



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

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Wednesday 13 October 2021

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

QUESTIONS

Renewable Energy - Tasmania's Position

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for ENERGY, Mr BARNETT

[10.02 a.m.]

Tasmania has a proud record of investment in renewable energy. You and the Premier have repeatedly boasted that Tasmania is 100 per cent self-sufficient in renewable energy. For example, during the Premier's state of the state address, he said it was a key Liberal Government commitment, and we have reached it through our nation-leading energy policies. We discovered during Estimates that while you were making statements like this, Tasmania was, in fact, a net importer of electricity.

In the 2020-21 financial year, Tasmania exported 1043 gigawatt hours of electricity across Basslink while importing 1628 gigawatt hours. On average, across the entire year, around 6 per cent of the state's electricity was imported.

Can you confirm that for the 2020-21 financial year, Tasmania was not, in fact, 100 per cent self-sufficient in renewable energy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Despite what others on the other side might think, Tasmania is already 100 per cent fully self-sufficient in renewable energy, and we have the nation-leading target to go to 200 per cent legislated across the parliament, in fact, globally -

Ms White - Are you misleading the House? Did you mislead budget Estimates, or are you misleading parliament?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - a very important initiative. This was well ahead of our 2022 target of November last year, and it is a world-leading target. Because we have sufficient installed renewable generation capacity to meet all our expected needs on average, depending on the time period, sometimes Tasmania might be a little under 100 per cent renewable, but other times it will be well over.

Ms White - Six per cent under.

Mr BARNETT - I am trying to assist members of the Opposition and those who might be listening, to provide some advice in response to assist the Leader of the Opposition.

Depending on the time period, sometimes Tasmania might be a little under 100 per cent renewable, but other times it will be well over, as we contribute our renewables to the mainland. Tasmania's 100 per cent renewable claim is robust, and compares favourably to those made in other Australian jurisdictions. Other jurisdictions use a similar approach. Across Australia the target at the moment, with regard to the use of renewables, is under 25 per cent, and Tasmania is sitting at 100 per cent.

The use of non-renewable electricity generation sources in Tasmania - namely, Basslink imports gas-fired generation from the Tamar Valley Power Station - is on average offset by the additional renewable generation that Tasmania exports across Basslink. Electricity makes up 40 per cent of Tasmania's total energy consumption. The remainder of our energy comes from other sources, with oil making up the largest portion of this due to its role in our transport fuel system. This presents an opportunity for Tasmania to use its renewable energy advantage to decarbonise other energy sectors, including the transport sector, and it is why the Government is doing what it is doing.

The 100 per cent target is a great achievement. It is fantastic. It was achieved and announced in November last year -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 45, relevance. The question to the minister was, can he confirm that for the last financial year, we were not 100 per cent renewable energy. He is misleading either the Estimates Committee or the House, and he should be truthful.

Mr SPEAKER - Ms White, as I have stated many times, it is not an opportunity to repeat the question. The question has been put, of course with some comment, and there is some leniency in how the minister goes about answering that question. It has all been interesting for me. Continue please, minister.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Mr Speaker. There are many parts to that question. I have been trying to assist the Leader of the Opposition and those on the other side with understanding the process around this. You have the 100 per cent targets - a great achievement, as I have said -

Ms White - You have not achieved it.

Mr BARNETT - You can pick two points in time if you want to be manipulative in your narrative, especially when one of those points is prior to the 100 per cent being achieved.

Ms White - It was data you provided to the Estimates Committee.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms White. You have already asked the question. Please allow the minister to answer it.

Mr BARNETT - I am trying to assist the member and those who might be listening. So far this calendar year, Tasmania has been a net exporter via Basslink, with 1215 gigawatts of exports.

Ms White - The question is about last financial year.

Mr SPEAKER - Ms White, order.

Mr BARNETT - You are obviously not interested in the answer but I will endeavour to conclude very shortly.

There were 1215 gigawatts hours of export, and 940 gigawatt hours of import as at 1 October 2021, so Labor's claims would be more wrong as we go forward, with 263 megawatts of wind farms approved and approaching FID, and 1500 megawatts in the planning and assessment phase.

On this side of the House we have a track record of delivering on energy, particularly with respect to low-cost, reliable clean electricity, which is what the rest of the nation wants and what the rest of the world wants.

We have it here in Tasmania. We are proud of that, and we are making the most of it. As a Government, we will not be distracted by criticisms or claims across the Chamber from the Leader of the Opposition or anywhere else. We have a big vision and we are implementing our vision, which is backed by very low electricity prices - in fact, either the lowest or among the lowest in the nation, for which you should be very grateful on behalf of the people of Tasmania.

Energy - Gas Supply Contract

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for ENERGY, Mr BARNETT

[10.08 a.m.]

After your Government almost blacked out the state in the 2016 energy crisis, the Tasmanian Energy Security Taskforce -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms WHITE - It is a statement of fact, Mr Speaker. The Tasmanian Energy Security Taskforce concluded that, and I quote:

The Tamar Valley Power Station, particularly the combined-cycle gas turbine, should be retained at least until there is a reliable alternative in place to mitigate against hydrological and Basslink failure risk.

We understand that Hydro Tasmania is now in discussions about the future gas supply contract to the Tamar Valley Power Station.

Minister, in line with the taskforce recommendations, will you rule out any changes to the gas supply contract that might impact on the availability of the combined-cycle gas turbine?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. With respect to the first part of her question, of course Labor was responsible, and Bryan Green, in terms of the dam levels -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - What happened under Labor? The dams were heading on the way to be drained. You were trying to claim all that money from the mainland, and draining the dams under Labor and you have never taken responsibility. You should be ashamed.

Ms White - They were drained under you, minister. Be truthful.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms White.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The minister is misleading the House. The annual reports from Hydro Tasmania prove the fact.

Mr SPEAKER - It is not a point of order. The minister has the call.

Mr BARNETT - They do not like the truth. They have no policies and no plans when it comes to energy. You just knock and criticise from the sidelines, particularly you, Mr Winter, the Opposition spokesperson for energy. Knock, knock, knock and criticisms. Your track record, 65 per cent, up, up, up in terms of prices, 65 per cent under Labor and Labor and the Greens over a seven-year period. You have no credibility when it comes to renewable energy.

In terms of gas, we acknowledge that gas supply and security is important to industrial and domestic users across Tasmania. We have recognised that. We are acting to provide long-term certainty to Tasmanian gas users by providing a future gas strategy. The discussion paper will be released for public comment shortly and the final strategy published in 2022. We are working with the key stakeholders. We have a gas strategy working group and that discussion paper will be released.

There will be opportunities to decarbonise gas in Tasmania while improving our energy security by reducing reliance on imports from the mainland. We will deliver a gas decarbonisation pathway study as part of the future gas strategy.

Dr Woodruff - What does that even mean?

Mr BARNETT - You would be very interested in this.

Dr Woodruff - Carbon capture and storage, decarbonising, fossil fuels, it does not work. Get attuned to the realities around you.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Franklin, order.

Mr BARNETT - I am taking your interjection and saying you would be very interested in this. I hope you and your colleagues are interested. It is time for the Greens to support our

renewable energy plans and our projects in Tasmania. It supports renewable energy. I take the interjection from the member for Franklin.

We will be delivering on that and we have a pathway to make that happen through our future gas strategy. It will be looking at the options for using locally produced hydrogen, renewable methane and biogas. We are looking at all of those options. This is part of the future. This is part of our plan. We have a vision. It is part of our renewable energy future. If the Opposition Leader had any interest at all she would be listening and she would be seeing what is ahead of her in this state on behalf of the people of Tasmania. This is an opportunity. You have seen today the climate change plans and zero net emissions by 2030. We are already leading. For six of the last seven years, we are leading Australia.

We are taking a leadership role. The Premier has made it clear that we are on a trajectory and it is going to help grow our economy and create more jobs.

Members interjecting.

Mr BARNETT - This future gas strategy is all part of that. I could say more but I am being drowned out by the Opposition.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, order. Order in the Chamber, please.

Mr BARNETT - The gas strategy will be clear. The introduction of the gas pipeline information disclosure and arbitration framework is part of that. As a direct result of this framework, gas transportation pricing outcomes for Tasmanian consumers have been improved significantly. That happened under our Government, under a majority Liberal government. It has been accepted through the energy ministers at a national level. Those reforms have been implemented in Tasmania to the benefit of gas users, residential and industrial. Why do you not acknowledge that in your question? Why do you not acknowledge publicly these benefits that are flowing through to Tasmania?

Gas commodity prices continue to fluctuate throughout Australia and securing gas on reasonable terms in a small market is a challenge. We welcome the Australian Government initiatives that reduce energy costs for consumers both here in Tasmania and across the eastern seaboard of Australia -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. With all this mumbling going on it is very difficult for other people in the Chamber to hear. Please do not interject.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Mr Speaker. In conclusion, this question is coming from an Opposition that has no plan and no policies when it comes to energy.

Members interjecting.

Mr BARNETT - You have nothing to offer. You are bereft. You are simply divided and distracted, fighting among each other. It is a joke. You have no credibility.

Mr SPEAKER - Thank you, minister.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order. Standing order 48, it is nearly 10.15 a.m. and the minister is still bloviating. A lot of hot air.

Mr BARNETT - I was concluding, Mr Speaker. No credibility. No plan. No policies on the other side.

Energy - Net Carbon Zero Emissions

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.15 a.m.]

