not talking about people who are sleeping in cars or tents at the moment. People are and they have been for a long time. That is not new. Sad as it is, this has been going on for far too long. We are talking about people who rent or own their homes who are doing it really tough. That is not helped by a housing market that is the way it is. It is not helped by rising electricity prices, rising water and sewerage prices. It is not helped by a new tip tax. It is not helped by rising interest rates. All of these things are going to come to Tasmanian families, all the while they know that here in Tasmania on average you get paid about 20 per cent less than the rest of the country. It is really tough for Tasmanians who are experiencing this crisis.

I implore the Government to consider supporting this motion in particular, to show that they are serious about the cost of living crisis that is hitting Tasmanians right now and is only going to get worse. I implore them to stop talking about outdated data from last financial year, and to stop talking about the 2008 global financial crisis and some myth that it only lasted a year. I implore them to get serious about the situation that is happening right now.

[4.06 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, if Mr Winter had stood up and laid out a plan which he rightly points to Tasmanians needing for reducing the cost of living, we might be able to support this motion but we cannot support this motion. I want to flag an amendment, which I will read into the record now:

Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

Omit part (3) and insert the following:

- (3) Calls on the Premier, the honourable Jeremy Rockliff, to act on cost of living by -

- (a) introducing legislation to limit the use of whole properties as short-stay accommodation in tight rental markets; and
- (b) introducing controls on unreasonable rent increases, and remove provisions allowing tenants to be evicted solely on the grounds of lease expiration; and
- (c) fund free public transport; and
- (d) invest in programs that relieve food insecurity; and
- (e) eliminate student fees and charges for TasTAFE students; and
- (f) fund all school costs for children and young people from households in poverty; and
- (g) enact a program to expand government concessions to all Tasmanian residents who live below the poverty line; and
- (h) provide free household energy efficiency upgrades for low income Tasmanians; and
- (i) adopt a *Housing First* approach to homelessness and housing insecurity; and
- (j) funding these programs through increased corporate/property taxes, including one or more of the following -
 - (i) increased casino tax rates; and/or
 - (ii) a 10 per cent royalty on the gross value of salmonoids grown in state-owned waters; and/or
 - (iii) a 75 per cent betterment tax on any increase in the value of land that results from a change in the allowable use of the land; and/or
 - (iv) a '1.0 per cent of unimproved value' tax on residences left vacant - with the exception of legitimate uses such as shacks; and/or
 - (v) reversing the last two years of cuts to land tax rates.

I point out that Labor supported the cuts to land tax rates. I will shortly give a copy of this amendment to the Clerk.

Labor is paying lip service on cost of living. It is particularly galling to listen to Mr Winter talk about cost of living when he led the opposition support for the gambling bill.

It has driven up the cost of living and will do so for generations because it will maintain poker machines in pubs and clubs across this island for generations.

It is very disappointing to see such a tepid, lazy and populist approach to cost of living from Labor. Rather than propose sensible and meaningful reforms to improve cost of living for those who need it, they have reached for low-hanging fruit, a bit like they did in question time today.

I note that they have taken up the issue of petrol prices before. The Attorney-General clarified at the time that the consideration of legislation to address this matter would be in circumstances where price gouging or anti-competitive behaviour by fuel retailers was taking place. This would involve examining consumer law frameworks. She also noted that external factors like the war in Ukraine are contributing to fuel price increases. Would that we could, Mr Deputy Speaker, but Tasmanian legislation cannot reduce the price importers pay for fuel. On the matter of price gouging, there is no doubt that historically Tasmanians have been overcharged for fuel, but I note that in September 2021 the ACCC, or Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, released a petrol price monitoring report which noted Hobart had the largest fuel price decrease in any Australian capital. The RACT noted this shows a closing gap of fuel prices and that Tasmanians were now getting a fairer deal.

I also note the Australian Government introduced a six-month reduction in fuel excise which of course was a political exercise designed to time into the federal election campaign. Nonetheless, putting aside the question over whether this was an efficient means to reduce cost of living, the ACCC has recorded that between 29 March and 26 April this year, the average daily regular unleaded petrol price decreased by between 25 cents and 48 cents a litre in Canberra, Hobart and Darwin. There was also a decrease between 29 cents and 32 cents a litre for diesel.

Mr Deputy Speaker, perhaps if Labor believes further action is required by the Tasmanian parliament, they should outline precisely what legislation should be introduced rather than a general ask for legislation to reduce petrol prices. Legislation is not a magic wand that can address any and all extraterritorial economic forces.

On to the next matter of the waste levy. I remind the House that Tasmania was the only jurisdiction in the country that did not have a waste levy in place. Labor erroneously and cynically describes this as a bin tax. First I note that if Labor is asking the House to pass a motion calling for legislative repeal, they should probably use the correct terminology. There is no bin tax.

In terms of the impact on cost of living, some context is important. As I understand it, based on average household waste generation, the cost is projected to be on average somewhere around \$20 per year for ratepayers. This is a ridiculously small cost for Labor to be carrying on about, like it is some sort of flagship policy for cost of living, particularly given their total disregard for the financial and health costs of the pokies legislation Labor waved through this parliament on behalf of their donors. Please, spare us the hypocrisy.

Tasmania's average rates are about \$2900 per year, so this waste levy is less than a 1 per cent increase on these costs. It should also be noted that the benefits that will be generated in respect of waste management will improve the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians and of course our environment.

Finally, on the matter of TasWater charges, I presume Labor is referring to TasWater's price and services plan number 4, or PSP4, for the period between 2022 and 2026. It should be noted that the office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator makes price determinations for regulated water and sewerage services. There is good reason for this independence. We only need to look back to Tasmania's history of water infrastructure management to see what happens when charges do not reflect the necessary cost of delivering quality, safe drinking water. It should also be noted that in many respects, contemporary charges reflect the cost of addressing historic poor management of water and sewerage assets. In other words, short-term thinking has passed costs on to future ratepayers.

On that point, I did not hear anything from Mr Winter about the fact that TasWater will have to spend in the order of \$240 million to upgrade its Bryn Estyn plant up the River Derwent, principally because we have allowed salmon hatcheries to pump salmon waste and faeces into the River Derwent and the Florentine. That has created enormous odour and quality issues which are most certainly part of the reason that TasWater is having to spend \$240 million at Bryn Estyn, and of course that money will come out of the pockets of the average Tasmanian.

The risk of putting these decisions in the hands of those in the political sphere is manifest in Labor's motion today. Populist decisions to reduce charges and fees for short term political gain can have serious ramifications in the future; someone will always have to pay. If TasWater is not able to invest in asset maintenance and renewal, the health and safety of people and the environment is put at risk. This is more likely to occur in remote or regional communities. TasWater's PSP4 limits cost increases to 3.4 per cent per annum. We recognise that that does place extra costs on people's bills, but TasWater needs to be a sustainable entity. This is the maximum upper threshold. This equates to maximum increases on the average household bill of about \$17.50 a year. This is also assuming Labor's position is to fix the maximum rate at 0 per cent; they conveniently have not provided their specific position.

It is also worth noting that the most recent year average Consumer Price Index change for Tasmania has been about 4.2 per cent, and the Reserve Bank of Australia forecasts for Australia are between 2.75 per cent and 3.755 per cent over the next couple of years. It is plausible that the rate increase we will see under TasWater's PSP4 out to 2026 will be lower than CPI. This is a relatively small saving to make to put the health and safety of individuals and the environment at risk, not to mention the fact that the costs would likely be passed on to future ratepayers. If Labor is really concerned about the cost of living, a far more sensible approach would be to call for the increase in water and sewerage concession eligibility criteria and/or the value of available concessions. Labor's proposal is not targeted to the most vulnerable and in fact they pay lip service to the economically and socially vulnerable. We saw it in their vote on the future gaming markets legislation. This is by design. It is a populist move to capitalise on resentment towards water and sewerage bills.

Mr Deputy Speaker, back to fuel prices. It is unclear what Labor's proposal for fuel price capping is in Tasmania. As of today, ULP fuel prices in Tasmania are at an average of 185 cents to 186 cents per litre and the terminal gate prices are 174 cents per litre, a margin of 11.8 cents per litre. Nowhere in Mr Winter's contribution did we hear any policy about the need to continue this island's transition to electrification, to make sure that the Government is seeding the second-hand vehicle fleet with electric vehicles so that the average Tasmanian can afford to buy an electric vehicle and therefore make consistent long-term savings on petrol, while also contributing to a cleaner Tasmania. This margin is relatively low in terms of recent history, although these margins have been quite high since 2015-16. If we assume Labor would

like to see price margins reduced to the long-term average of 9.5 cents per litre, this would be roughly 2.3 cents per litre on current average prices. Looking at ABS data of average passenger vehicle fuel consumption per kilometre and average annual kilometres travelled, this would equate to an annual savings of about \$27 a vehicle.

If we make generous assumptions about what Labor is asking for, we are looking at a maximum of about \$65 or \$64.50 saved in costs per year, or \$1.24 a week. These may be back-of-the-envelope calculations but they are also quite generous. It is also the case that the majority of these savings would only be realised by property owners, and would be on bills where there are currently concessions available. This cost-of-living package, if you can call it that, is poorly articulated, ill-considered and does not go anywhere near the real cost-of-living issues facing Tasmania, most notably rental costs. It is a cost-of-living package largely targeted at property owners, not renters. That is why we have sought to amend this motion so that it would deliver genuine cost of living measures that provide genuine cost of living relief to people who are economically and socially marginal.

Why did we not hear Mr Winter advocating for short-stay accommodation to be reined in? Why will not Labor, and indeed the Liberals for that matter, support our moves to bring in some restraint on unreasonable rent increases like they have in the Australia Capital Territory? It is good workable policy that can deliver genuine cost of living relief.

We could, as a state, fund free public transport. There are places in the world like Portland, Oregon, that have free public transport in the heart of the city. It has activated the city; it has led to greater social mobility and inclusion. It is just about the choices that government makes.

We could deliver more in terms of food security. We know that on this island some people live in healthy food deserts. Too many Tasmanians struggle to buy quality food. Thank goodness for the organisations that are working with our neighbourhood houses to provide that food security relief. In those families, it is the difference between eating and not. It is the difference between making sure your kid goes to school with something in their stomach.

We could make a choice to eliminate student fees and charges for TasTAFE students. We could open up TasTAFE to more and more Tasmanians. We could deal with some of those training deficits and challenges that Ms Dow talked about in her contribution on the previous motion. But it is a choice that we have made not to do that, as a state. We could fund all school costs for children and young people from households in poverty. We could do that, as a state, but it is a choice that has been made by the Government not to do it - and it is a choice that has been made by Labor not to recognise that as a significant and effective cost of living relief measure.

We should enact a program to expand government concessions to all Tasmanian residents who live below the poverty line. We know there are tens of thousands of Tasmanians who live below the poverty line whose lives are so stressful because they cannot make ends meet, no matter how hard they try. We could make a choice to provide relief to those families and those individuals.

We could do what the Labor-Greens government did between 2010-14 and deliver large-scale, free energy efficient upgrades to low-income households, community groups and small businesses - an immediate cost of living saving that, for a household, can lead to savings of up

to \$1000 a year. That is real cost of living relief at a relatively small cost to government. The difference it makes in the lives of people who have their house insulated and made more energy efficient is profound. Not only does it lead to cost of living relief, it makes their homes healthier, warmer, less mouldy and less drafty.

We must adopt a housing first approach to tackle homelessness and housing stress. They do this in places like Wales, where the first response to a person who is homeless is to provide them secure accommodation. Then you wrap some supports around them and you work through so that you can deliver them secure, affordable, stable housing. We should be funding these measures by making sure Tasmanians are getting a good return on their assets and resources. As a state, we give the corporations a free ride. Much better that we give young Tasmanians from rural and regional areas a free ride on public and passenger transport. Much better that we give Tasmanians a fair return for their wealth. It is their wealth. It does not belong to the corporations. It does not belong to the government of the day. It is the shared wealth of all Tasmanians. Tasmanians should receive a fair return on that wealth.

We regard this as a highly cynical and populist approach from Labor. It is not evidence-based. It is not about targeting the most economically and socially vulnerable. More than anything else, it is about targeting government.

This morning in question time I was reminded of those pictures I have seen of monkeys in the zoo, flinging poo everywhere knowing that some will stick. This Labor Opposition came into the first question time of this parliamentary session and they did not talk about cost of living. They did not ask a question about that poor man who rang an ambulance and died while he was waiting. Grubby politics. We should be looking for the common ground. I know it is difficult to find, particularly in a Westminster parliament like this, but we should be looking for it. Of course, there are things we disagree on, because we come from different philosophical places. However, there is plenty of common ground. We all know Tasmanians need genuine cost of living relief. Our constituents tell us that. We hear from our constituents on a daily basis who cannot afford their rent, their groceries or petrol.

We have put an amendment forward that we think is the foundation for a real conversation about cost of living relief. These all measures that we are proposing that come from a foundation of evidence. We know they can work.

The stuff Labor has on the table is not about providing cost of living relief. Otherwise, you would not focus on what you call a bin tax. You would not try to force TasWater to operate at a loss. You would not pretend that the state can do anything meaningful about imported fuel other than start the transition to the electrification of our transport, or looking, or what we can do on-island to produce our own fuels that are cleaner.

It is really disappointing to have someone of Mr Winter's intellect and capacity come into this place and pretend that what he put forward is an actual cost of living motion. It is not.

Mr Winter - Yes it is.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is not. It is populism. It is cheap politics.

We will not be supporting the motion in its form. I commend our amendment to the House. Our amendment would deliver tangible cost of living relief. It would liberate many Tasmanians from the high stress of poverty and disadvantage.

Together, this suite of measures could transform the island for people who live on the margins of our society and the economy. I remind Mr Ellis, who is not here at the moment, that we do not live in an economy. We live in a society. We are an island community. There are no jobs on a dead planet. We do have to look after the place, and we have to look after each other. It has been quite difficult for people who live on the margins during the pandemic to know that they are consigned to the margins in many ways.

If you are a person living with a disability in Tasmania now and over the past decade you have listened to governments and community leaders talk about the importance of inclusion and access and you see now what is happening, you will be heartbroken and scared. We live in a community and it is our connections to each other that help to make a good life but it is very hard to have a good life when you are deeply poor. It is very hard to have a good life when you are so stressed and your body is so full of cortisol that you cannot make good decisions. It is hard to have a good life when you cannot access the support that you need. It is impossible to have a good life if you do not have secure, affordable housing and you cannot feed your family.

There are things we can do. It is all about political will but we do not advance this debate on cost of living with falsehoods and populism and that is what we have had out of Labor in here today.

[4.31 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Treasurer) - Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in this debate. It is interesting, the longer I am a member of this place, the more I am surprised at the way it can operate. I must say I -

Ms O'Connor - You are surprised at what?

Mr FERGUSON - I am surprised at lots of things that I do not expect. One of them is what just happened in the last 30 minutes. You shook me up, Ms O'Connor, that is for sure. You did. I had to question all of my life and how I got here. As a well-known socially conservative, economic rationalist, who greatly admires people in the Liberal tradition who have been able to straddle social conservatism together with some dry economics but then finding the meld point, which remembers people in our society who do not have a big voice, who must be remembered - the John Howard battlers - I belong to that tradition. To then listen to Ms O'Connor, who I have always regarded as a considerably left-wing politician, actually school the Labor Party on market economics and bring them back up to date, Ms O'Connor made Mr Winter look like Karl Marx today.

That's why I say it again, Ms O'Connor, you shook me up. Thank you for that. Rising in my place, I felt that I would defer to you and not contest the call when we both rose at the same time and I am glad I did. Thank you, Ms O'Connor, for that. You did surprise me.

It was an appalling display from the people who call themselves the official opposition in this place. This motion that has been placed on the table is barely worthy of the debating time in this House because of the way it has been put together. It has actually run the state

down. It is critical of the state in some of the areas of strong performance and well-recognised strong business confidence and strong economic growth.

I do not think population gets a mention. Well, it does get a mention. They are running down our population growth as well, despite the fact that we are two year's ahead of schedule on our ambitions to grow the population. They look at cherrypicking and pick up the odd quarterly bit of data that it could be said does not suit the Government's narrative in looking at strong growth in all of those areas when you take the broad picture, particularly year to date data. Actually, what they are doing at the end, it calls on this parliament to do one thing, for the Premier to legislate petrol prices, to interfere - and I wrote it down when he said it - the Labor Party actually wants the Premier to, 'Conduct an extraordinary market intervention'. That is what Mr Winter said. On the one hand, calling on the Premier to do it and on the other hand, oh oh, there is still time to walk the other side of the street too. That that would be very foolish because it would be an extraordinary market intervention.

Ms O'Connor put it best when she reminded Mr Winter of the external causes of our wholesale fuel prices in this country.

I should not have to tell Mr Winter about the economic shock that is happening in a particular part of the world. We have the luxury of only having to dial into the 6 o'clock news to see - we do not have to live - what it is like to live through that war of a killer, of a monster who has invaded territory that does not belong to his country at all and destroyed lives. I am sorry I do not know the numbers but tens of thousands of lives lost, no doubt millions disrupted and dislocated. It is true that while it hurts at the bowser for Australian families, our inconvenience and out of pocket on that one, does not compare. Yet it is the clear reason for the fuel shock, for the energy price shock that has been happening.

I heard it said by one Labor politician - I do not know who it was - criticising the fact that fuel prices were on the rise before that monster invaded Ukraine. We all saw him coming. He had been rattling his sabre for a while and markets respond to that uncertainty. That part of the world is one of the biggest exporters of energy and steel.

Ms O'Connor - And food.

Mr FERGUSON - It is true, in food, in that part of eastern Europe. While it is not on our doorstep, I was amazed when I looked at the national fact sheet on this, just how relevant that part of the world is to the global economy. None of us like the fact that fuel prices went from somewhere around \$1.70 to \$2.30 per litre. None of us liked that and there are responses that can be made to those real issues that have caused pain to Tasmanian families.

To suggest that somehow Jeremy Rockliff has the power to bring in a bill, maybe as skinny as the piece of paper I am holding, and to legislate down the price of petrol, is just a juvenile, naïve and an irresponsible policy response. But then, the Labor Party even call it out for themselves. They expose their own hypocrisy when they say, 'Well, that would be an extraordinary market intervention'. You cannot have it both ways, Mr Winter. What you have failed to do - we listened to you in complete silence -

Members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - What you have failed to do is even accurately report what the previous Premier might have said about this, which said, show us the evidence of price gouging and if it is within the state power to do something we would be prepared to look at that.

Ms O'Connor, again, making so much sense on that matter, referred to the levers of government that are available through competition law and the ACCC. So, Mr Winter, my question to you, and my challenge to your party would be, if you believe that Tasmanian petrol stations or importers - have it either way you like - are gouging, put the evidence forward and have it tested by those independent agencies.

It was also interesting that throughout that address from Mr Winter, on the one hand he wants the Government to spend more. On the other hand -

Mr Winter - No I did not.

Mr FERGUSON - You do, because you were criticising wages policy - and on the other hand he was criticising the Government's debt, net debt. Constantly walking two sides of the street. On the one hand, say pay higher wages and do something about that, even though Tasmania has higher wages growth in the country, in the environment of rising costs of living, but on the other hand, criticising the Government on economic management. Again, as Ms O'Connor said, the Labor Party might have had some credibility if they had actually put something forward today.

Now I listened very carefully. The role of the opposition is to scrutinise government, to give ministers a hard time if they have done something wrong, or caught them out lying or whatever, having a policy issue or a problem. It is also the job of the opposition to be an alternative, and to tell Tasmanians what they actually stand for.

Standing here today, I would not be able to tell you where Labor stands on regulating fuel prices. Do they want to regulate fuel prices or do they not want to see fuel prices regulated by the state? I think it is a recipe for disaster, by the way. What Mr Winter apparently is calling for is retail price-setting power by the state Government. Of course you may feel good doing that but then you might find you put a whole bunch of businesses out of business or they simply choose not to sell the product you have now regulated.

It is the strangest conundrum that I have just witnessed. I can sense the discomfort because Labor clearly does not have a position on this, despite the fact that its own motion is calling on the Government to implement legislation to reduce petrol prices.

Ms O'Connor also did a fairly thorough demolition job in relation to Labor's so-called bin tax; I will come to that later. She also did a pretty thorough job of demolishing Labor's approach on TasWater plans which they are currently submitting to the independent economic regulator, which is part of the process and how it is supposed to work.

I am opening my response by pointing out the double standards that the Labor Party and Mr Winter in particular have promoted today. On the one hand they are suggesting that the Government has the power to control and direct TasWater pricing - I am not talking about the independent economic regulator, I am talking about the Government - but on the other hand the Labor Party has a very strong track record of opposing the Government, attempting in the past to take more control of TasWater, in fact to own it, where it would have been established

as a scrutinisable government business. By the way, it is not a GBE, as one of your members recently falsely claimed. It is an enterprise owned by local government and progressively the state Government has increased its equity holdings from zero per cent, no ownership, no shareholding, to 5 per cent. That is occurring across 10 years as we progressively increase the equity arrangements and the grant arrangements that would make us still a minority shareholder of a business that is owned and controlled by local government and is effectively a local government business.

The reason I know all this is because I am familiar with the act because I remember when then treasurer, Michael Aird, brought it in. I remember it well. I think it was 2008 when the Water and Sewerage Industry Act was introduced, probably right here where I am standing. It was an intended decision of that government to ensure that pricing plans were submitted by TasWater management through its board - of course in the day there were three water utilities that have been amalgamated - but that those pricing plans would be submitted to the - at that time - water and sewerage economic regulator, for want of the correct title, and it would be the independent regulator who would settle the matter as to what pricing determination would be allowed, taking into account the infrastructure needs of the business to deal with known and emerging infrastructure shortcomings to get Tasmania's dilapidated water and sewerage industry to safe and potable standards.

I know where I was working in 2008. I was working at the Clifford Craig Medical Research Trust. Today it is known as the Clifford Craig Foundation which, by the way, is going very well for northern Tasmania. Where were you, Mr Winter, at the time? What I am wondering out loud is did you not used to work for Mr Aird back then? That is how the system was set up, that is how it was created. The pricing plans of an organisation set up to be owned by local government and scrutinised by the independent economic regulator - that is how it was created.

Four years ago we wanted to take over TasWater because we were not satisfied with its progress of delivering infrastructure upgrades and we were concerned at that time about slated price increases for consumers. We were concerned about the pace of dealing with undrinkable tap water across communities around Tasmania. Labor opposed that tooth and nail. Most of the mayors did too. I am not sure where you were at the time, Mr Winter. You may not have been the mayor but you were certainly a councillor at Kingsborough Council and your voting record is perhaps on public display; I will check it later. That was fiercely opposed and those arguments have been run and won and variously lost and we have moved because we were unable to succeed.

That deals with some of the most glaring hypocritical problems and attempts to walk both sides of three different issues. It has been very poor form from the Labor Party. They are trying to ring a little bell that says to Tasmanians that they care about the increasing cost of living, but they are failing to tell Tasmanians what they would do differently whatsoever. They have even walked away from market intervention on petrol prices.