Your announcement to enshrine net carbon zero emissions by 2030 is cynical non-action on the climate crisis. We have already reached that milestone. We reached that milestone in 2015, thanks to the Tasmanian Forest Agreement negotiated under a Labor-Greens government. The TFA that you voted against reserved our vast native forest carbon stores. Your Government crowed about reaching net zero back then in the same year that you ripped up the Tasmanian Forestry Agreement legislation. Since then you have accelerated the clear-felling and burning of native forests; the carbon banks that got us to net zero.

Today you trumpeted your Government's climate ambition, calling yourself nation-leading. That is greenwash. Not only are you setting a target that we achieved six years ago but you are not setting targets for industry sectors when emissions in transport and industrial processing are growing year on year.

If you want to keep our community safe from climate hazards and you want to be able to look the children who will be striking on Friday in the eyes, you need to commit to end native forest clear-felling and introduce strong sector targets by 2030. Are you prepared to do that?

Mr TUCKER - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The member has been on her feet for a minute and a half and has not asked a question yet. It is not a speech.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - You did hear the question, Premier?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I got the gist of it. I thank the member for Franklin for that question. To be honest, I am staggered that you would come into this place and ask that question today. Tasmania is a national - an international - leader in this space.

The minister made the point a few moments ago that we can generate 100 per cent of our renewable energy needs. We have an emissions profile that is the envy of the world. The Greens cannot accept that and it staggers me -

Members interjecting.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order. The Premier is misleading the House. We do accept that. I made the point in my question. We have been there for six years. We more than accept it. We want action.

Mr SPEAKER - That is not a point of order, Dr Woodruff. You know this is not a debate. You cannot make different points through the contribution. You have asked the question. I will admit it was not completely in silence when you were asking the question, but I ask that the Premier be heard in silence while he answers it, please.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is a very important matter. I have said on a number of occasions we are at a very important moment in Tasmania. We have a range of opportunities in front of us, building on the back of the work of governments over the last 100 years in investment in renewable energy. The choices were made by different governments - and there were choices made. The Minister for Finance made the point: can the Greens point to one dam that they supported? We have a renewable energy base that has been built over the last 100 years and will continue to grow with a target of 200 per cent. I acknowledge the carbon sink that we have in our forests. I have made the point in this place on many occasions that the carbon sink we have come at a considerable cost to our communities. A decade ago with the way that it was managed and the way that it was rolled out, there were families sitting in lounge rooms around this state watching their businesses and their homes being lost: sitting there with their children and there was a price that was paid.

Dr Woodruff - You know about hard decisions.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff. If you cannot listen to the answer in silence then you will be doing it from the monitor outside.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, I acknowledge the carbon sink we have. It means we have a fantastic opportunity, not just to lead this country, but to be one of the leaders on the international stage as well. Our emissions were 108 per cent below the 1990 baseline in the last year they were accounted for.

We are where nations want to be, we are where other states want to be, we are in such a rare position that we can set a world-leading target of net zero emissions by 2030. We can ensure that we take everybody with us. As a result of the decisions that have been made over the last 100 years, we are in that rare position where we will see an inflow of investment occur into the future. There will be more jobs. People will want to be here because we have such a special opportunity. I wish that for once, the Greens would accept that we are in a good place and that you do not need to be punitive.

It is interesting to look at some of the outcomes in terms of the emissions profiles. Regarding electricity generation, we do very, very well. Look at agriculture - we are below the 1990 baseline in emissions right now - negative 8 per cent. Look at the waste sector - negative 26 per cent. Those sectors have managed to migrate there by themselves.

Mr SPEAKER - If you could wind up please, Premier.

Mr GUTWEIN - Since 1990, our economy has nearly doubled. There are more than 60 000 jobs now in Tasmania and we lead the world with our emissions profile. If we work sensibly and responsibly with our industry sectors, we can take everybody with us. We can be

a beacon, not just for this country but for the world, with what we achieve and with the legacy we leave for those Tasmanians who are going to follow us.

Securing Tasmania's Future

Mr TUCKER question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.23 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on how the Government's clear plan to secure Tasmania's future is working? Are you aware of any alternative approaches?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Tucker for that question and for his interest in this very important matter.

Tasmania continues to be the envy of the nation and, I believe, the envy of the world, with the 100 per cent renewable target, which we have achieved; the 200 per cent target and our emissions profile. The minister for Environment and Climate Change will have more to say on the world-leading target that we will announce later this morning.

Our plan to secure Tasmania's future is working. Businesses are confident. They are investing and hiring. It is well above pre-pandemic levels. Who would have thought in the middle of last year, when we were forecasting 12.5 per cent unemployment - an economy in recession - that we would be where we are today?

Job vacancies are now the highest in the nation - 80.2 per cent higher. That means we have jobs ready for people to take if they want to take them. Our record on jobs is very clear - 27 600 created since we came into Government. In contrast to that side of the House - and I note Mr Winter yesterday welding himself, once again, to the Greens on a stunt motion - our plan is working.

Deloitte Access Economics business outlook for the September quarter forecasts that Tasmania will have the equal fastest growing economy in the country this financial year, at 3.6 per cent. Deloitte said the recent State Budget shows the benefits of this faster than expected recovery. Net debt is now expected to be close to \$1 billion lower than previously forecast - and that comes despite an extra boost to healthcare, particularly community based and preventative services. Our finances are improving and we are investing more into health.

The report highlights the confidence our businesses have to spend, invest and hire staffing and they said:

With COVID-19 harder to find than a tagged Tasmanian brown trout, businesses are currently the most confident in the country.

Mr Barnett interjecting.

Mr GUTWEIN - I knew that would get a rise out the Minister for Primary Industries and Water.

International demand is at record highs, for the first time cracking the \$4 billion mark over a 12-month period. Goods exports grew at 17.3 per cent in August to reach \$4.15 billion, the highest level on record, spurred on by soaring mineral export earnings as well.

Dwelling approvals are at 4246 over a 12-month period to August. That is one of the highest totals in the last 25 years, and is 32.1 per cent higher than the year before. Housing is challenging in Tasmania, but we are building more houses and getting out of the ground faster than we have ever done before.

There was more good news yesterday. This will not interest the Labor Party but the NAB business survey for September found that Tasmanian businesses are once again the most confident in the nation and importantly, with the best business conditions in the nation. Confident Tasmanians are supporting Tasmanian businesses. Retail trade is now 13.6 per cent higher than in February last year. Tasmania is in a great space. There is a moment in front of us that, if we grasp it, we can ensure that future generations of Tasmanians can benefit from the investment that is being made by this Government and by governments over the last 100 years into renewable energy, smart technologies, and into an agricultural base that will go from strength to strength under our policies.

I make the point that on this side of the House we have a clear plan and that plan is working. Businesses are confident, people understand that plan and we are getting on with the job. What is happening on that side? More chaos, no plan, no leadership. I say again - whingeing is not a policy and complaining is not a platform. The Labor Party -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Standing Order 48. I note that you were asking the Premier to wind up when he was responding to Dr Woodruff's question on climate. He has now been speaking for five minutes and is lobbing into the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER - The Premier is winding up. I do not need to ask him to do so when it is obvious that he is.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, I will wind up. I am sure that it will not surprise anybody that the Greens are defending Labor. Whether Labor can defend itself is a matter for them, but anybody can see, especially after yesterday, the very close arrangement that is emerging on that side.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I acknowledge the presence in gallery of TasTAFE students. Hopefully you will enjoy your morning.

Members - Hear, hear.

Liberal Party - Disclosure of Donations from Gaming Industry

Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.29 a.m.]

Yesterday I asked you a straightforward question regarding donations to the Tasmanian Liberal Party from vested interests in the gambling industry. You churlishly refused to answer the question.

I am well aware the returns on the Australian Electoral Commission show that since 2016, approximately \$1.1 million has been donated by those associated with the gaming industry to the Tasmanian Liberal Party. However, donation disclosure laws are weak and your Party has likely received significantly more donations than those declared to the AEC. I also note that the returns for the 2021 year are yet to be published.

I ask you to make a more complete disclosure to the Tasmanian people, including all cash donations and in-kind assistance instead of hiding behind weak donation disclosure laws. I ask you again: over the past five years how much money and in-kind assistance has been donated to the Tasmanian Liberal Party and Liberal candidates from organisations, companies or individuals associated with the gambling industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the independent member of Clark for that question. I preface it by this: you said that yesterday you asked me a straightforward question. I gave you a straightforward answer.

What was interesting in the preamble to this question was the work the member has done looking at the AEC election disclosures that are on the website. She had done the work and she knew the answer before she asked the questions. The member knows very well that as the Premier donations are not my business. Donations are handled at arm's length by the Tasmanian Liberal organisation. Disclosure is a matter for them. We have abided by the law. We will continue to abide by the law. The Government is looking to improve those laws.

That side of the House has never done it. We are doing the work to improve those laws. That matter will be introduced, I would expect, this side of Christmas. Whether it has the opportunity for debate then or early next year is another matter. Prior to the next election we will have improved the laws.

I am proud of the fact that this Government is taking that step. Donation disclosures are a matter for the Liberal Party organisation. They are conducted at arm's length from me. The timing of disclosures is a matter for the current law, not for me or for the party. The party is bound by the laws as well.

Fortescue Future Industries - Provision of Power by Hydro Tasmania

Mr WINTER question to the MINISTER for ENERGY, Mr BARNETT

[10.32 a.m.]