I will say that the Government will not be supporting the motion today. That much ought to be clear. The decision by the Labor Party to bring this motion forward today has not done very much for the usefulness of this House.

I want to say as well that the Government is acutely aware of issues in the community, particularly the rising cost of living across a whole range of different goods and services. Our

Government, together with the federal Liberal Government, has been working closely to do what we can do to mitigate some of those increases in people's costs of living. The idea of the Tasmanian Government controlling European export oil products is obviously fanciful, but what we have been able to do is provide consumers with greater choice and information so they can exercise those choices, such as the exceptional fuel app which has been a great success.

Mr Ellis - Has it?

Mr FERGUSON - It has been a great success, Mr Deputy Speaker. Every member of my family has it on their phone and uses it every single time they fuel up. It is also the case that the federal Liberal Government, in the face of rising fuel prices at the retail level, halved federal excise on diesel and unleaded petrol. I was concerned, I have to say, from the outset, because some of the advocacy before that decision would have seen us have an equal reaction, if you like, in our infrastructure availability of funding for the maintenance of our roads, because that funding, few people realise, is not a growth tax. It does not go up with the retail or wholesale price; it is more or less fixed with minor adjustments only. Some of us were concerned that people were getting the incorrect view that the Government was somehow benefiting from the rising cost in fuel. It was not, but I was concerned that we might see a reduction in funding for our roads.

What the Morrison Liberal Government has done by halving that tax for six months has been a true win-win. Not only has it really helped consumers more or less immediately, it has also been funded so that it does not come at the expense of state and territory road programs. I am grateful for that. The Prime Minister was very upfront that it is not possible to do that forever, but it was understood that it would be something that would be of immediate help to people on one of the hottest issues of the time leading up to the federal budget announcement.

I want to put to bed the idea that somehow our economy is not going extremely well. It is interesting that there is a word missing from this motion, the word 'CommSec'. Very clearly, our economy is going very strongly. You do not get CommSec reporting that Tasmania is the leading economy in the country by fluke or accident. I do not think it is the benchmark for Tasmania to always be at number one. It would be great if we could, but when I was sitting where Mr Winter is, Tasmania was coming last. We were the poorest state in terms of our economic performance, even against trend. The government that I opposed was the Labor-Greens government. They ran jobs into the ground and deliberately shut down an industry knowing the impact it would have on regional communities.

I heard Mr Winter yesterday bellyaching about wood supplies in the future. Have a look at the choices his party made and the consequences that followed. The only reason we are talking about legislated wood supply is because this group of people shut down, I think, half a million hectares of Tasmanian native forest to keep the Greens happy. That is what happened.

Ms O'Connor - No, they did it because the industry and the environment movement sat down at the table and agreed on it.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr FERGUSON - I am happy to get that into the record.

Ms O'Connor - It is true.

Mr FERGUSON - The Greens' truth is not my truth on this. I knew it. I watched as it happened. It grieved me greatly. We saw rural communities protesting around the state in the way they could. This included taking a coffin around Tasmania, reminding the government of what they were doing in two regional communities. The change of government could not come soon enough. They backed us in, particularly with our legislation to reverse the Tasmanian forest agreement which was opposed by the Labor Party in opposition.

The Government is taking action to minimise cost of living increases. So we should. Pleasingly, the most recent ABS inflation data that the increase in CPI for our state is a little less than nationally. CPI has grown. It has been primarily driven by increases in the cost of fuel. We have discussed that at length. The easing of COVID-19 restrictions is still causing supply chain and shipping challenges right around the globe. Tasmania is not on our own on this. Rising cost of living is an issue for every government on the globe. We are acting to do what we can to support Tasmanian families, working hand-in-hand with the federal government.

Importantly, as well, wages are responding in our tight labour market. We have seen unemployment go down and down to historic low levels. We have seen the labour market tighten up. There is competition for labour. Vacancy rates are something like 80 per cent higher than normal. Businesses say to me that one of the number one issues is not what they said 10 years ago - that they cannot get enough customers. Now they say that they cannot get enough workers.

With that scenario, industry is responding. We have seen the highest private sector wage growth in the country at 3.2 per cent. In the public sector, it has been at 2.6 per cent - also the fastest in the country - but you did not hear that in Mr Winter's address. What you have seen is that Tasmania has a smaller gap than any other state, not mentioned by Mr Winter.

We understand that for families, the number one ability for them to pay bills at all is to have a job. Tasmania today is the turnaround state. Not only have we turned around our economic fortunes, but we have maintained them. The CommSec report painted the picture extremely well. Compared to our 10-year average, our employment is 30 per cent better on unemployment data. The way the Tasmanian economy has rebounded, turned around, and grown is phenomenal.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, which we all lived through, and are still living with the consequences of it we had very gloomy forecasts for what could happen with employment in Tasmania. We went through our lockdowns. Former premier Gutwein, Dr Veitch, the Health ministers, Mr Rockcliff and Sarah Courtney, and the whole government and this parliament worked together.

Member interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - Are you still talking? If you want to address the motion, stand and take your turn. We all worked together to work through that pandemic.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - You are unleashing your inner power. Just for the moment, I am responding to the motion.

We have seen one of the most stunning turnarounds. There are more people employed in Tasmania today than ever in the state's history - more than 260 000 people. These are historic outcomes. Our unemployment rate is not only lower, but our population is bigger at 540 000 people. We have less percentage of a bigger population who are unemployed. That is a stunning result. It is one that Tasmanians can be very proud of and I believe they are.

Electricity prices are one the biggest costs that a family budget will face. I remind the House that under Labor we saw energy prices increase by 65 per cent. I was elected in 2010. At that election, Lin Thorpe promised with David Bartlett that energy prices would not ever go up by more than 5.0 per cent. They broke that promise. It was 65 per cent. In fact, as a result of our energy policies, led by this Government, Mr Groom, Mr Barnett, there is your history. You are ashamed of it. You say, 'Who cares.' Tasmanians care.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. The Treasurer has the call. No one else should be speaking in the Chamber. Order.

Mr FERGUSON - They have not forgotten. They do not like their own history. You should not like your own history. It is terrible. You promised a 5.0 per cent cap, walked away from it and energy prices went up 65 per cent. That is the record. Challenge the facts, if you wish, but bring your evidence. Last year the independent Tasmanian Economic Regulator approved a 7.0 per cent decrease in residential energy prices to apply. Small business saw a decrease of 11 per cent.

I have addressed TasWater enough in terms of the mechanics. I want to endorse what Ms O'Connor has quite faithfully reported to the House - how prices are set for TasWater. It is a business that is not owned by this parliament, by the way. We have worked with TasWater, particularly with our new policy coming out of the 2018 election, when we were not able to get our reforms agreed to. We came to a different approach through the MOU with TasWater. We agreed for a two-year freeze. Then we agreed that there would be a cap of 3.5 per cent. It has been falsely said that we are controlling the price but what we were able to do was negotiate the cap, in exchange for our grant and equity.

It is correct. Ms O'Connor corrected Mr Winter in the draft report, which is still subject to a bit of process no doubt. The regulator proposes a lesser amount of increase and that is how Mr Aird set it up. That is how it was set up: that there would be an independent oversight. Does anybody want to say that is not how it should work? I am not hearing that. The independent regulator is suggesting increases of 3.07, no doubt Mr Dimasi will come to his own view on this and it will be determined. The truth is that we have seen two years of zero increase. It is subject to independent oversight. We have agreed with TasWater that it should be capped, which means it could be less. It is a business that the state Government does not own or run, but Labor opposed the fact that we tried to own it and run it. You cannot have it both ways.

On the Notice Paper, there is a motion from Mr Winter's Leader that states: 'Water bill increases of \$400'. That is patently false. The 3.07 increase would result in an average annual

bill increase of around \$38 for a typical residential customer using 179 kilolitres of water per year. Ms White added on an additional zero. You would have to be paying a bill worth thousands per year to see an increase of \$400. In an earlier media release, I believe it that Ms White used an even higher number - \$453. Completely false, making stuff up.

We will not be supporting the motion.

Ms O'Connor - We are on the amendment.

Mr FERGUSON - The Government does not agree to the amendment proposed by Ms O'Connor because it proposes other extraordinary market interventions and opposes some of our tax initiatives that are Government policy and have already been endorsed by this House.

I give the Greens a C+ on this. I give the Labor Party a flat F because you barely deserved to turn up for this debate. It is barely worth the paper it is written on. You have completely tried to dog whistle to people who are doing it tough in the Tasmanian community and you have failed to come forward with a single serious proposition to help a single Tasmanian family. You should be condemned for your stunt today. You have completely wasted the parliament's time. You have failed the test again of being an alternative government.

The test for you is to actually do your job and come forward with something that is thought through. I do not expect you to write a whole budget but come forward with an alternative budget. Come forward with a range of policies. Have a go at costing them, put them forward and actually back yourself in instead of being such cowards and being prepared only to criticise and make up stuff. Make up phony figures. Make up new rules for how prices are set, and then the parliament might take you seriously.

Mr SPEAKER - The time being 5 o'clock, the time for this debate has expired. The question is that the amendment be agree to.

The House divided -

AYES 3

Ms Johnston
Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

NOES 19

Mrs Alexander (Teller)
Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Street
Mr Tucker

Ms White
Mr Winter
Mr Wood

Amendment negatived.

Mr SPEAKER - The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 7

Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms Finlay (Teller)
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms White
Mr Winter

NOES 13

Mrs Alexander (Teller)
Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Mr Jaensch
Ms Johnston
Ms O'Connor
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Street
Mr Tucker
Mr Wood
Dr Woodruff

PAIRS

Dr Broad
Ms Haddad

Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff

Motion negatived.

MOTION

JBS Purchase of Huon Aquaculture - Motion Negatived

[5.11 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House -

(1) Notes -

- (a) the sale of Huon Aquaculture to Brazilian meat giant JBS in November of 2021; and
- (b) *ABC Four Corners* on 25 April 2022 revealed the Batista brothers, owners of JBS, under investigation in Brazil,

confessed to bribery of over 1800 Brazilian officials to secure cheap finance for their global expansion, and were fined US\$3.2 billion.

- (2) Recognises *Four Corners* revealed US Department of Justice investigations determined JBS spent millions of dollars in bribes in Brazil to secure finance to buy US companies, with JBS subsequently being convicted of foreign bribery charges in a US Court.
- (3) Acknowledges *Four Corners* details the cheap finance raised by JBS through corrupt conduct funded purchases of companies in Australia as well as the US.
- (4) Agrees these revelations raise serious questions about the funds used by JBS to purchase Huon Aquaculture, noting that the use of the proceeds of crime to purchase a venture is illegal.
- (5) Calls on the Government to refer the sale of Huon Aquaculture to the Australian Federal Police for investigation as to whether any criminal activity occurred during the course of its acquisition, or in the operation of Huon Aquaculture since the acquisition.

Mr Speaker, I can indicate that we will be needing a vote.

The Batista brothers have long been butchers and cattle producers in Brazil, but today the Batistas, Joesley and Wesley, and their company, JBS, are Australia and the world's biggest producers of protein.

The takeover of Huon Aquaculture by that JBS meat giant in November last year was a shock to so many Tasmanians. It sent shivers down many people's spines, particularly people of the communities of King Island, and around Longford who themselves have already witnessed firsthand the grim workplace safety and environmental costs of how JBS does business. I want to note that it is not just the Liberal Party but it is the Labor Party who have been absolutely silent on these issues when we previously raised them on behalf of those communities. It is truly disturbing to see how concerned they are to be flag wavers for the salmon industry at any cost, including the cost of supporting communities who have suffered grievous workplace safety instances by JBS and also environmental damage.

I want to lay out now, just how JBS is a family empire that is built on corruption and why the Government has to act to protect the workers and our fragile marine environment now before more disaster strikes Tasmania.

I give full credit to Grace Tobin and the producers of *Four Corners* for their excellent investigative journalism that is the backbone of the material that I will present today. Thank goodness for excellent investigative journalism. It is really at the hallmark of a functioning democracy. It is withering on the vine in Australia under the Liberals in government. There are attacks on the ABC. There are relentless attacks on any independent journalists, and there are many excellent journalists around this country who are doing good work.

I hope and will do everything I can to speed on 21 May so we can vote this federal Government out and vote in a government that will support investigative journalism and support proper funding for the ABC.

Bribery and corruption has fuelled JBS's expansion around the world, including Australia. Fifteen years ago, JBS embarked on a multi-billion-dollar global spending spree. It came right out of the blue. In 2007, it snapped up the American meat food giant, Swift Foods. The deal instantly turned JBS into world's biggest beef company. The takeover of Swift and its subsidiary, Australia Meat Holdings, also made JBS the largest beef processor in Australia. The scale and speed of JBS's acquisition expansion was breathtaking. They bought Tasman Meats and the King Island, Longford and Devonport abattoirs in Tasmania.

There have long been questions about JBS's meteoric rise and where all the money for these acquisitions came from. Their dirty deals started unravelling in 2017 during a major corruption crackdown in Brazil. The Brazilian prosecutors started to come after JBS and the Batistas themselves confessed to a massive bribery scheme; to spending \$150 million on more than 1800 Brazilian officials. It is one of the largest corruption schemes ever revealed in the world - probably the largest.

Four Corners reported Joesley Batista confessing to paying kickbacks to the Brazilian finance minister to obtain billions of dollars in cheap financing from that country's public bank, the BNDES. He told prosecutors that JBS's global expansion had been made possible through bribery. A Brazilian federal prosecutor testified that JBS would not be so big if it did not receive so much money from the BNDES bank and if it was not for the bribes that allowed these criminal contracts.

The stated purpose for JBS's bribery of public banks and pension funds in Brazil was to obtain capital for its global expansion. The state of Brazil was defrauded on a systemic grand corruption. To settle the charges in Brazil, JBS's parent company agreed to pay one of the biggest fines in global corporate history: US \$3.2 billion. Even after that the scandals kept coming, and the brothers were soon arrested and charged with insider trading, for selling down their shares in JBS before entering into their plea deal. They were jailed for six months and banned from running JBS for two years.

This is small fry for two brothers, the Brazilian butchers, who own a company with an annual turnover now of \$65 billion. You have to understand that the fall of these two men and the way they run their company is a total take-no-prisoners approach, including themselves. They do not mind if they sit in what I am sure was a very comfortable jail cell for six months. Meanwhile, things keep moving in their big machine.

It was that arrest in Brazil in 2019 that triggered the US Department of Justice to undertake their own investigation. A US congresswoman, Rosa Delauro, was interviewed by *Four Corners*. She said that the US uncovered fraud, bribery, and other violations of US federal laws. Their entrance into the United States market was illegal. They bribed Brazilian officials to get the loans to amass the capital so they could enter the United States and purchase Swift and other companies.

In 2020, the JBS parent company pleaded guilty to foreign bribery charges in the United States. It was an FBI investigation that found the company paid billions of dollars to corrupt

Brazilian officials to obtain financing to buy American companies. They were convicted in the United States of violations against the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

I understand that what happened in Brazil feels like a long way away from Tasmania but it is directly linked to that company's expansion and success in mainland Australia and now in Tasmania. Their entry and early expansion here was funded by the cheap financing that was obtained by paying those same bribes in Brazil. The Australian connection to the bribery scheme has been examined during the investigation led by the Brazilian federal prosecutor Ivan Marx. His team investigated how that dirty money was funnelled into international acquisitions, including JBS's purchase into Australia through Swift Foods in 2007. That purchase was bankrolled with funding secured through Joesley Batista's bribery of Brazil's finance minister. Joesley Batista confessed to another bribe that helped underwrite JBS's subsequent purchases of companies in Australia. He gave evidence that said, we - that is JBS - bought four more companies, three in the United States and one in Australia: the words of the Brazilian butcher, Joesley Batista himself.

The Brazilian federal prosecutor has determined that the bribed monies were used for the expansion of JBS into the United States through their purchase of Swift and into Australia through the purchase of the Tasman Group. Certainly, the fact bribes were being paid at the time in Brazil that JBS was expanding into both the US and Australian markets causes a great opportunity for international cooperation between the Australian Federal Police and the FBI. It is obviously beneficial to us as a country to understand the truth of what has happened. As a state, we would not want to have any company here to be involved in criminal activities. If they had been involved in criminal activity we would want to understand what the extent of that was.

According to the testimony on *Four Corners*, the Brazilian authorities have explicitly said that they are ready to assist any Australian investigations. They are on record saying if there are, 'any interests of the authorities in Australia to investigate anything like this, we are here and we are able to help'. It is important to note that we have form, as a country, in undertaking these sorts of investigations. We have the Australian Federal Police reported just recently by Nick Clark in *The Examiner*, an excellent piece of investigative journalism. Thank you to him and the other people at *The Examiner* who continue to provide really important information to Tasmanians about how corruption and bribery has worked in this state, to mean that there have been purchases of properties, purchased by the proceeds of crime.

The investigation here has been looking at the Musselroe Bay property in the north east of Tasmania. It was once earmarked for \$185 million ecotourism development but it is now being put on ice. The Australian Federal Police criminal assets confiscation task force has seized a number of properties in Melbourne and has alleged that they were bought by Chinese nationals laundering the proceeds of crime. They have made investigations which allege a connection to the owners of companies that have bought that land in north east Tasmania.

It is incredibly important for us to understand the relationship of dirty money and how it is influencing the trading away of assets in Australia. Not assets, trading away of our land, of our marine environment, of fragile precious waters. The idea that a company like JBS could be expanding its protein empire just to add salmon to its suite of things that it can offer on the table in the marketplace for consumers is frightening. It is repulsive to think that we could handover the keys to our marine environment to those Brazilian butchers who have such terrible

form not only for using corruption and bribery as standard modus operandi for commercial transactions, but for a whole range of other crimes that go well beyond corruption.

Four Corners detailed a number of these in that excellent episode, which people can look at on iview, if they choose to do so. It was only a couple of weeks ago. They quote journalist Andrew Wasley, who spent years investigating JBS's environmental track record in the Amazon rainforest. Despite JBS's pledge to protect the Amazon in their cattle-raising, they have been repeatedly accused of buying cattle that has been raised on illegally cleared rainforest land.

It has been linked to deforestation on a grand scale, and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism has obtained receipts that show JBS was exporting large quantities of Brazilian beef farmed on illegally deforested Amazon land, the lungs of the planet. The place of all on the planet that we need to keep moist and carbon rich, JBS has been exporting cattle raised on these clear-felled landscapes, Brazilian beef into Australia.

They are also guilty of price-fixing and food safety breaches and other anti-competitive practices. In the United States, the company has been forced to shell out hundreds of millions of dollars in fines and settlements over price-fixing convictions.

Probably most pertinent in particular for Tasmania is their terrible record of workplace safety negligence. They have the highest rate of serious injuries of all American meat companies. Rosa DeLauro, that quite amazingly strong U.S. congresswoman, was quoted as saying, 'They exploit workers. They have more violations in the workplace than almost any other U.S. corporation. They exploit their workers by creating an environment that is unsafe and puts workers at risk'.

The company's appalling record in the workplace extends to Australia too. *Four Corners* uncovered serious and repeated failures by JBS to protect its own workers from injury, and even death. John Kiriona-Hodge worked for JBS at its abattoir in Longford, Tasmania five years ago. He was only 17 at the time, and he was working in the gutting room, which was an accident waiting to happen. I just want to let people know that I will be reading the generalities of a particular incident without any of the specifics. We do not need to record the details. People can hear Mr Kiriona-Hodge's personal testimony, and I encourage members, and anyone who is watching, to do that. It is really important to understand the reality of what one young Tasmanian boy suffered at the hands of a cruel, heartless and utterly negligent international meat-making, money-making corporation, here in Tasmania.

We should all watch that testimony but is not for me to speak his words. He was working in the gut room, cleaning out beef stomachs and getting them ready to be washed and turned into tripe. The tripe often became stuck in the machinery after it was rinsed in a tub of scalding water. To dislodge it, John and other workers were required by the company to climb onto the edge of the tub, and one morning, he slipped and fell into the boiling water. In John's words it was, he said, 'rather brutal, it was messed up'. He lost the skin and suffered second and third-degree burns from his feet up to his thighs. John said, 'It took a lot out of me. For the last five years, all I have been doing is recovering, and doing appointments, and just stuff I did not think I would have to do.'

A magistrate found JBS knew there was a safety problem at that Longford abattoir and they failed to fix it. JBS subsequently received a payout of just under half a million dollars.

JBS itself was convicted of workplace safety breaches and fined \$150 000. Let us just put that in the context again of a company with an annual turnover of \$65 billion. It is small change for them.

In February 2014, only three months after John's accident, Warwick Ranclaud was a JBS worker at their Caroonna feedlot in New South Wales. He was killed on the job. He was burnt to death during an extreme bushfire situation that was caused because of a JBS manager's negligent behaviour. JBS was convicted in court and fined \$300 000. During the court case, we learnt that there had been two previous fires that were started at the same site, also sparked by similar negligence in the months leading up to Warwick's death.

Despite that known and identified risk, JBS management kept no record of those fires and failed to train any of their staff around the dangers of using slashers and other equipment on high bushfire risk days. Most disgusting of all, JBS refused to pay Warwick's mother his funeral expenses and refused to pay her for the ambulance expenses for taking her son in a critically burned and dying condition from Caroonna to Tamworth Hospital. His mother testified on *Four Corners* that she never ever received contact or any condolences from the company.

Here we are in Tasmania. What happened last November? It started in August when JBS launched a \$425 million takeover bid for Huon Aquaculture, which is the second-largest salmon producer in the country. Why would a global meat giant like JBS be attracted to invest in Tasmania's salmon industry? There are two reasons. The first is the obvious reason is that they are into making money big time. They obviously have a plan to own all protein production on the planet.

Richard Flanagan makes the point in the *Four Corners* exposé that the salmon industry is seen as the really lucrative end of the protein production business. In Tasmania it is effectively unregulated. Of course, it is unregulated. We have the Liberal and the Labor parties with an identical position of turning away and turning a blind eye to everything that is happening with pollution and damage to the marine environment from salmon farming. Even the excesses of what happened in Macquarie Harbour, even the scandals, the millions of dead fish, the damage to world heritage area values. The potential irreparable damage to the survival of the maugean skate. Even the outrage of people in Norfolk Bay and the other communities, appalled that Huon Aquaculture would dump their sick, diseased fish in that beautiful bay and all the people on Bruny Island who cannot believe how the Government could possibly have created a marine farming planning review panel process which was a rubber stamp for the largest expansion of salmon farming ever in Tasmania, ever in Australia.

No independent scientist was able to speak their mind and be heard on that panel in their bid to raise the issues of the damage. There were serious concerns about the environmental management of Storm Bay: that the three companies, Petuna, Tassal and Huon Aquaculture were threatening the values because of the proposed environmental management and because of the proposed vast volumes of pollution that would go into Storm Bay as a result of the intensive salmon farming that is proposed.

We already have form in Tasmania of both parties doing everything they can, not just to turn a blind eye, but to change laws, to adjust regulations, to dumb down the independent EPA, so it is no longer independent. It cannot be. It cannot do its job when it has a statement of

expectations which requires it to put the affluence of businesses and the productivity of businesses ahead of environmental protection.