During Estimates, the Premier said he did not agree with Hydro Tasmania that it could not provide 250 megawatts of power to Fortescue Future Industries' proposed hydrogen plant at Bell Bay. Can you confirm Hydro Tasmania is developing an offer for FFI to supply it with energy? If so, how was Hydro Tasmania's mind changed from less than two months ago?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I am delighted to speak about our renewable energy future and specifically the green hydrogen potential in this state, which is now coming to fruition. Tasmania remains at the forefront of the opportunities to produce green hydrogen. We have achieved 100 per cent and we are targeting now 200 per cent

legislated. The rest of Australia and the rest of the world can see that we have a big vision consistent with our Tasmanian Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan, our Renewable Energy Action Plan. I am pleased to acknowledge the special interest of Fortescue Future Industries. Origin Energy, Able Energy, Woodside Energy and others also have ambitious plans to produce renewable hydrogen at scale. That would see Tasmania become a globally significant player in this growth sector, with hundreds of jobs and billions in investment over the next decade.

The Government continues to emphasise to all those proponents the importance of buying local, supporting Tasmanian jobs and manufacturing. We welcome the interest of Mr Forrest and the commitment that he has to this state. Energy is available for Fortescue Future Industries and for other proponents on terms and conditions to be agreed.

Mr Winter - Energy from Hydro Tasmania?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, from Hydro Tasmania on terms and conditions to be agreed. That is very clearly understood by the relevant proponents. I am happy to confirm that to the member in answer to his question.

There will be further opportunities and Hydro Tasmania will be operating on a commercial-in-confidence basis. It has the energy for firming in the years ahead. It is complementary with wind. Regarding wind, Tasmania has an additional 263 megawatts of wind energy approved and approaching FID. There is another 1500 megawatts of wind energy in the planning and environmental assessment process. There are thousands more in the future in our three renewable energy zones.

We are pleased and proud of the efforts we have put in over past years, notwithstanding the criticism from the other side; the knocking. Come on board. You have no plans and no policies. It is time the Opposition stood up and said, 'We want to be with you, Tasmanians. We want to be with you on this journey'. You have heard the zero net emissions announcement from the Premier today. The Minister for Climate Change will be providing more details shortly. We are on track to grow our economy, deliver more jobs and deliver a renewable energy future.

Emissions Reduction - Effect on the Economy and Jobs

Mr ELLIS question to MINISTER for CLIMATE CHANGE, Mr JAENSCH

[10.37 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on the Government's response to the independent review of the Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008 and the Government's plans to grow the economy and create jobs while reducing emissions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Ellis for his interest in this critically important matter for Tasmania and the world. Tasmania is a leader in addressing climate change. Our state has achieved net zero emissions for six of the last seven years. Since 1990, our emissions have reduced by 108.6 per cent while our economy has nearly doubled and over 60 000 jobs have been created.

In November last year we reached 100 per cent self-sufficiency in electricity generated from renewable sources. These globally significant achievements are due to a combination of our long-term renewable energy investments and our managed forest estate along with ongoing emissions reductions in our waste and agricultural sectors.

As the world seeks low emissions products and services and solutions, these competitive strengths are becoming increasingly important opportunities for Tasmania. Modelling shows that as our economy and population grows -

Dr Woodruff - So, you are going to sit on your hands? Do nothing for nine years.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr JAENSCH - and the risk of severe bushfire increases, we will need to do more to maintain our net zero emissions status.

We know that the climate changes already under way will affect our way of life, our industries and our environment in our lifetimes. Some of our most important economic sectors, including agriculture, are directly exposed to these changes. That is why Tasmania must contribute what it can to the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avoid the worst impacts of climate change while we grow our economy and jobs.

Tasmania can do both, better than nearly anywhere in the world. As members would know, the Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008 has recently been subject to an independent review, including consultation with the Tasmanian community and targeted engagement with key industry sectors and young Tasmanian people. The review's final report was tabled in this place on 26 August this year and found strong support for Tasmania to continue being a global leader on climate change.

Today I can confirm the Government's response to the review, which includes accepting in full or in principle all seven of its recommendations. The Tasmanian Government will legislate a target of net zero emissions from 2030. This will be the most ambitious emissions reduction target in Australia, and one of the most ambitious in the world. While this may be out of reach for many other states and nations, we have done the work to be confident that this ambition is feasible and achievable for Tasmania.

Most importantly, our modelling and our experience shows that this target can be reached not by shrinking our economy, but by growing it: not by doing less, but by doing more in parts of our economy where we have unique competitive advantages, including the knowledge and innovation of Tasmanians themselves.

Our plan to reduce emissions identifies 16 emissions-reduction opportunities across our economy that can boost productivity and drive local and export demand for our renewable energy and products, including - driving the rapid uptake of electric vehicles; using more of our renewable energy, and less imported fuels; developing a renewable hydrogen industry; replacing fossil fuels in transport and industry here and overseas; growing agroforestry and on-island timber processing; providing opportunities for farmers; and growing and exporting our own next-generation building materials.

The economic modelling for Tasmania tabled here last month found that by adopting these and other identified actions, our economy could be \$475 million larger, with over 1200 more jobs by 2050. We will help to reduce emissions across the country and the rest of the world.

We heard the clear message from industry that they want to be part of the solution to climate change. A whole-of-economy target provides a flexible approach that recognises that different sectors have different opportunities to reduce their emissions, and that some will require more time, support and technology than others while we all work to a common goal. That is why the Government will legislate the requirement for sector-based emission reduction and resilience plans to be developed in partnership with the different industry sectors, identifying actions to reduce their emissions and boost their resilience to climate change. Leading by example, we will develop an emissions reduction and resilience plan for government operations, including our commitment to transition the government vehicle fleet to 100 per cent electric vehicles by 2030.

In response to the review, the Government will develop a whole-of-government policy framework to ensure that climate change is considered in the development of all relevant policies, plans and strategies.

Today I am releasing a draft bill for public consultation over the next five weeks, which strengthens Tasmania's Climate Change (State Action) Act by amending it to legislate our 2030 target, consolidate the objects of the act, require a climate action plan and a statewide climate risk assessment every five years, and to require the completion of sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans. I encourage all members here and all Tasmanians to review the draft legislation and the accompanying Government response ahead of the tabling of the bill later this year.

Our Government will continue to support industry, businesses and our community to make the transition to a low-emissions economy and become more resilient to a changing climate. Our 2030 target sends a strong message that Tasmania is serious about using our unique advantages to their greatest effect to respond to climate change, to protect our lifestyle and environment, and to grow our economy and jobs. Our 2030 target is a strong target that all Tasmanians can be proud of and get behind as we work to secure our common future.

Fortescue Future Industries - Bell Bay Investment

Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for ENERGY, Mr BARNETT

[10.44. a.m.]

Andrew Forrest recently announced a \$1 billion investment in a hydrogen electrolyser plant in Queensland. He said the Queensland Labor Government had been quick to support his plans, so while he had hoped the first announcement could be made in Tasmania, that opportunity has now passed. He also told ABC radio his massive investment in Tasmania was still on the table, but you need to get on with the job of providing him with power. He said:

I have been waiting for an answer for a while now. It has been very slow and there are other opportunities in other parts of Australia.

When will Dr Forrest get his answer? Can you confirm that your Government believes there is currently, or will be soon enough, sufficient power to support a 250 megawatt hydrogen plant at Bell Bay?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. The answer to your last question is yes.

As to your other questions, let me outline that we are delighted with the special interest Dr Forrest has in Tasmania, and we appreciate the opportunity to work with Fortescue Future Industries and their relevant team. They have demonstrated special interest in Tasmania and we have an ongoing working relationship with them, as does the Premier, and across government with our new Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania agency. It is progressing very well in accordance with our plan. We do have the energy available and that has been made very clear from Hydro Tasmania to not just FFI, but to the range of other proponents.

You may not have been listening, but we have a range of other special proponents that have demonstrated interest on the public record - Origin Energy, Woodside Energy, Abel Energy and Grange Resources on the north-west coast doing specific work and others. We are very pleased to have ongoing discussions with each of those proponents through the various government business enterprises, whether it is Hydro Tasmania, TasNetworks, TasWater, Tasmanian Irrigation; the whole works across government.

This is a team Tasmania approach. We are demonstrating a very dedicated focus consistent with the plan. This is part of our long-term plan.

Mr Speaker, I would like to also note that in addition -

Dr Broad - Another slogan. Very slow, he says. It has been very slow.

Mr SPEAKER - The member for Braddon should stop interjecting.

Mr BARNETT - My other point to note is that all of this must demonstrate the benefits for the long term for Tasmania. It is not a short-term quick fix. This is part of our long-term plan. Mr Winter should take that on board. It is essential that we continue those discussions, and that is not to be happening in front of the media or in the public space. These are commercial-in-confidence discussions.

One thing Tasmanians can very clear on is that we have their interests at heart. We are working for the people of Tasmania to grow the economy, deliver more jobs and deliver a cleaner world, not just in Tasmania and Australia, but globally. We can do that from Tasmania.

You heard from the Minister for Climate Change, the Premier, earlier this morning about our visionary nation-leading, globally-leading approach. Together with the interest that we have had from those proponents that I have referred to, the investment interest proved there is growing demand for our clean, green energy in Tasmania, with the state Government and our agencies continuing to work with current and potential new industrial customers, and on commercial arrangements to provide energy for those projects. Those discussions are ongoing;

they are commercial-in-confidence. It is positive and it is focusing on growing the economy, delivering jobs and factoring in our long-term plan.

We are not brokering deals, Mr Winter, on the floor of the parliament. You are trying to bait me as minister to do so. That will not happen. Those commercial-in-confidence discussions will continue. Our renewable energy future is very exciting and this side of the House is backing it. It has huge potential and we are grabbing that potential, that opportunity, with both hands to deliver thousands of jobs, billions in investments and a very prosperous future for Tasmania.

Bell Bay Hydrogen Development - Water Supply

Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for ENERGY, Mr BARNETT

[10.50 a.m.]