That is why JBS would feel very comfortable setting up business in Tasmania because they are among friends. I am sure the Batista brothers feel very comfortable in Tasmania. They know how to do business with people like the Labor and the Liberals in Tasmania. They have done it in Brazil, 1800 members of parliament, members of the judiciary, other officials. They grease the palms. They gave them whatever was required. So much money.

People in positions of entitlement and privilege in Tasmania are used to being treated as special people. Obviously, that is enough. Just talk the talk of big business and people go a little bit funny around the eyes if you are in the Labor or the Liberal Party and the money flows. It does not need to flow into individual's pockets. Maybe that is how they do bribery in Brazil, but in Australia, when you have the Liberal and the Labor parties, you just give some donations to the political party.

How would we know that this has happened? We would not. We have such pathetic laws in Tasmania that we could not possibly track that money. What we have is a perfect storm where the world's largest protein producer is on steroids just prowling the planet looking for the last places it can get to control companies.

Ms O'Connor - On the proceeds of crime.

Dr WOODRUFF - On the proceeds of crime.

As Richard Flanagan said, from cattle raising point of view, getting into the salmon business is sweet because you do not have to buy land to put your feed lots and sow stores on. You do not have to buy battery hen farms. You can be given the sea to destroy for nothing. You buy the company, but you do not buy sea; you get given it. It is a great racket to become part of. They can see it. It is just part of the Batistas' global strategy. They want to get into aquaculture globally. They have expanded from beef and chicken and into pork. As Richard Flanagan says, it is probably the last piece of the jigsaw puzzle for them.

The takeover bid was the first test for JBS Australia since the US corruption scandal. You would think that our Australian Government would be looking at the details of that. They were there for everybody to see. Our friends in the US had certainly confronted this. It was all over the papers. The Greens found that information quite easily. There was no doubt it was writ large: the crimes, the corruption, the fraud, the bribery of the Batista brothers and JBS.

But, the company needed to win the approval of the federal treasurer and his advisers at the Foreign Investment Review Board in order to pass the test to get into Australia. Their role is supposed to be to assess the character for Australia's national interest but it is totally, notoriously opaque. From the outset, JBS appeared very confident in its media interviews about its likelihood of success.

They have been smoozing Australian politicians for years. In 2013, Tony Abbot was recorded visiting and chatting to JBS Australia. We have had Labor's Anastasia Palaszczuk, in Queensland, swooning all over them in 2017. The former Nationals' director, Scott Mitchell, who is a powerful lobbyist in Canberra, is not surprisingly letting everybody know why JBS's expansion needs to have the support of the federal coalition in Canberra, as well as the Liberal

Government in Tasmania. On ABC radio last September we had Senator Jonathon Duniam very positive about what he said was their previous experience with the FIRB. He said he expected that we will see JBS as a business entity on this island.

Well, he was right. What a surprise that Josh Frydenberg, Liberal Treasurer, signed off on that takeover of Huon Aquaculture late last year. Along the way we also had Peter Gutwein, remember, the former premier of Tasmania, who was a strong flag waver for JBS. He argued to the Legislative Council last September that it is 'in the national interest' for JBS to be allowed to purchase Huon Aquaculture because they have a strong footprint in this state and across the country. A strong footprint, regardless of what that footprint stands for or where the launching pad for that has come from, is good enough for a Tasmanian Liberal politician and it seems like nothing has changed.

Despite JBS being under investigation with serious questions about criminal activities, despite the environmental and worker safety harm, they have been encouraged and supported. It seems like there is no powerful person in this country who is prepared to say anything against them. Given JBS's track record with videotaped police confessions by the Batistas of gross systemic bribery of officials; given the jail time that they have served for fraud and bribery; given the company's extreme workplace safety negligence record, which has caused death and grievous harm to Tasmanians and other Australians; given the Batista brothers' confessions in Brazil of their use of the proceeds of crime to finance the purchases of companies in the United States and Australia, and given the investigations by the US Department of Justice that resulted in the convictions of JBS for the proceeds of crime in that country, would you not expect the Government would want to refer the purchase of Huon Aquaculture by JBS to the Australian Federal Police for investigation?

You certainly would if you were listening to this and read the catalogue of the crimes that they have committed. Why would we not want, why would we not expect our Attorney-General, on behalf of the Government, to do everything she could to confirm that there has been no dark money used to finance the purchase or operations of Huon Aquaculture by the Brazilian butchers? If money from loans were obtained illegally because of bribes that were used to fund ventures in Australia, which has been already confirmed, then the proceeds of those ventures are the proceeds of crime. As Rosa DeLauro, from the United State Congress said, JBS have demonstrated their willingness for corruption, pollution and illegal activity that puts the public at risk at so many levels.

She warned Australia to beware of JBS. The Huon Aquaculture connection to the bribery scheme certainly warrants greater scrutiny. It is the Government's responsibility to refer the sale to the AFP, Australian Federal Police, for investigation. It is our responsibility, as a parliament, to send a very strong signal not just to JBS, but to every other company that trades like this, with corruption and bribery, workplace safety negligence, gross environmental damage and deforestation of rainforests that we need to keep this planet healthy and with a safe climate, that puts the beautiful marine environment that we treasure and is the source of so much biodiversity that we all benefit from. It is not the salmon industry's right to pollute. The wealth of our waters should remain with us for everybody's enjoyment, for us to use the great richness that is there with an eye to protecting, to improving this biodiversity and to keeping the multiplicity of species there into the future.

I implore the Government, the Premier, the Attorney-General, to take this matter as seriously as it is. It is critical for the future of Tasmania that we have - we cannot possibly do

business and exact any stringent laws when you have a \$65 billion company and a tiny little state of Tasmania. We already have a terrible track record in that area. If this Government wants to reset, now is the time, now is the time to refer to the Australian Federal Police. There are plenty of other people who will happily take over the purchase of Huon Aquaculture. They are not the only people on the planet who are interested in farming salmon. We need to have people who we know have not got into that place through crime, and through workplace safety breaches and environmental damage.

Ms O'Connor - Hear hear.

[5.46 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Speaker, in the very few moments that are available for the major parties to make a contribution, I will say right at the beginning I will provide some time for the shadow minister for primary industries and water to share some remarks on behalf of the Labor Party. I note the insulting approach from the Greens that in the short 50 minutes, we now have less than 15 minutes to share our remarks.

Ms O'Connor - Yes, that is right.

Mr BARNETT - On behalf of the Government, we will not be supporting this. We strongly oppose this motion. Here we go again with the Greens, but it gets worse. In her opening remarks, the member for Franklin, Dr Woodruff, says that her objective is to protect the workers and the marine environment. What we do know is they have an objective to put the workers out of work. When you talk about protecting the workers, you have belled the cat.

Ms O'Connor - You just cannot lie straight in bed, can you?

Mr BARNETT - You belled the cat. We know you have no interest -

Ms O'Connor - Talk about the substance here.

Mr BARNETT - in the workers in the salmon industry. This is entirely consistent -

Ms O'Connor - Talk about the substance.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - with the efforts of the Greens, who are the lapdog of the Bob Brown Foundation -

Ms O'Connor - You are the lapdog of a corrupt corporation.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - in this place, for the attack on the productive industries, whether it be forestry, mining, salmon, aquaculture, agriculture, across the board, an attack on those productive industries, an attack on jobs. They have stooped to a new low now, where they are attempting to besmirch the reputation of an entity that has been involved in Tasmania. In fact, JBS is a significant and long-term Tasmanian employer through its operation of our meat processing facility at Longford. It is the largest beef processing facility in Tasmania. It is very

important to the regional communities across all of Tasmania, not just in the northern Midlands and the town of Longford. It invests in wages, local procurement and livestock, and in fact, when they made their announcement, I just want to note: JBS in Tasmania has and continues to invest heavily in Tasmania. Our Longford operation in Tasmania is the largest beef export beef processing facility. It produces high quality grass-fed beef for Australia and the world -

Mr Tucker - Hear, hear.

Mr BARNETT - together with - and I will take the 'hear hear' from the member for Lyons. As a farmer, he knows and understands - together with our wholesale business D. R Johnston, we employ 370 Tasmanians and pay more than \$30 million in annual wages.

JBS also purchases around \$150 million in livestock from local Tasmanian producers and makes around \$20 million of purchases from local businesses each year. The people I have dealt with at JBS over many years are professional, they are smart, and they are dedicated, and of course they want to grow their businesses.

It is an important part of primary industries and agriculture in particular and now with their investment with aquaculture. I put on the record, congratulations to Huon Aquaculture, it is a great success story. In fact, they received the Tasmanian Farmer of the Year award some years ago, so well done to Peter and Frances Bender and their hundreds of Tasmanian workers.

This effort of continuous improvement will continue. I want to make the point as a former minister for primary industries and water, over any years in terms of the salmon industry, it is based on best practice, based on continuous improvement, based on improved feeding systems for fish, based on new technology, of land-based hatchery facilities. I have visited many of those facilities onshore and offshore. As a government we have released the 10- year salmon plan, and that is backing it in based on best practice and continuous improvement, and we will continue to do so as we do with the other productive industries, as a majority Liberal government.

The Greens have stooped to a new low with this attack today on JBS, and an attack on our salmon industry, where Dr Woodruff has said specifically, and I quote: 'The salmon industry is effectively unregulated'. That is absolute arrant nonsense. It is totally untrue.

Dr Woodruff interjecting.

Mr BARNETT - She is trying to back it in again now, and you have been caught out. We have belled the cat on the Greens. We all know where you are coming from. Your efforts to do so are shameful, disgraceful in fact.

Everyone knows that the Foreign Investment Review Board has a role to play in this regard and that is undertaken at the federal level by the federal government. As a state, what we do know is that we have strict regulations in place, we have best practice arrangements in managing the salmon industry and they will remain. JBS will be subject to those environmental and planning approval processes in terms of our regulation in the state of Tasmania. That will continue.

Of course we support foreign investment in Tasmania. We have the Cascade Brewery, Cattle Hill wind farm, Nyrstar, Grange Resources, Dutch Mill, Rennison Bell, Simplot,

Screeding, Biomar, SAPUTO Dairy. These are employing thousands of Tasmanians, so we support that, providing the capital and finance, employing people, training them and encouraging competition and innovation, and we are very supportive of that.

In the very few moments left, as a government we support growing our economy. We support our productive industries. We support the rules and regulations around this important industry. We support that and we will back them in.

What we do know is that the Greens are very good at Green warfare, and Green lawfare. Just a reminder, two days ago they lost their court case with MMG, with their efforts to try to stop them from going through the normal due environment and approval process with the federal government through the EPBC. We know what they are up to. They have a fulltime campaigner, the Bob Brown Foundation, to attack the salmon industry in Tasmania, and we know what they are up to. Green warfare, Green lawfare, that is what they are doing. They raise their money out of Melbourne and Sydney, spend it in Tasmania trying to stop our productive industries, trying to besmirch the reputation of those involved in our productive interests. It is shameful. We condemn it. It is not on.

We support the jobs and the growing economy, and a sustainable salmon industry, and a sustainable productive industry. On that note, I will leave the rest of the time for the shadow spokesperson for primary industries and water, unlike the Dr Woodruff who, unfortunately, has taken up so much time.

[5.53 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Mr Speaker, in the time left available to me, I will reduce my contribution into three areas to directly respond to the notice of motion before us, to put on record the clear and relentless history and current action of the Tasmanian Labor Party supported by unions and others in our great community to advocate for safe workplaces in Tasmania, whomever the owners are, and make some final contributions about the industry.

Before I do that, I want to shift the tone a little, of which the former minister for primary industries and water has gone some way to do. The first point of the motion is noting the sale of Huon Aquaculture. In noting the sale, I think it is appropriate, and the former minister did do this, to acknowledge the incredible work of the Benders, raising an industry from almost nothing in support with others and with others coming onboard, which is a star of the Tasmanian economy, and recognised internationally for the great work they are doing not only to provide employment for local workers but, as the former minister indicated, leading innovation in making sure that we do have world's best practice in the industry, from a great family that has grown something really important for the economy of Tasmania.

Ms O'Connor - Which family?

Ms FINLAY - This is the Benders. Thank you for that clarification.

There have been a number of comments today in relation to the sale and the company that now has the ownership of Huon Aquaculture. I put on the record Tasmanian Labor's position in terms of this. We are unreservedly strong supporters of the salmon industry and we are supporters of this because of the marine environment and the way that we are able to provide great opportunities for economic advancement in Tasmania and also for the support of small

regional towns, often coastal towns, in Tasmania. We know that, in doing so, it supports thousands of jobs, both directly and indirectly, across the state.

In doing that, we do know that although foreign investment can be really important and a great driver for economic growth and employment, it must always be in the national interest. It is the government's responsibility to explain how the foreign investment approvals are in the national interest. Given that none of the information of the FIRB review is available to either us or the public, it is on the government to ensure that. We trust the system and if there are faults in the system that the government would attend to that.

I want to make the first opportunity to put on the record my disappointment that the newly appointed minister for such a significant portfolio area of primary industries and water, which goes across not only aquaculture, which hit its billion-dollar contribution just in this last year, but also across fisheries and primary industries and our great water resources, is not in this House. Therefore, this afternoon, although there has been a great contribution from the former minister, the current minister is not here to defend and put on the record her position. I think that is a real failing of this current Government, not being able to find a significant minister from within the lower House who can be over this portfolio.

I want to make a comment about workplace safety and the suggestion that an owner of any business, any entity, any company in Tasmania can somehow be outside the law. Tasmanian Labor places firmly on the record that irrespective of any ownership of any entity, anyone operating in Tasmania must ensure that they meet all the local, Tasmanian, Australian and international laws. They must be held accountable by this Government for any failure to do so at any point.

What I want to do now is shift the focus from the attempt to continue to undermine what is a wonderful industry for Tasmania that provides so much for so many, and reinforce that whenever these attacks occur to remind people that from Huon's example they directly employ over 800 Tasmanians, many young Tasmanians. They employ families where there are members of multiple generations working within the one company, and that have passed down expertise through their family to continue to work in this area. I remind people when we speak of such things in this place that there will be people who listen to this, employees of not only this company but of the industry and those people who support the industry - almost 12 000 people in Tasmania work directly or indirectly to support what is a great brand benefit to Tasmanians. We should always understand and respect that.

I put on the record that, point (1), noting the sale, that the Benders have created something important here, that the new owners, no matter who they are and in whatever environment will be, and should be, called to account by the Government if they are any examples of poor behaviour. While these attacks continue we must remember the great Tasmanians who work in this industry who raise their families, who support their families and support local communities in Tasmania because that is the lifeblood of small regional towns in Tasmania. Without such industries in small regional towns Tasmania would be far poorer.

I recently met people working in net labs, people working in the feed control centres, I met smart and clever Tasmanians, young Tasmanians in their first job, and they always speak proudly and confidently about the contribution they make to their local town, and also to their really important industry.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER - The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 3

Ms Johnston
Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

NOES 19

Mrs Alexander (Teller)
Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Street
Mr Tucker
Ms White
Mr Winter
Mr Wood

Motion negatived.

ADJOURNMENT

Joseph William Brain - Tribute

[6.09 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight after that joking on a more serious matter and that is to recognise the contribution to the Tasmanian community of Bill Brain - Joseph William Brain.

He was born on 18 September 1932 to parents Dorothy and Joe. He grew up in Hobart in Kingston Beach. He was great at minisports and in his early years played football for Sandy Bay. After he started teaching, he played for Longford where he was in the winning premiership team in 1955. He played at East Devonport for a year before moving to Ulverstone in 1957 where he also played cricket and was captain of the Ulverstone cricket team.

He went to teacher training college in Hobart to train as a P.E. teacher, but he did not finish because he was pulled out of training in 1954 by the department because they needed an itinerant P.E. teacher for Deloraine, covering Deloraine, Wesleyvale, Mole Creek, et cetera.

He then moved on in his itinerant P.E. teaching job to Ulverstone, Penguin, and Sheffield, moving to teaching swimming across the north-west, experiencing the joys of teaching in the sea at Ulverstone, the river at Latrobe and the Bluff in Devonport.

He moved to Launceston in the early to mid-1960s and was employed as a swimming teacher. He spent a lot of time at the then Victoria Baths which is behind the old museum on the corner of Wellington and Patterson streets. There are heaps of stories about cold showers and the very unscientific guesses made about the amount of chlorine that was needed in the pool each day. The students used to think he was actually throwing buckets of ice in but it was all large amounts of chlorine.

Against a huge amount of opposition, Bill fought for and designed the only even-depth teaching pool in Australia and the Glen Dhu pool opened in 1968. The shallow depth allowed hourly lessons to be run through the day with 60 students and four teachers. He had learnt how to chlorinate by then and cleaned the pool and did that on his weekends.

Swimming lessons ran from September through to March, including holiday swimming lessons during January. Then he would work around the primary schools from May to September. He set up and ran the Learn to Swim lessons for every student from grade 3 to 6 which is still mandated by the Tasmanian Education Department today.

He taught private swimming lessons every day at his own home pool in East Launceston in Newstead and taught swimming there up until 1982. During the 1970s he designed portable pools that could be towed to rural schools such as Fingal, St Marys, Mathinna and Flinders Island. He set up the pools on a Sunday to teach kids in that area for a week and move on to the next school.

There was a story about one of the portable pools having to be set up in the Fingal School library because it was so cold outside. The librarian was particularly unamused at the wet books and carpet.

During the 1970s, Bill had to finish his Tasmanian teachers' certificate to be able to remain employed, much to his family's entertainment because he was actually pulled out by the department. One of Bill's courses was to learn how to play the guitar. After much practice he could nearly manage to play a jolting rendition of 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat'.

In the late 1970s he went on to write several articles on even-depth pool and swimming progressions in magazines such as the *Australian Swimmer*. These articles and his previous achievements in swimming teaching led him to gaining a scholarship at the Education Department to travel to England for six months where he wrote a thesis about teaching swimming. There Bill spent several months at the Physical Education Teacher Training College overseeing their program. He spent time with the then head coach of the England Olympic swimming team to gain more insight into stroke correction and progressions.

He maintained his connection with footy. During the late 1960s he coached the Under 16 Tasmanian Football Team and travelled with them to Adelaide.

He was a keen golfer, playing pennant A Grade golf at the Riverside Club for many years. It was here that he met in 1968 his wife to be, Jane, when she was invited to fill in for a Christmas foursome. She was a nursing sister who had emigrated from Ireland as a ten-pound

Pom. They married in 1970. They were married for over 51 years and they had three children, Shevaunn, Andrew and Rachel. It was a devastating loss to them when they lost Andrew as a young baby to SIDS in 1972.

As well as teaching swimming in Launceston, Bill also began to teach children with special needs. During this time, he recognised that not all students were getting the same opportunities so he voluntarily helped to set up the Special Olympics Tasmania, which we now know as the New Horizons Club. I know many members here have supported them over the years.

During this time, he coordinated all of the special Olympics events for swimming and athletics. He was head coach for the Special Olympics Australian team and travelled to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It was the very first Australian team to compete in this world event, which was opened by Ronald Reagan. Bill took another team to Wellington, New Zealand two years later in 1985.

During the 1980s he continued to be involved with Learn to Swim and also organised a northern primary school dance event that took place every year involving the coordination of thousands of primary school students all dancing together. That event still continues.

In the late 1980s, early 1990s, he moved from Glen Dhu to the Charles Street Teaching Centre where he oversaw primary physical education in the north of the state. Whilst he was well qualified for this job his passion was not paperwork and not bureaucratic bs.

Bill collected many life memberships throughout the years of his achievements in sport: PE teaching; swimming and water safety teaching; and his involvement with special Olympics, New Horizons.

He retired in September 1992. During retirement he spent a lot of time fishing at his beloved Swansea shack, waiting for Jane to retire nine years later. They then bought a van and travelled parts of Australia until Bill became noticeably unwell with dementia. Jane became his full-time carer until December 2018 when he was admitted to the Manor Nursing Home in Kings Meadows.

Bill died on the 25 April 2022. I am sure that all members of this House will join with me in honouring a wonderful Tasmanian, thank him for his commitment on behalf of the legions of children who learnt to swim at Glen Dhu, thank him for his commitment to that site and to the many, many teachers whom he mentored.

We give our deepest sympathy to his family and friends.

Members - Hear, hear.

International Firefighters Day Family Violence - Candlelight Vigil

[6.15 p.m.]

Mrs PETRUSMA (Franklin - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Mr Speaker, I rise to speak on International Firefighters Day, also known as St Florian's Day.

I and quite a few other members of this House attended the memorial service at the Hobart Fire Station today.

The date of 4 May was chosen for Saint Florian's Day as it is linked to the feast of Saint Florian who was the first known commander of a firefighting squad in the Roman Empire. Florian was a high-ranking Roman army officer in the Roman province of Noricum and is now known as the patron saint of firefighters. He was the first known commander of a firefighting squad in the Roman Empire. He lost his life as did his colleagues in protecting the same values which firefighters all over the world share today, to protect life in their community.

Today is a very special day for those in our firefighting family. It is a day for honouring our firefighters who demonstrate bravery and commitment each and every day. Saint Florian's Day is a time for communities to come together to recognise career and volunteer firefighters who have gone above and beyond showing incredible acts of bravery in protecting the community. It is a day to pause and give thanks and to reflect on those who serve: those who help to protect us and save us at times when we are at our most vulnerable.

It is important that we recognise the extraordinary efforts and sacrifices of our firefighters that they make each and every day to serve their communities - all for people they do not know, but who they have sworn to serve and protect.

Ms O'Connor - Hear, hear.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Our firefighters do not undertake these roles for recognition: they do it because they care about their loved ones and they care about their community. They dedicate countless hours to ensure we are kept safe.

The role of firefighters has evolved over the years and today they respond to a diverse range of challenging incidents such as house fires, bushfires, hazardous material incidents, road crashes, and technical and specialist rescues. While our firefighters are well trained, well equipped and have good safety systems in place, they still operate in a high-risk environment in their quest to protect lives and property. Invariably, there are times in our firefighters' lives when they will put themselves in harm's way all for the sake of others.

Today, we pause and remember those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in protecting their community. In particular, our 16 Tasmanian firefighters who have sadly died whilst on duty between 1859 and 2022. This year we especially remember Mr Andrew Kerr and Mr Michael Dennison who will be honoured formally during the National Emergency Services Memorial Service in Canberra, this Friday 6 May. The Chief Officer will attend Canberra for the memorial service where Andrew and Michael's name will be inscribed on the National Emergency Services Memorial to ensure they are remembered eternally. Our sincerest condolences and heartfelt thoughts are with the family, loved ones, friends and colleagues of our firefighting heroes.

Today, I and other members attended the commemorative service at the Hobart Fire Station to lay a wreath and remember Andrew and Michael and all of our firefighters who have made the ultimate sacrifice in serving and protecting our communities. We stood together in deep respect for firefighters and provided tribute to those who have fallen. It is my hope and I know it is all of this parliament's hope that at the end of every shift every firefighter goes home safely.

Ms O'Connor - Hear, hear.

Mrs PETRUSMA - On behalf of all of us here tonight I thank our career and volunteer firefighters for their ongoing dedication and commitment to ensure the Tasmanian community is cared for and protected. From the bottom of all our hearts our sincerest thanks to all of our firefighters for their commitment, service and dedication to keeping all of us safe.