Where will the water for a hydrogen development at Bell Bay come from?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to receive that question from the member. There are three key ingredients to the success of a world class hydrogen manufacturing facility, whether it be at Bell Bay or wherever. For Tasmania, Bell Bay is the proposed hub and those discussions with the federal government, regarding funding support, are progressing positively. The three ingredients are electricity, water and infrastructure - road, rail and port. Those three -

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Standing order 45. You give leniency when long questions are asked, but I asked a simple question. Where is the water coming from for a Bell Bay hydrogen development?

Mr SPEAKER - You know the ministers have an opportunity to answer and they do not have to answer every question that was in the question and parts thereof within the first 30 seconds. We always allow a certain amount of leniency. Your question was shorter than normal but there is always a lot of preamble and there is always a back-drop to each question. I am allowing the minister the opportunity to answer that question.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before I was rudely interrupted, I was answering that question. There is a range of sources for water. One of our great natural advantages in Tasmania is water -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - I am attempting to answer the question. We have a world-class wind resource in Tasmania, and a world-class water resource. We have one per cent of Australia's land mass, 12 per cent of Australia's rainfall and 27 per cent of Australia's water in storage. This is a fantastic opportunity for Tasmania.

The discussions with TasWater, Tas Irrigation, ReCFIT and the various government agencies that I referred to in an earlier answer, are ongoing and they are positive. I thank the office of the Coordinator-General and also ReCFIT, Anton Voss and his team; they are doing a terrific job.

We have many options with water. We have a world-class asset here and we will make the most of it.

Forest Management Practices - Forest Logging and Increased Fire Risk

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.52 a.m.]

Today you announced a net zero by 2030 target that relies on our forests doing the heavy lifting on climate - the same forests that your government continues to log. Are you aware of the most recent paper by UTAS academics which points to increased bushfire risk as a result of native forest clear-felling and burning? The paper, called Fire Risk and Severity Decline with Stand Development in Tasmanian Giant Eucalyptus Forest, is now the eleventh Australian research paper confirming the link between industrial native forest logging and increased fire risk.

The paper finds fire risk decreases as forests mature and it recommends updating the state's approach to management of native forests. This is our scientists sounding the alarm in order to keep communities and wilderness safer from bushfire.

Instead of vilifying UTAS scientists working in the public interest, as the Minister for Resources minister has, will you now accept there is a verified link between native forest clear-felling and burning and increased bushfire risk, and will you ensure that forest management practices are changed to protect communities and the natural environment in the future?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for her question. I point out that is going to be covered in an order of the day later this afternoon.

Ms O'Connor - You should apologise to Jen Sanger and Jamie Kirkpatrick.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'Connor - You hid under privilege and you sledged them and they have been vindicated.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, it looks as though there is trouble in paradise over there. I thank the member for Franklin for her question. Wood is our ultimate renewable resource, and sustainable forestry management is part of the solution to climate change - not the opposite. We do not agree that ceasing all native forestry is the best approach for mitigating bushfires

and climate change. You tend to pick and choose the science. You do over time. Our sustainable forestry management approach is reinforced by the IPCC -

Ms O'Connor - It is not.

Mr GUTWEIN - It is. They define deforestation as the conversion of forest land to non-forest land. There is no deforestation in our public native forests. Our native forests are regrown -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, order in the Chamber. I cannot hear the Premier. I do not know about anybody else.

Mr GUTWEIN - The question is not coming in the context of climate change. It is coming in the context that they want to shut down our native forests. In finishing my comments, I make the point that less than 1 per cent of our native forests is harvested in a given year. Only 0.27 per cent -

Ms O'Connor - A million tonnes of native forest -

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Ms O'Connor, you do not have to interject, surely?

Mr GUTWEIN - Wood is the ultimate renewable resource.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 45 -relevance. It would be great if the Premier could read the paper and look at enacting the research.

Mr SPEAKER - It is not a point of order. Dr Woodruff, sit down, it is not a point of order.

Mr GUTWEIN - I consider that the member has gone from asking me a question to providing me with a reading list. I will leave the matter there. The Greens and the Liberals will always have a difference of opinion on this. We believe that our native forests can be harvested in a renewable way.

COVID-19 - Mental Health

Ms OGILVIE question to MINISTER for MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.57 a.m.]

You have been encouraging Tasmanians to be aware of their mental health. What is the majority Gutwein Liberal Government doing to help Tasmanians who might feel anxious, worried or overwhelmed by the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her considerable personal interest in this matter. As I mentioned yesterday, this week is Mental Health Week. While many

Tasmanians have demonstrated incredible resilience throughout the pandemic, it is important and a timely reminder for people to take time to look after their own wellbeing. The theme for Mental Health Week is awareness, belonging and connection; and that is very appropriate for what we have been through over the last 18 months. It has been inspiring to see the way Tasmanians have supported each other over that time.

It is understandable, and could be quite common, that some people may be worried, concerned or uncertain as we move forward through the pandemic and start thinking about what living with a COVID-19 environment might be like. For some time yet, COVID-19 will continue to present challenges we have never had to deal with before. I encourage all Tasmanians to reach out to family, friends and neighbours to make sure they are their brothers that they care about.

Maintaining a daily routine, engaging in activities and hobbies we enjoy, and exercising in a safe and secure way is also important to keep Tasmanians mentally healthy. It is important to understand the things we each need to feel safe and supported, to maintain and boost our mental wellbeing and to know when we are struggling and need to reach out for help. However we feel, there will be up and downs, but we are never alone. There are others going through the same thing.

We should each consider how we can make our own mental health and wellbeing a priority to build stronger connections to each other and within our community, not just during special awareness weeks, but every day. The Tasmanian Government is investing in early intervention and preventive mental health initiatives, including nearly \$8 million in this year's state Budget to continue and expand innovative services established during the pandemic such as a Tasmanian Lifeline and the Mental Health Council of Tasmania's check-in website.

Tasmanian Lifeline on 1800 984 434 is a call-in, reach-out service for any Tasmanian who may feel stressed, anxious about the future, finding the impacts of restrictions a challenge or simply needing a friendly and understanding voice to talk things over with. This hotline is staffed from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. seven days a week. Tasmanians can also visit the Mental Health Council of Tasmania's website at mhct.org for information on how we can each take some steps in our day-to-day lives to look after our mental wellbeing. The Mental Health Council of Tasmania is strongly supported by our Government. It has a range of activities planned for the rest of Mental Health Week. I encourage all members to get out and about and enjoy what is on offer in your local communities.

As well as celebrating Mental Health Week, we are continuing to implement our extensive mental health reform program. The 2021 Budget allocates an additional \$8.8 million to these reforms. This will allow the full operation of the Acute Care Team, which is a new community-based mental health service in the south and the progression of the new Peacock Centre facility and associated services. Good progress is also being made towards establishing the two-year trial of an emergency mental health co-response service, as I mentioned yesterday, by the end of this year. This means Tasmanians will get faster access to mental health care services when they need it, while reducing pressure on our emergency departments.

Work is currently under way to scope the operational model. I look forward to the commencement of these and other new services as we roll out our plan for a contemporary, integrated mental health system across Tasmania.

Seafood Pledge

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr BARNETT

[11.02 a.m.]

Since 2015 the Seafood Pledge has supported Tasmanians to obtain 7000 vocational qualifications, maritime licences and endorsements of maritime licences. You have rightly trumpeted the success of this initiative as it has helped drive growth in the sector. Despite repeated requests from the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council and Tasmania's three largest salmon producers, you have refused to re-sign the Seafood Pledge. Why? What implications will this have for the industry's ability to recruit, train and maintain a skilled workforce?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I often wear the T-shirt 'Eat more seafood'. It is a very important message. It has been very tough for the seafood sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been great working together during those tough 20 months. We look forward to ongoing discussions and engagement.

We had the Tasmanian Seafood Industry awards on the weekend. The member attended with a number of other members. The feedback on that night in response to the Government's efforts to provide support through the small business grants and other support packages we have provided to the industry was really appreciated.

The minister for Education and Skills and Training is having ongoing discussions with the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council, as am I. They are a very important stakeholder and it is a very important sector. Those discussions will continue.

Regarding the Seafood Pledge, we acknowledge that and we note that. That is why those discussions are ongoing. We acknowledge the leadership of the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council. Julian Harrington is doing a terrific job as CEO. He is a good advocate. I said that on Friday night at the dinner. He was recognised with a special award on the night. We pay respect and honour to him.

Seafood Pledge

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for SKILLS, TRAINING and WORKFORCE GROWTH, Ms COURTNEY

[11.05 a.m.]

The Seafood Pledge has enabled thousands of Tasmanians to access skills training in the seafood industry, yet you and the Government have currently refused to re-sign the pledge. Can you confirm re-signing the pledge would have cost less than \$1 million per year and if so, did you not consider that this was excellent value for money?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I have met with Seafood & Maritime Training about this issue. With skills funding through the Department of State Growth we look at a range of different industries and how we can allocate funding in a way that is competitive and responds to needs within industry. I have met with them; I have met with a range of other industries.

Only this side of the Chamber is committed to skills training in Tasmania and the only side of the Chamber that went to the election with a strong commitment around training for Tasmanians. We have made an almost \$100 million commitment but we are looking to deliver to further underpin TasTAFE and make sure we can deliver trained industries so that TasTAFE can be responsive to a range of industries.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Interjections on the left should cease.

Ms COURTNEY - We have guaranteed 80 per cent of funding through this election commitment. For that remaining funding we will continue to work productively with a range of industries, including the seafood and maritime industries to make sure that we can allocate funding in a way that responds to need and is done in a competitive way.