On the parliament lawns right now, there is a candlelight vigil which is held on the first Wednesday in May every year. It is happening right around Australia and it is to remember those who have died because of domestic and family violence. I want to thank the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee for organising tonight, as well as Betsy and the outstanding Nourish choir who each and every year attend as well as James, the police piper, but also Xavier, Mon and Louisa for also sharing with us tonight their own lived experience of being new entrants and people seeking asylum and the issues they face in regards to family violence.

I thank everyone who is at the vigil tonight because they were showing their strong stance that enough is enough that family violence in Tasmania must stop. It was very poignant to note just to pause and remember and honour those whose lives have been lost and who have tragically died because of family violence. On average, one woman is tragically killed in Australia by a former or intimate partner every week and we are already in the 18th week of 2022 and tragically already in 2022, 18 women's lives have been lost due to family violence at the hands of a current or an ex-partner. What is even more worrying is one in five people still believe there are situations in which women still bear some responsibility for the violence. These are our mothers, our wives, our daughters, our sisters, our aunts, our friends, our neighbours, and our colleagues. The simple truth is there is never an acceptable excuse or reason for violence against any Tasmanian. I want to thank everyone for turning up tonight, because as a community we do need to speak out. There should be no family or sexual violence in Tasmania.

We need to stop treating family violence as a private matter. Family violence behind closed doors can go on for many years. In some cases, it only ends with death. Tonight, it was good to hear from Xavier, Mon, and Louisa about the additional barriers to getting support that our asylum seekers, temporary visa-holders, and people from our community face, in understanding their rights and in getting support. People with disability, our LGBTIQ+ and CALD Tasmanians, people in rural and regional Tasmania, Tasmanian Aboriginal people and people from all socioeconomic groups face difficulties in getting the support and services they need. I say to them all tonight to come forward and please report so we can hold perpetrators to account and they can get the support and services they need. Our vision is a Tasmania free from violence for all Tasmanians.

Foreign Investment Review Board - Decisions

[6.22 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, I want to warmly and unreservedly endorse the statements made by the minister, Mrs Petrusma, just then in relation to the incredible service that firefighters pay to our community and the part of recommitting this whole House to the prevention of violence against women.

I am not going to reflect on the vote from Dr Woodruff's private members' time a short time ago. There are a couple of statements made by our colleagues, by the minister and Ms Finlay. What we did not hear in other members' contributions on our private members' time was an acknowledgement that we want to have here in Tasmania companies that do not have a history of corruption, poor workplace safety standards or extensive environmental damage from the Amazon through the Americas, to Australia and even in Tasmania. When JBS owned the abattoir on King Island, they were dumping raw effluent into Porky's Creek. Then they made a decision to shut that abattoir which put people out of work and made life impossible for producers on King Island.

Where we see evidence of corruption or profiting from the proceeds of crime, we should be able to acknowledge and name it. This is not some conspiracy theory that the Greens have cooked up. There is a trail of evidence which was laid out by *Four Corners* that goes all the way from Tasmanian waters back to Brazil. We should be able to acknowledge that. We should be confident the decisions made by the Foreign Investment Review Board are in the national interest and do not sell out the national interest.

Treasurer Friedenbergh, who made the decision to approve JBS' acquisition of Huon Aquaculture also made the decision to sell the port of Darwin to a Chinese company. I would argue, in both those cases, a decision was made that betrayed the national interest. We should be able to, as Tasmanians, demand that the best companies invest here: companies with a clean track record and a commitment to workers' safety; companies that are proud of their environmental record. You could not say that about JBS. JBS is contributing to climate change. In any number of American states, JBS has been targeted by the EPA for polluting the natural environment and having a very casual regard for environmental and workplace laws and regulations.

We have an unfortunate history here of allowing big corporations to call the shots and turning a blind eye to some of their, at times, improper, utterly self-serving corporate practices, from Gunns to the Federal Group, both corporations that have been big donors to the major parties here.

We need to do everything we can to clean up governance. We should not be such easy pickings for big corporations that want to profit from our shared wealth and our hard-fought brand, without contributing anything to strengthening that brand and, in fact, arguably undermining it. I found Ms Finlay's contribution - I know it had to be truncated - incredibly confused and internally conflicting. What we got from minister Barnett is what we usually get, which is not to go to the substance of the issue, not to acknowledge the truth which was laid out by *Four Corners*, and to attack the Greens.

Ms Finlay saw our motion as an attack on the industry. I do not know if she read it properly but it just laid out the facts and called on the Attorney-General to refer this matter to the Australian Federal Police. JBS has a dark history of corruption, bribery and terrible workplace standards, deforestation in the Amazon and pollution in Tasmania. It has business practices that are actually shafting primary producers here, like on King Island and on mainland Tasmania.

We should be clear-eyed about this stuff. We should be able to acknowledge it and make a shared commitment that we invite the best of companies down here. This is the best place in the world. We should be able to demand a premium from companies and corporations that

invest here. You cannot put a price on our brand. Nowhere else in the world has a brand as valuable as ours.

But a brand has to have integrity. You cannot as a government member, out of one side of your mouth talk about the brand, and then through your votes or your decisions take actions that undermine the brand. It undermines the brand to have a company like JBS here. It undermines the brand to not properly regulate the finfish farming industry and not to make sure that scientists are at the table. I encourage members in this place to see the truth for what it is.

Time expired.

Josef Chromy OAM - Tribute

[6.29 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Speaker, tonight on the adjournment, I speak, reflect upon and pay a tribute to one of Tasmania's great entrepreneurs, Josef Chromy OAM. His achievements were extensive. His retirement was celebrated just last weekend. I take this opportunity on behalf, I think, of all Tasmanians and certainly my wife Kate and I to convey my congratulations on his long and illustrious career.

Joe Chromy was awarded an Order of Australia medal for services to business and industry, particularly the meat processing industry. In 2007 he was listed in the top 50 most influential wine personalities in *Australian Wine Business Magazine*. He received an Export Leadership Award in the Tasmanian Export Awards 2008, the same award that my father, the late John Barnett won in the mid-1980s. He was awarded a National Export Hero Award by the Australian Institute of Export in 2009. He became an honorary life member of the Tamar Valley Wine Route 2010. He received the Royal Hobart Wine Show Tasmania Award for outstanding services to the Tasmanian wine industry 2011 and so much more than that.

I absolutely pay a tribute to Joe. I have known him for decades and decades. He has been a dear friend of my family and specifically my late father, John Barnett. I know I can pay a tribute to Joe in the way that I shall. He came from war-torn Czechoslovakia. In 1950, he was a penniless 19-year-old having qualified as a skilled master butcher and a smallgoods maker, beginning when he was just 13-years-old. Joe was a man of enterprise; a man of entrepreneurial flair and he had a dream to own his own business.

Sadly, as a refugee escaping from Czechoslovakia, he went with other young men who did not make it. He did. When I say they did not make it, one of them died in fleeing Czechoslovakia. Joe tells the story about that sad time. He was just so focused on escaping from that terrible regime in Czechoslovakia at the time.

When he arrived in Australia, Joe initially worked at the Railton Asbestos Sheeting Company until he had saved enough to rent a small room at the back of a butcher's shop. After many decades, Joe had built the hugely successful Blue Ribbon Meat Products. My father got to know Joe. My father was a farmer at Quamby Hagley and pioneered the export of live sheep from Tasmania into the Middle East and was well supported by Tasmanian farmers over many decades.

Joe and my late dad built a good relationship. Dad was able to help and support Joe in getting started into the Blue Ribbon Meat Products business. Joe has repaid that favour to so many people. He is generous. He is kind. He is a wonderful personality. He has a twinkle in his eye at all times. He is now 91 years of age. Kate and I remember his 80th and 90th birthdays. He is a man who loves a celebration, a fine wine, and an excellent champagne. That is there in copious amounts at the Josef Chromy Winery.

In the early 1990s, Joe's business owned multiple smallgoods factories, butchers, meatworks, and he was exporting meats all around the world. He was a great supporter of the Tasmanian agricultural and the red meat industry in particular, with sales in excess of \$80 million per year, and employing 530 full-time employees.

In 1993, Joe floated Blue Ribbon Meats on the stock exchange and began a new adventure into the wine industry. Recognising that Tasmania was parallel with many French winemaking regions, Joe set about acquiring and establishing multiple leading wineries in Tasmania. These included Tamar Ridge, Jansz, Heemskirk, and the illustrious Josef Chromy winery in my electorate of Lyons - and your electorate of Lyons, Mr Speaker, just on the border with the electorate of Bass.

Launched in 2007, Josef Chromy Wines had produced some of the most highly awarded wines and is known throughout the nation and indeed the world. I have a bottle of some of the best wine, a trophy winner from London, in fact, at my home today.

With the cellar door so popular, drawing locals and tourists alike, the Relbia site expanded to include a restaurant and function centre. The restaurant focuses on Tasmanian produce. It has been awarded One Chef Hat, and has featured in the *Australian Good Food Guide* every year since 2017. Tasmania's food and wine industry has much to be thankful for from Joe's entrepreneurial expertise.

He is never one to slow down. Even at age 91, his enterprise with the JAC Group has developed multiple property and tourism ventures. These include The Charles in Launceston on the former Launceston General Hospital site, The Met on the Ellerslie in Hobart, Penny Royal Launceston and the TRC Hotel in Launceston, and the Gorge Hotel proposal as well. Additionally, the JAC Group developed Mt Pleasant Estate in Prospect, Hawley Beach Estate, and the Spring Farm Estate in Kingston, all a further testament to Joe's vision and commitment to excellence.

Not surprisingly, a Czech film crew visiting Tasmania in 2012 made a documentary on Joe as well. In that, Joe was quoted as saying, 'I came here with nothing but hope and ambition over 50 years ago. Tasmanians welcomed me and with their help, I have been rewarded.' We have been rewarded by your service and support to this community in Tasmania, and I pay a tribute to you, Joe, to all your lovely family, obviously to Dean Cocker. Congratulations, well done. We pay a tribute to you, and we say thank you.

Assistance with Health Issue

[6.36 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to speak on behalf of one of my constituents, who has been waiting far too long for elective

surgery and a follow-up specialist appointment. My constituent has given me permission tonight to speak her name into the *Hansard*.

I wrote to the minister for Health, and now Premier, on 14 December regarding my constituent, Ms Melinda Paul, and her wait, for far too long, for laparoscopic hiatus hernia repair and gastric bypass and the devastating impact that is having on her quality of life at the moment and ability to work. The undoubtedly terrible impact the reflux that she lives with each and every day is having on her ability to work, but also the fatigue that is related to that, after a particular episode of gastric reflux, and how that then means that she cannot be at work. She works in a call centre so she needs to use her voice, and on many occasions the reflux does impact on her ability to speak.

Tonight, I bring forward Melinda's case because in the correspondence that the minister sent back to me, following my initial letter, he made a number of comments about an outpatient clinic appointment for Melinda and was not able to provide a date in this letter. Tonight, I just want some clarity from the minister's office about when Melinda Paul can expect to be able to have her specialist appointment. When will she be given priority to have her elective surgery, which is not so much elective as it is necessary for her, for her quality of life, the debilitating pain that the reflux causes her, and for the absence that she is having from her work related to her ongoing suffering with this condition?

I thank the minister for his attention to this matter, and I look forward to him being in contact with Ms Paul.

House Completion Data - Correction

Road Safety - School Crossings

[6.38 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Deputy Premier) - Mr Speaker, before I address the matter on the adjournment, I wish to make a correction to the record. I am advised that earlier today, I gave incorrect information regarding new house completions data. To correct the record, I am advised as follows: there were in fact over 3200 new homes completed in Tasmania in the 12 months to December 2021. A mighty result but the correct numbers matter. I would like the House to have that now that it has been brought to my attention. Thank you.