Building Stronger Communities

Mr STREET question to MINISTER for COMMUNITY SERVICES and DEVELOPMENT, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.07 a.m.]

This week is National Carers Week as well as National Seniors Week. Can the minister please outline how the Government will help secure Tasmania's future through building stronger communities?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Street for his question. I know his interest in these matters.

As Mr Street said, as well as Mental Health Week, this week is also National Carers Week and National Seniors Week. On behalf of the Tasmanian Government I acknowledge those who help more vulnerable members of our communities and thank them very sincerely. While these are all important to me as minister, I acknowledge that they are much more important to those in our community who these weeks apply to. For some, they wear all of these hats and their daily routine revolves around those who they support.

Carers make a significant contribution to the ongoing health and wellbeing of Tasmanians in need of support and assistance. I encourage all Tasmanians to take the time to consider this year's Carers Week theme, 'Millions of Reasons to Care', and acknowledge the estimated 80 000 plus unpaid carers in Tasmania.

The next step at the forefront of our new action plan is the introduction of carer recognition legislation. Today I announce that community consultation for this legislation is now open. Today a discussion paper is available online on the Department of Communities Tasmania website. Government representatives will be travelling the state to ensure all interested Tasmanians can have their say on this important piece of legislation to ensure it best reflects those who care in our communities. Consultation will be held in Launceston, Devonport and Hobart from 15 to 18 October.

Seniors Week also provides a wonderful opportunity to celebrate what we have here in Tasmania, to connect with each other and to recognise the relationships that support others across our communities. Held between 11 and 17 October this year, the theme for Seniors Week 2021 is friendship with a tagline of: 'Discover. Imagine. Together'. We want to continue to support Tasmanians to age actively; to empower them to make choices about how to live their life and to reach their potential for physical, mental and social wellbeing.

We are now working with the Council of Ageing Tasmania (COTA) to develop our next active ageing strategy. Community consultations will commence next year and COTA will be working with the Government to reach out to and connect with older Tasmanians across the state, to consult broadly on the development of a new active ageing plan for Tasmania. This includes ensuring those in more rural and regional areas also have the opportunity to have their voices heard because no matter where you live, we want all Tasmanians to help shape Tasmania as the best place to live, work, invest, volunteer and participate as we grow older. I will have more to say on how Tasmanians can participate and have their say when the consultation period is officially launched.

I congratulate and thank all those community peaks, COTA Tasmania and Carers Tasmania for organising another activity-packed week of events to celebrate Tasmanians, and for helping to ensure Tasmanians continue to be connected and, importantly, supported.

STADIUMS TASMANIA BILL 2021 (No. 48)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Gutwein and read the first time.

OPCAT IMPLEMENTATION BILL 2021 (No. 49)

First Reading

Bill presented by Ms Archer and read for the first time.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Energy Security

[11.13 a.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: energy security.

The questions in question time were instructive of the concerns that Labor has on this topic, and they stem primarily from the 2016 energy crisis. If you want to know what avoiding responsibility looks like, pretending it is not your problem or it is not your fault, look at the reaction today when the Leader of Opposition rightfully pointed out that the 2016 energy crisis was almost a black-out, and it was caused by the Tasmanian Liberal Government's incompetence in energy security.

They want to rewrite history, but it has already been written. Tasmanians understand that the Liberals cannot be trusted on energy security, and that is why the public announcement of the interventions by the Premier, outlined by him in Estimates, need to be carefully scrutinised.

They do not seem to have learnt. When we hear about the hydrogen proposal and Hydro Tasmania telling Dr Andrew Forrest that it does not have the energy to supply him at any price, what that is saying is that it is not about the price, it is about the fact that they do not have the energy. Presumably, Hydro Tasmania is saying that on the basis of advice that has been provided internally by its own experts, who are saying they do not have energy to supply to respond to Andrew Forrest's and Fortescue Future Industries' request.

The concern is that the Premier of Tasmania says he does not agree with Hydro Tasmania and he thinks we do have energy to supply. Who is looking after energy security? Is it the experts in Hydro Tasmania who have advised, presumably, that it does not have enough power to supply at any price, or is it the Premier?

If the Premier has some energy security expertise on his resume, I am not aware of it; perhaps he does. Our preference would be for the experts to make decisions about Tasmania's energy security and the ability for Tasmania's world-class Hydro Tasmania to provide power to that development, rather than the Premier of Tasmania getting involved, as he appears to have done based on his answers within Estimates.

We take the Government at its word when it says it did not provide formal direction to Hydro Tasmania. That is what the answer was in Estimates and I will take that at its word. The question that was not answered by the Minister for Energy today is what happens? How can it be that Hydro Tasmania, two months ago, says it does not have enough power to provide, yet today we understand that Fortescue Future Industries is waiting on a terms sheet from Hydro Tasmania that they are prepared now to provide power. Unless there has been some kind of alternative energy development in the last two months that I am not aware of, the question is, do we have enough power to provide?

Further to that, we have a hydrogen action plan put in place by the Minister for Energy that appears to be missing the two critical components of making hydrogen. We do not have enough power to provide to the hydrogen proponents, and he cannot tell us where the water is coming from. How could you possibly trumpet this policy for about a year, perhaps longer, without having the key components for making hydrogen? He cannot answer the question. The question was very simple. Where is the water coming from? He does not know. What has happened between two months ago when Hydro did not have power, and now they do?

A further question that is again very pertinent to energy security in Tasmania from the Leader of the Opposition today - and not adequately answered - relates to the 2016 energy crisis and the Tasmanian Energy Security Taskforce, which concluded that:

The Tamar Valley Power Station, particularly the combined-cycle gas turbine, should be retained at least until there is a reliable alternative in place to mitigate against hydrological and Basslink failure risk.

The minister had an opportunity to rule out mothballing the combined-cycle system at the Tamar Valley Power Station and he would not do it. He would not rule it out. It is all well and good to say that it is sitting there and that it is not being sold but the fact is that unless you have the gas available for that combined-cycle unit, then it is not ready. It is not able to be easily deployed during an emergency - and any action to change the arrangements so that the combined cycle is not available goes against the Tasmanian Energy Security Taskforce recommendations. It was a very critical recommendation, Mr Speaker. This is a recommendation that is all about trying to avoid the potential for a catastrophe that happened under the Liberal Government's watch in 2016.

The alternative would be to bring on more generation. The more I get involved in this portfolio, and the more proponents of windfarm developments in particular that I speak to, the less confident I am that we will see new windfarm developments. They tell me this is the hardest state in Australia to get a windfarm approved.

Dr Woodruff - You must be kidding. It is the easiest. You should talk to some international companies.

Mr WINTER - That is what they say. People who develop windfarms across Australia say this is the hardest place to get a windfarm approved. They have to go through layers and layers of bureaucracy. Unfortunately, they have to go through the Tasmanian Planning Scheme and they have to go through the process that the minister has in place for these developments.

Quite simply, if we are going to have the renewable energy targets that the minister talks about, and to one day get to the fully renewable announcement that he made last year - that, and comically, is not true - we need to have more renewable developments in Tasmania. However, we do not have the framework in place for those wind farms to go ahead.

[11.20 a.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) - Mr Speaker, energy security is very important. I can inform the House that our dam levels are over 50 per cent. That is energy security. It gives confidence to Tasmanians and is good news. It is a higher level than the prudent, reliable level and also the high reliability level. We are very pleased in that regard, in terms of energy security.

The Opposition has no credibility coming in here. They came in here with the first question today, and they were talking about the dams. At the moment the dams are over 50 per cent. They caused the crisis under their watch with the reduction in the water levels of the dams, and they were trying to make lots of money on the mainland. I understand that. There is a big incentive there; but it was on their watch. It is on the public record, that under the Labor Opposition there was a 65 per cent increase in electricity prices over that seven-year period.

What has happened under us? Down, down, down: 1 July 7 per cent for residential customers, 11 per cent for small business customers. Now this has been backed in by the Economic Regulator, having either the lowest or amongst the lowest regulated electricity prices in Australia. We are pleased and proud of that. We are delivering low cost, reliable, clean, electricity - 100 per cent clean. To be very clear, the 100 per cent is based on an average annual consumption equalling expected average annual generation capability. If that is not clear enough, I do not know what is.

You do not need to take my word for it. You can talk to the department. You can go to the GBE scrutiny later this year and have it all confirmed again. We now have enough renewable electricity generation capacity installed to exceed our annual average electricity consumption. I can go through all the detail; but you have made such a mess of this morning in terms of the questions and not listening to the answers. I can fill you in a little more, but let us be clear about the 100 per cent - and we are going to 200 per cent.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - I have made it clear in answers to the questions about Fortescue Future Industries. The energy is available.

Dr Woodruff - Where is the water coming from?

Mr BARNETT - I am answering the first question, about the energy. The energy is available on terms and conditions. However, there are other proponents as well - Origin Energy, Woodside Energy, Abel Energy and others. We are not going to be negotiating these things on the floor of the parliament, as the Opposition wants us to do. It will be commercial-in-confidence discussions behind closed doors.

The Tasmanian people can be assured that we have their best interests at heart and we want a growing economy, creating more jobs. There was also a question related to the Tamar Valley Power Station. The Government is committed to retaining the gas-powered Tamar Valley Power Station. It enhances energy security by providing a diversity of generation options and acting as a safeguard in Tasmania's energy mix. We have had a debate about wind; it is one of Tasmania's great assets, a world-class wind resource. Gas-powered generation is being utilised less, as a result of the increased availability of wind. However, the assets at the Tamar Valley Power Station are playing an important role in grid stabilisation through providing frequency control ancillary services and for other purposes. Discussions are taking place between Hydro Tasmania and Tas Gas Pipeline and those discussions will be ongoing. We do not directly interfere in those discussions. We will allow those very important discussions to take place.