Earlier this week, I had the pleasure of catching up with Mr Brett Carhart, who is known on Facebook, with his following, as 'the crossing guy'. I think members of this House will be as concerned as the Government is about the road toll that we are experiencing in Tasmania on an annual basis. Even on trend terms, this year is not looking good at all.

Every death on the road is one too many, but also, in only looking at the death toll, we cannot accidentally overlook the serious casualties on the road which include serious injuries. Those numbers are not often reported in the media as visibly as the death toll, for obvious reasons. Nonetheless, the disablement and the effect that that has on people and their families is immense. It is very troubling for the Government. Right now, the Legislative Council is inquiring into this and the Government has been supporting that inquiry. We look forward to the report of the member for Launceston, Mrs Armitage, who is the chair of that committee. I understand that her report is shortly to be released. I look forward to that.

I hope members will be aware that the week after next is Road Safety Week, right across the country. I am a huge fan and often speak about the organisation SARAH - Safer Australian Roads and Highways - led by an incredible Australian, Mr Peter Fraser, who has been recognised around our country as a lead advocate for safety, not just for safe systems but for safe infrastructure. He lost his own daughter, by the name of Sarah as well, taken far too young. I encourage members of this House to find out about local road safety events in your local community and please support them. Look out for the yellow ribbon and please wear it with pride.

I mentioned Brett Carhart, because, as a crossing guard, he has expressed his concern to the Department of State Growth about the number of near misses that he has seen and witnessed over his years working as a school patrol officer or a crossing guard. People are speeding in 40 kilometre per hour school zones. Unfortunately, in some cases, people are distracted by their mobile phones, they are not parking appropriately, they might be pulling out unsafely and in a small number of cases, he has expressed that some people will even try to chuck a U-turn in a crossing zone because it is convenient to them. I hasten to add, this is not the experience of most people. Most people do the right thing, but you only need 1 per cent to do the wrong thing to have a major risk in that workplace. For kids it is their workplace, going to school. For the crossing guards themselves it is their workplace. They are in a street, in a road.

To support this, the Government has supported the department to run an innovative new trial. Members will be familiar with the body-worn cameras this Government has purchased for Tasmanian police officers. They are running all the time. They are chest mounted. They are recording at all times but they only record the previous 30 seconds. When the user presses the button it then records and maintains that first 30 seconds of historic and then continues to record, so that we can gather evidence of a criminal act or some anti-social behaviour or even an assault on a police officer. That is why we did that.

We are making those cameras now available in a trial through term 2 across a number of Tasmanian schools. I will not be disclosing those locations but I will be saying that, for those people who unfortunately are in that very small minority, who feel like they cannot respect the road rules and not respect the 40 kilometre per hour speed limit, we want to send a clear message to them that it is just another response that we are implementing to catch that behaviour out.

The other thing I want to mention is those school crossing guards are there for a reason. Small children are not always road smart. They are not always aware of the risks and sometimes they get very excited, either jumping out of a car or running across the street. We try to guide them about making those safe decisions. That is why the guard is there. I thank Brett for his support of this trial, for being good enough to share it with the community through local media. I know the *Mercury* and *The Examiner* have covered this together with, I think, the ABC and Seven News. So it has got some good coverage. I want to get that message out there and thank everybody for the support that they are showing.

As I conclude, Road Safety Week will have been run between now and when the parliament next meets. Again, I encourage people to please support all of us a community - not just the Government - to encourage safe driving practices, safe attitudes and safe behaviours by the person behind the wheel and other people in the car. Together we can make a difference. We know that those smarter, more sensible, right attitudes - if we can encourage them in the

drivers - will be able to mitigate a vast majority of crashes that are occurring here in Tasmania. I thank the House.

HomeBuilder Grant Program - Query

[6.44 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, it is a good thing that the Deputy Premier is here - and congratulations by the way on your appointment. It is a good thing that you are here because this is in relation to a HomeBuilder Grant program constituent inquiry which I flicked through to your office on 6 April. I have not had a response and I have flicked it through again. It could be my email, but I thought I would raise it tonight because it is quite important to the constituent.

They are looking to have an appeal on a rejection of the HomeBuilder Grant and they only have 60 days to do that. This was provided 30 days ago, so it is getting quite problematic. Timing is important in this. I will give you a quick idea of what it is about. I am not going to use the constituent's name, to protect their privacy. They certainly do not want any dramas being made about this, they just would really like to get a result. I note that I have written to the minister's office on a number of occasions in the last six months in relation to these matters. Her office has been excellent in that response, getting in touch with the constituents and talking them through the process and passing them on to the right people, then following up as well. I appreciate that.

Basically, I met with a constituent in relation to her problems with the substantial renovation build. The constituent has advised that due to defective building practices which led to mould and structural damage, they were unable to meet the obligations under the Home Builder Grants Program. I also have information which I will forward on, which only came through today, from a surveyor who can verify that it is no fault of the constituents at all. It was a defective build that has put this renovation build back by 12 months.

It is a harrowing story. A family decided to put a second storey on their home. During that renovation process the whole ceiling collapsed on the house. They were still living in the downstairs part. It made the whole house almost impossible for them to live in. They were not able to get the builder to come back to rectify the issue. They have lost a lot of money on the build; it has been devastating. As the lady said to me, I do not think people understand just what this does to you on the inside. It has been really distressing.

Tomorrow I will pass on the additional information from the surveyor. They are verifying that this build should have been completed in 16 to 26 weeks. I think they are 12 months behind already. It has been a really distressing period and it has not been any of their own fault. Thank you.

Leap Farm - Tribute

[6.48 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, last month I had the privilege of visiting Leap Farm. It is in Lyons. It is a 108-hectare property at Copping, south-east Tasmania. The

owners, Iain and Kate Fielding, established the property in July 2012. They had a mission to produce the highest quality food and become a carbon positive farm.

Kate and Iain farm Swiss Toggenburg dairy goats. They produce Tongala cheese, beef and goat meat. They have been voted on by small producers and customers. In 2009 Leap Farm was awarded the Sprout small producer of the year. Continuing the trend in 2020, under the innovation category, they were the short-listed in *Weekly Times* Farmer of the Year award. Each year they have appeared at the popular Bream Creek show and had a stall at the farmers' market in Copping.

Their remarkable story starts when Iain was lecturing at Macquarie University in Sydney and researching ecology. This was when Iain decided it was time to put his knowledge to practice. Both Iain and Kate are lovers of cheese and the decision was easy.

Deciding to return to Tasmania where friends and family were, and knowing about the local food culture, they found the perfect patch of paradise. They needed to ensure they produced quality milk. Quality milk meant having happy goats. They purchased and populated the property with kids, which has resulted in the success they have today.

Iain and Kate also purchased 50 Poll Hereford and Black Baldy cows in calf and a red Angus bull, which I was quite disappointed about - I thought it should have been a black one.

When they first purchased the farm, it came with rangeland goats, which meant they could start their goat meat food production earlier. They had the perfect outlet for the Bream Creek farmers' market, which started in 2012.

Since late 2013 they have been producing their own beef and value-added products sold directly to the consumer. Now the farm produces five cheeses, banded under the Tongola Cheese: Curdy, a fresh goat curd; Capris, a soft lactic curd cheese with a mild taste, Bloom, similar to Camembert; Zoe, a fresh fudging lactic curd cheese; and Big B, a semi hard mature cheese. All the cheeses are home made on the farm. All the cheeses are seasonally available between October to June.

Tongola Cheeses started prior to Leap Farm in the late 90s by Hans Stuz and Esther Hausermann. The couple left Switzerland and purchased 16 acres overlooking the Huon River in southern Tasmania, then gradually developed the land into their home with a small herd of Swiss Toggenburg goats. They developed cheese-making skills over the summer months in the Swiss Alps. They used to turn the fresh goat's milk into Swiss style cheese, creating Tongola.

Demand outgrew Hans and Esther's capacity, meaning something had to change to keep Tongola Cheese alive. This was when Kate and Iain contacted Esther and Hans to purchase some goats. They purchased 18 kids and the results are what we see today.

Iain and Kate use organic principles to improve the land and increase biodiversity which in turn improves productivity. They calculate the carbon footprint of their farm using GHG Accounting Framework calculators been developed by the University of Melbourne.

In 2019, Leap Farm admitted approximately 190 tonnes of carbon poolones, while removing 610 tonnes of carbon equivalence. So, they over offset the emissions of 60 average

Australian houses each year, something a lot of people cannot do. To remove carbon from the atmosphere and reduce their admissions, Iain and Kate use a number of farm management strategies and incorporate a variety of pasture systems.

In 2021 Leap Farm became a carbon positive farm. It was great to see what Iain and Kate have developed in their farm management skills and techniques. They are contributors in being part of a solution and not part of a problem.

What an amazing visit. I recommend that if you are down that way to have a look. Thank you very much.

The House adjourned at 6.52 p.m.

Appendix 1

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition No. PET21/I5HA

House of Assembly

The petitioner of residents of Tasmania draws to the attention of the House:

- The forest in coupe FN005C is known the Franklin and wider Huon Valley community as 'Castle Forbes Forest'. This forest contains significant ecological values that would be lost as a result of the scheduled clear-felling.
- Its tall old-growth eucalyptus trees bear hollows that are core habitat for threatened species such as the masked own and swift parrot. Two Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles nests sit a few hundred metres from the forest, and are vulnerable to clearing disturbances. The forest has old enormous leatherwood trees. The continued destruction of forests like Castle Forbes Forest is continuing to the decline of our threatened species.
- The Huon Valley community values Castle Forbes Forest for the exceptional enrichment it affords us and our children, we value the opportunity to walk through an ancient ecosystem so close to or homes, which support s such a diversity of life.
- The planned forest clear-felling and regrowth operations will make out local environment more flammable. Converting tall, moisture holding wet forests to sense, flammable regrowth so close to our homes and town is alarming. Particularly following the fires that drew so near in 2019, those in leadership roles should do all the ye can to protect communities from increasing the risk of bushfire.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the House to call on the Government to facilitate the removal of the Castle Forbes Forest from the Permanent Timber Production Zone, or otherwise permanently exclude if from logging operations.

RESPONSE:

- The Tasmanian Government supports our renewable, sustainable native forestry industry.
- While plantations are now the source of the majority of Tasmania's forest products, plantation timber alone cannot provide the full range products or meet current market demand.
- When timber is harvested from Tasmania's native forests it is done so in a sustainable way, in accordance with our world-class forest practices system.
- The Tasmanian Government is committed to the long-term sustainable management of our forests for the benefit of all Tasmanians.
- Sustainable Timber Tasmania annually publishes a Three-Year Wood Production Plan to the public. The plan identifies forest coupes intended for harvest over the next three years. Updated information on these plans is readily available for the public to view on Sustainable Timber Tasmania's website.
- Sustainable Timber Tasmania advise that the specific Franklin forest coupe (FN005C) was removed from the 2021/22 to 2023/24 Three Year Wood Production Plan in July 2021.
- This removal will allow Sustainable Timber Tasmania's operational planning team time to review its options for the management of various special values within the coupe. It also allows its operational planning team time to consider and review any information which has been submitted about FN005C by stakeholders and the community as part of Sustainable Timber Tasmania's stakeholder engagement process.
- Sustainable Timber Tasmania has confirmed that it is not conducting harvesting operations at FN005C in the foreseeable future and this coupe will not be included in the Three-Year Wood Production Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25, to be released to the public in July 2022.



Guy Barnett MP
Minister for Resources

Date: 8/3/22