I have made it very clear that we have an abundance of water in Tasmania. It is one of our great assets. Wind is a world-class energy resource; water likewise - a world-class resource here in Tasmania with one per cent of our land mass, 12 per cent of Australia's rainfall, 27 per cent of Australia's water in storage. We do not negotiate the intricacies of these arrangements with proponents across the chamber. There is adequate water available from a range of resources.

Ms O'Connor - You are squandering it, as we discovered in Estimates.

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

Mr BARNETT - We are very pleased with those discussions. We thank Dr Forrest for his special interest; not just the other renewable energy proponents that want to base themselves here in Tasmania at Bell Bay - which is planned to be a green hydrogen hub. We have ongoing interest from the major industrials and from potential future major industrials.

It is very encouraging, and I am talking of very positive discussions that are taking place across government. We will have more to say about that in the time ahead. It is partly, at least, because of our renewable energy profile at 100 per cent, targeting 200 per cent, and our natural assets in water, in wind, and the fact that they are complementary.

FFI has specifically indicated that it is complementary in terms of the Marinus Link and their plans for renewable hydrogen. I am very pleased about their acknowledgment of the fact that it is complementary - both Marinus Link and their plans for a green hydrogen project at Bell Bay. They happily co-exist, they say.

Time expired.

[11.27 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, the Labor Party's motion to talk about energy security is welcome. I consider there are some members on both sides of the Chamber who would do well to revisit the history. When Basslink went down in December 2015, it was the result of a number of factors. It was a perfect storm of bureaucrats who failed to listen to the climate science.

The Bureau of Meteorology in Japan in May 2015, predicted the early warning of a super El Nino. Australia's Bureau of Meteorology in July 2015, was warning - large alarm bells - that the summer of 2015-16 was going to be a super El Nino. Drought was already occurring across mainland Australia and the rain had stopped falling on crops in winter and spring. When we came into spring in 2015, our dams were low. When we got into late spring/early summer, our dams were really low. They were in the low 20s.

It was ringing warning bells because we had an agreement - a number which we would not drop our dams below. Yet, what subsequently came out, was that Hydro was speculating and selling our water for money to the mainland as electricity to make some profit. It left us in a predictably appalling situation for summer. I guess they thought they could skate through but, unfortunately, a grand majeure intervened and there was a fault in the cable.

Whether it went down as a result of that trading and pushing electrons across the cable, that is a matter that only Keppel, Hydro and a bunch of legal people know the answer to. Tasmanians do not, even people in this place. Taxpayers have no idea what caused Basslink to fail. For more three months, Tasmanians were without an electricity cable connection to the mainland. It cost us a fortune.

Thanks to the minister, Matthew Groom, going on holidays over the summer, there was a lack of care from this Government about keeping an eye on the issues that drive energy security and the things that matter to Tasmania.

Today things have changed. Six years later the Liberals are still denying the climate reality. The Labor Party is also denying climate reality. All we are talking about are these blokey nuts and bolts, but we are not looking at what is driving this massive transformation of our energy systems worldwide, that is accelerating climate heating.

Climate heating is requiring us to rapidly change our energy systems. We cannot continue to use fossil fuel power. We have not heard from the minister. We had no comments from Labor except that they seemed to be concerned that one day we might stop using the Tamar Valley Power Station. Gas is a fossil fuel. What is the plan for when we will no longer be able to use gas in Tasmania? When will that day be? What are the conversations being had with the federal government about the trade sanctions imposed on Australia if we do not do something real to manage climate change?

In Tasmania we understand that we need to protect carbon stores. That is what the Greens are talking about. That is what the Government needs to focus on. That is the source of our current net zero emissions position but it cannot be guaranteed. Nothing can be guaranteed unless we look at protecting and growing carbon stores.

In Tasmania we cannot make sure people do not end up without electricity or in energy poverty unless we have a plan to stop using gas. What is happening with the Tas Gas negotiations? There is a new contract being negotiated now. What are the deals that are being struck? How long are we signing Tasmanians up to continue to rely on fossil fuel when we have other options such as green hydrogen?

Our green hydrogen has to be certified as not being produced by fossil fuels. We have a lot of work to do in that space. Fossil fuels are driving part of our system. We are connected to the mainland. How are we going to manage this situation in the future?

It is important that the minister is open with Tasmanians about the costs for the plans he has for Marinus, Battery of the Nation and green hydrogen. There are many moving pieces and most of them involve billions of dollars of public expenditure. We need to hear more about how our funds will be spent in the future.

[11.34 a.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak on this matter of public importance. I was surprised to see the Labor Party bring forward an MPI on energy security. Not as surprised as I was to see them bring forward one on unity on the first parliamentary day back here after the election.

The reason for bringing on this MPI is so that Mr Winter can spruik for Dr Forrest. Dr Forrest is one of the most successful business people in Australia. I know the game he is playing. You know the game he is playing. He is playing jurisdictions off against one another to get the best deal for his company. That is his job, Mr Winter. That is what he is supposed to do. The job of the Tasmanian Government and of government business enterprises is to look after the best interests of Tasmanians.

I would have thought the job of the Opposition was to look after Tasmania's best interests as well, but instead you try to pressure the Government to do a deal for one commercial entity. Would you give the power away, Mr Winter? There are commercial negotiations going on with all the entities that want to invest in Tasmania, so Dr Forrest being on the front page of

the *Mercury* putting pressure on the Government is not a surprise. What is a surprise is the Opposition doing his bidding and trying to put pressure on a government business enterprise for one specific industry.

The only thing that Dr Woodruff was able to contribute was a cheap shot at the former Energy minister for taking time off over Christmas to spend with his family. If that is the best you have in this place -

Dr Woodruff - He was totally out to lunch, as you know. You were not in parliament.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr STREET - It is an absolute disgrace. That is okay. What goes around, comes around, Dr Woodruff. If you want to make personal attacks on people for spending time with their family, that is fine. Good things come to those who wait.

Dr Woodruff - They were extraordinary circumstances. The whole state was without power. It was a crisis.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr STREET - We are talking about energy security. As of Monday this week the storage levels were at 50.2 per cent which is significantly above the high liability level and the prudent storage levels. The Energy Security Risk Response Framework is something we put into legislation by way of amendments to the Energy Co-ordination and Planning Act 1995. It is clearly working effectively.

Under the framework, the Tasmanian Economic Regulator performs the role of monitor and assessor for energy security and is responsible for monitoring storages with its most recent dashboard providing a clean bill of health for Tasmania's energy security.

We also know that Tasmania's energy security continues to be boosted with the Cattle Hill and Granville Harbour wind farms now fully commissioned. The House should note that the Granville Harbour wind farm has recently been named as Australia's top-performing wind asset. In its August report, Rystad Energy said that Granville Harbour achieved a record 53.73 per cent capacity with 99.26 per cent turbine availability.

Mr Winter - Are you taking credit for the wind?

Mr STREET - No. I am pointing out that that is part of the reason that we have a secure energy source, Mr Winter.

Mr Winter - Because it keeps blowing.

Mr STREET - Just listen quietly; you might learn something.

In August the wind farm produced 47 gigawatt hours of energy, which is equivalent to powering of 64 000 homes or businesses. One of the few things that Mr Winter did say that I agree with is that the Greens would have opposed not only Granville Harbour but also Cattle Hill and any other wind farm that is proposed for Tasmania. For them to come in here and talk about energy security is nothing but hypocrisy. Granville Harbour holds a special

place in our power generator history because when it came online last year Tasmania became one of only a handful of jurisdictions in the world to be 100 per cent self-sufficient in renewable energy. It is another thing that Mr Winer shakes his head at, but it is an undeniable fact.

With Tasmania now 100 per cent self-sufficient the Government has legislated a target to double our renewable energy generation to 200 per cent of our current needs by 2040. Our ability to produce clean, green energy sets us apart from the rest of the world and has given businesses the confidence they need to invest in our state.

We are committed to further growing the renewable energy sector and creating more jobs in Tasmania, which is why we are taking action to ensure it can continue to prosper. I want to congratulate the Energy minister for the work he is doing in this area. We are continuing to develop a renewable hydrogen industry in Tasmania with significant national and international interest in Bell Bay as a hydrogen hub. We are working with proponents on other renewable generation opportunities such as wind.

Marinus Link and the Battery of the Nation projects, including pumped hydro, are progressing well and represent further opportunities to grow the sector and attract even more businesses to Tasmania to invest, create local jobs and grow our renewable energy sector.

In the time I have remaining I want to touch on the gas-fired power station at Bell Bay. It was a foundation customer, underpinning the business case for the initial development of the pipeline by Duke Energy, with construction commencing in 2001, and completed the next year. The Tamar Valley Power Station has historically played an important role in reducing Tasmania's energy security risk, providing backup energy generation.

Mr Winter talked about the power station and the doubts around its future. The current contracts between Hydro Tasmania and the Tasmanian Gas Pipeline are due to expire on 31 November 2021. However, Hydro Tasmania and the TGP are working towards a new agreement, free of government involvement. Earlier, the minister made clear he is keeping a close eye on those negotiations as well.

Mr Winter - You have answered the question. The Minister for Energy would not answer that question. I had to hear it from a backbencher.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr STREET - Much like the situation with Dr Forrest, these negotiations are commercial-in-confidence. Why on earth would the Tasmanian Government or Hydro Tasmania play out these negotiations in public and show their hand? They are commercial-in-confidence, and the job of Hydro Tasmania is to get the best deal possible for Tasmania.

Energy security in Tasmania is critically important, but it is also at a point where energy is secure in Tasmania. Not only have we secured Tasmania's energy future, but we have been able to do it while introducing lower prices for customers.

Our commitment to keep downward pressure on the cost of living is something we take very seriously. In June this year, the independent Tasmanian Economic Regulator approved a 7.11 per cent decrease in Aurora's energy residential electricity price. Small business

customers have also benefited from a decrease of 11 per cent in regulated electricity prices. This is in stark contrast to the Labor government's 65 per cent price rises.

Time expired.

[11.42 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, this Government has form when it comes to not securing Tasmania's future with power. They are the ones responsible for Tasmania's major industrial customers having to load-shed, as well as having to import 200 megawatts worth of diesel generators to fill in a short-term power gap that they created.

The idea that they are going to come into this place and rewrite history, and once again attempt to blame Labor for all their poor decisions, is outrageous. They came into Government in 2014. The energy crisis was in 2016. We had a situation where this Government was running down the dams. The dams were running low. This was the time that they should have taken advantage of the safeguard that Labor had put in place, which was the gas-fired power station at Bell Bay.

Instead of firing up the combined-cycle power station there - the big combined cycle - to fill in that gap as the dams were draining away, what did they do? They were attempting to sell the combined-cycle power station. They were attempting to sell the security of Tasmania's power supply at the same time as the dams were running down.

It was this Government that created that power crisis. That is why the questions we have been asking today are relevant. That is why this is a matter of public importance.

What we now see coming out of Estimates is that last year the state imported 600 gigawatt hours of power across Basslink. We are a net importer of electricity. What that means is if Basslink went down again - if Basslink was out of action last year - we would have been 600 megawatts short of power. We could have potentially had another power crisis.

What this Government does not understand is that you cannot have lack of confidence like this. You need energy security. Energy security is what has underpinned the development of Tasmania's economy over the last 50 to 60 years.

The idea that the lights will not go out is what keeps businesses here, as well as it being renewable but this Government is not answering simple questions about the gas contract. As the member for Franklin, Mr Street, rightly pointed out, that gas contract underpins the entire gas supply into Tasmania. That is also an issue relevant to the major customers, like Grange Resources, and the other major users. Simplot in Ulverstone has a gas power supply. It uses gas to generate electricity and fire its boilers.

Gas is a very important issue, but we do not get any answers from this Government, and especially from the minister, Mr Barnett. He is making a habit of not answering questions. This is causing uncertainty across the business community, across the industries he looks after, including forestry and resources and now, energy. There is no certainty coming out of this minister because he does not answer questions. How can people in Tasmania have confidence their power is secure when we do not know what is happening with the gas backup system? What is happening? Is he going to try and flog it off again? He will not answer questions.

There are other questions he will not answer. He still has not guaranteed 137 000 cubic metres of sawlogs. He has not guaranteed that -

Mr BARNETT - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The member is misleading. The 137 000 cubic metres of sawlogs is a legislated requirement and the member knows that.

Dr BROAD - He is obviously very sensitive about this. He has fobbed it off as being an operational matter for Sustainable Timber Tasmania. We know you are going to do over forestry, because last sitting week, what did you do? You adopted the Greens policy on the salmon industry.

What else did you do, Mr No More Lock-Ups? This minister is going to be party to locking up 25 000 hectares. How many times has he stood up in this place and said, 'No more lock-ups, I cannot be clearer'? He said that. How can we have confidence in this minister, when that is one of his biggest, most massive, backflips he has ever done? It is probably one of the biggest I have seen in this place.

We have also heard that he cannot even get a mining lease right. It is obvious that this minister now has little influence in Cabinet because of these horrendous backflips he has had to suffer. How does he cover it up? By not answering questions - simple questions like where is the water coming from for the hydrogen developments that he has been spruiking for years.

For years he has been spruiking hydrogen development, but does he have a strategy, a plan, an action plan? He has no water, and then Hydro is going around telling Fortescue Future Industries that there is no power at any price. Now, if that is a negotiating tactic - as the member for Franklin, Mr Street, was saying - going to somebody who the Government has spruiked to come to Tasmania because we have this wonderful situation where the hydrogen industry is going to take off, and the way they negotiate is to say, sorry, no power at any price - if that is a negotiating tactic, then it is a very novel way to attract businesses into Tasmania.

That changes about a month later - and coincidentally, the CEO walked. That is an interesting way of debating and negotiating.

Where are we at with this Government? How can we rely on them now? They do not say what they do. They do not follow through. It is all spin and spruik. How many times have we seen them talk about Marinus, pumped hydro, hydrogen? All these things are hot air for this Government because they do not follow through. It is all spin and no substance.

We come to Marinus in our energy security. The minister is saying we are 100 per cent renewable. The way he works that out is because average consumption is less than average generation. But what assumptions is he using when he talks about 'average' generation? How much wind? How much rainfall actually comes into calculating what our average generation capacity is? Last year you were 600 gigawatt hours short? That means we could potentially brown out again.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

**GUARDIANSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT
(ADVANCE CARE DIRECTIVES) BILL 2021 (No. 14)**

In Committee

**Council amendments to clause 15 -
Part 5A inserted
Subclause 35I -
Witnessing of advance care directive**

[11.50 a.m.]

Ms ARCHER - Mr Chair, I move -

That the Council amendments to clauses 35I(5)(e) and 35I(5)(f) be agreed to.

With respect to clause 35I(5)(e), whilst the amendment adds additional clarity to what is meant by 'pecuniary interest' to this provision we consider it is unnecessary, and we indicated that in the other place, the Government does not oppose the proposed amendment for the addition of 'known'. However, for clarity, I will address how clause 35I(5) works.

For the benefit of members, clause 35I provides for the witness requirements for making an advanced care directive. The subclauses include the various witness requirements including providing for the definition of 'close relative', meaning a spouse, parent, child, a grandparent, aunt or uncle in addition to all other requirements in order for an advance care directive to be validly made.

Subclause (5) provides for a prescriptive list of persons who cannot witness an advance care directive (ACD) and that includes close relatives; carers of the persons making the ACD; persons signing on behalf of a person making the ACD by virtue of clause 35H(4)(ii); children under the age of 18; a person who has a pecuniary interest in the estate of the person making the ACD; a person who occupies a position of authority - which is subject to the second amendment we will consider from the other place, and I will talk further to that once we have dealt with this amendment; a person's appointed guardian; or any other person as prescribed in regulations.

The excluded witness list provided in this provision is designed to exclude people who have a potential conflict of interest at the time they witnessed the document. The category this amendment seeks to clarify is that of a person with a pecuniary interest by adding that it must be a 'known' pecuniary interest. I clarify that a person who does not have a pecuniary interest at the time they are a witness has no conflict in that regard. If they do get a pecuniary interest at a future date, that does not affect the validity of the ACD. It is simply the point in time of witnessing the ACD that matters, to ensure that a person making the ACD is not unduly influenced by someone who knows they have an interest in their estate as a beneficiary.

Secondly, clause 35G(2) of the bill provides that a person making an ACD must have decision-making ability, must understand what an advance care directive is, and understand the consequences of giving an advance care directive. It is the responsibility of the person giving the advance care directive to determine whether a person witnessing the document is a beneficiary of their estate.

The person giving the ACD will be guided by the form and other guidance material, not to have such people witness their ACD. In other words, the person making an ACD knows who has a pecuniary interest, such as being a beneficiary, so it is not really necessary to insert the word 'known' in this clause. Further implementation of the bill will ensure educational and explanatory material for ACDs that guide people making an ACD as to who they can have as witnesses.

If there are any inadvertent errors in witnessing, clause 35K gives the Guardianship and Administration Board the ability to validate any errors in appropriate circumstance. That is, clause 35K(2) means that if a person has given or attempted to give an ACD that does not meet the formal requirements such as witnessing under clause 35I, the board is able to make an order declaring that the ACD is valid. For example, the board may do this if satisfied the ACD reflects what the person wanted and they have not been subjected to undue influence.

The Government is of the view that 35I(5)(e) works as intended, will be understood by people making ACDs in light of the guidance they would get, and any errors can be addressed by the board.

However, we acknowledge the other place has suggested this amendment to add clarity to the provisions, so the Government will not oppose it.

Mr CHAIR - Minister, could you formally move that we agreed to the amendments.

Ms ARCHER - I move -

That we agree to the amendments.

With respect to clause 35I(5)(f), regarding position of authority, the Government will support the amendment to clarify the operation of this provision which is the section of the list that excludes certain persons from witnessing an ACD.

Subclause (5)(f) relates to persons who occupy a position of authority in the facility that the person making the ACD resides. For background, clause 35I(5)(f) has been drafted based on section 15(2)(d) of the South Australian Advance Care Directives Act 2013 which also excludes a person who occupies a position of authority in a hospital, hospice, nursing home or other facility at which the person giving the advance care directive resides.

The term 'position of authority' is a reference to a position of authority where the person has an authority in relation to the person making an ACD, such as a practical control or influence over that person. There are similar references to position of authority in some other statutes in relation to people who have a position of authority over another, such that they should not do certain things. In the case of a person living in a health facility, they are in a position of vulnerability compared to the influence of the clinical and management positions in the facility. To avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest, such persons in a position of authority in the facility are excluded from being witnesses. Persons in the facility with no authority in relation to the person making the ACD, therefore could be a witness as they have no conflict. South Australian educational material notes this excludes persons who are not independent or have a potential conflict of interest, such as a senior nursing or medical person at the facility.

The Tasmanian implementation process would develop similar material. However, to clarify the intent of the clause, the Government will support the proposed amendment. The amendment captures all persons in the facility who have direct or indirect ability to control or influence the person making the advance care directive, without restricting the category of persons to those in administrative authority. We believe this amendment does provide the clarity that members from the other place were seeking.

Ms HADDAD - Thank you, minister, for providing clarity on the reasons for accepting the amendment. The Labor Opposition supported the amendments as moved in the upper House and will be supporting them again today. Reflecting on the reasoning of the upper House, I read the *Hansard* from the debate moved by the member for Murchison, I believe on behalf of the member for Mersey, but they were broadly supported by other members in the upper House as well as by the Government and Opposition members.

As we have heard from the minister, the first amendment was to insert the word 'known' into subsection (5)(e) of section 35I of the bill so it would now read, 'if the person has a known pecuniary interest in the estate of the person giving the advance care directive'. The reason put forward by the member for Murchison is that if a person has a pecuniary interest in the estate the person giving the advance care directive would not be able to witness the advance care directive. That is the intention of the original section. She agreed that makes sense, but it was of concern to them that if somebody had a pecuniary interest but was unaware of that pecuniary interest it could invalidate the ACD.

The member for Murchison said the person witnessing the ACD might not feel comfortable asking the person directly, 'are you looking after me in your will?' I can understand why that briefing was put forward in the upper House. She argued that it does not detract from the provision at all to state that the person has a known pecuniary interest. They would be clearly disqualified from being a witness, however, if they have such an interest but had no knowledge of it. I imagine it would come down to interpretation if it was challenged. So at that point in time not enduring. Subsequently the person may become a beneficiary. You know you have a pecuniary interest and you should disqualify yourself from being a witness, but the person asking you to sign it may not be entirely aware of all of the provisions and it makes it easier for the person being asked to be the witness.

That is a sound argument from the member for Murchison. It is important to note that the minister in her contribution explained that if a person did not have a pecuniary interest at the time of the witnessing but later gained pecuniary interest that would not invalidate. Section 35K provides a safeguarding protection for the ability for advance care directives to be deemed valid, despite them not meeting certain requirements.

Similarly, the second amendment put forward by the member for Murchison in the upper House also dealt with who can and cannot witness an ACD. The intention was to clarify that the intent of 35I(5)(f) as it appeared in the bill as it was debated talks about a person who occupies a position of authority in any of those places such as a hospital or a hospice or a nursing home. She said that it was clear to both herself and the member for Mersey that it was about somebody's ability to influence the person in making an advance care directive that may then benefit somebody else rather than the person themselves. She identified that the risk is one of being coerced or being influenced in a way that may see the benefit flow to somebody else, particularly when you are looking after people in a nursing home or facilities like that where they are vulnerable.

She said that it was a risk if someone has influence over that person that they could encourage them to sign an advance care directive that potentially benefits that person and not the person making the directive.

In the member for Murchison's argument, that second amendment that we are discussing which is replacing 35I(5)(f) as it was printed in the original bill, clarifies that situation.

She acknowledged that it was more wordy but it is about the capacity to have influence over the care and management of the person, not so much the person who may be a friend or an acquaintance who is not going to have an influence over decision-making. The Government supported that amendment in the upper House as did the Opposition. For those reasons and in agreement with the rationale put forward by members in the other place and explained by the minister in this place today the Opposition will support both those amendments.

Dr WOODRUFF - The Greens will not be opposing either of these amendments.

I have some questions and I hope the minister is able to shed some light on how this might be interpreted. I probably agree with the arguments you made about inserting the word 'known'. I do not understand how it makes it clearer.

Ms Archer - You will have to ask the other place, not me. It was their suggestion.

Dr WOODRUFF - Sure, I understand that. It provides an opportunity to ask questions about knowns and unknowns. The comments you made were the ones that my mind went to as well. A person either is listed in a will as having a pecuniary interest in the estate or is not. My question, if you can shed any light, except you did not make this amendment, is known to whom?

Ms Archer - Yes. I have covered that.

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes, you did, sorry. Would that include people who are not listed but who might indirectly have a benefit through an estate, such as a partner of a member who is listed in the estate, or a new partner of someone who is listed on the estate? I do not understand what it is aiming to cover that is not already in there. We do not object to that amendment as it is made. It does not seem to make it a lot clearer.

The second question I have is in relation to the second amendment, 35I(5)(f) which adds some clarification to the word 'authority' by replacing that with 'has a direct or indirect ability to control or influence the care and management of a person giving the advance care directive'.

In your view, would that lead to including people who were everyday care staff? They do influence the care and management of a person. I am thinking of my mother's situation when she was in a care home and had people who, on a daily basis, were caring for her. She was quite connected with them. They were not going to benefit in any way, but they were people she trusted. She did not need to call on them to make an ACD but would they be excluded in this reading or would it be more like people who are prescribing medicines or people who were in charge of a residential facility, a hospice or hospital?

They were the only questions I had. Otherwise we are happy to accept these amendments in the form they are.

Ms ARCHER - The font on my notes makes it read as clause 351. It is actually clause 35I. My apologies, I am not reading 100 per cent today.

Regarding the first query, I will read out what I said in relation to adding that word 'known' and why we felt it was not necessary. Your query on that particular one in relation to this first amendment shows that it is not required. You either have a pecuniary interest at the time the ACD is made or not and the person making the ACD knows that.

I clarify that a person who does not have a pecuniary interest at the time they are a witness has no conflict in that regard. If they do get a pecuniary interest at a future date, if the will was made at a later date, that does not affect the validity of the ACD. It is simply the point in time of witnessing the ACD that matters to ensure that the person making the ACD is not unduly influenced by someone who knows they have an interest in their estate as a beneficiary.

Those in the other place wanted that word inserted. It does not change the meaning of the clause. They felt it provided greater clarity. We did not feel it was necessary, but in the spirit of getting this through, we have agreed to it.

With respect to your second query, it relates to the other point that I made. You asked does it include those caring and providing hands-on care? The quote that I restate from my notes is, the amendment captures all persons in the facility who have direct or indirect ability to control or influence a person making the advance care directive without restricting the category of persons to those in administrative authority.

I will look towards my advisers to see if I am correct. It does not exclude administrative but it would capture all people caring. If we look at 35I(5)(b), a carer is already excluded, so in that example they are excluded.

Ms ARCHER - I believe I have already covered all of those.

Council amendments agreed to.

Reported the Committee had resolved to agree to the Council amendments.

Resolution agreed to.

VALIDATION BILL 2021 (No. 39)

Second Reading

[12.11 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

The Validation Bill 2021 provides for validation of technical matters arising with the appointment of statutory officers and decisions of the Mental Health Tribunal, the Guardianship and Administration Board, the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation

Tribunal, the Legal Profession Disciplinary Tribunal and the Tasmanian Industrial Commission.

The bill also addresses issues associated with the transitional arrangements of the Justices of the Peace Act 2018 and makes a number of amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1984 to resolve issues regarding the appointment of members to the Tasmanian Industrial Commission.

The bill includes amendments to retrospectively validate the appointment and performance or exercise of powers, authorities, functions and duties of certain persons appointed to a relevant statutory body. These are persons who continued to perform functions and duties after the expiry of their term of appointment under the mistaken understanding of the government and the relevant bodies that their power to do so had been extended by the relevant act or the Acts Interpretation Act 1931.

Consequently, the bill also validates the constitution and decisions of the relevant statutory body affected by such an issue. Section 21(3) of the Acts Interpretation Act allows a person, after expiry of a fixed term appointment, to continue to exercise the powers, authorities, functions and duties conferred or imposed on the office for up to six months where they have not been reappointed and no other person has been appointed in their stead. This extension does not apply where the appointing act includes an express contrary intent.

It was recently identified that the enactment legislation for the Mental Health Tribunal, the Guardianship and Administration Board, the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Tribunal and the Tasmanian Industrial Commission include provisions which are now interpreted as meaning the extension under section 21(3) did not apply. Whilst the existing legislation for the relevant statutory bodies includes provisions that validate decisions where there are technical defects or irregularities, these do not apply to the absence of an extension of appointment or an acting appointment under the Acts Interpretation Act.

As has been noted with previous statutory appointment validation legislation, there are common law doctrines, such as the de facto public officer doctrine, that could be relied upon to support any decision made by an invalidly appointed person. In short, this doctrine essentially provides that if the statutory officer acts in a legally recognised role to which they and others believe they have been properly appointed to, their exercise of power will remain valid despite any errors or irregularities in their appointment process.

However, this doctrine also requires action to be taken to remedy the defect once the problem is known. Accordingly, the amendments have been drafted to retrospectively validate these matters to remove any doubt or uncertainty as to the validity of any decisions or actions made by these persons. It is important to note that this bill does not intend to call into question the professionalism or expertise of any of the statutory officers or members of a board, commission or tribunal who have made the decisions that are now potentially impacted.

The bill simply puts beyond doubt any issues of invalidity associated with these appointments and decisions. It should be further noted that these validation amendments are not related to the commencement of the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT) which is due to be established later this year, actually on 1 November, following the passage of the stage 2 enacting legislation which I have tabled.

This bill, which was released for public consultation in early 2021, will set out the transitional arrangements allowing all current tribunal and board members to be transferred to TASCAT from its commencement date.

Dealing with the validation of the Legal Profession Disciplinary Tribunal, this bill also includes amendments to the Legal Profession Act 2007 to retrospectively validate the appointment of any member of the Disciplinary Tribunal, and therefore any actions or decisions of the member who is appointed prior to 22 June 2021. The bill also validates the constitution of the tribunal where this issue arises.

The bill addresses an error which has become apparent regarding the appointment of the Legal Profession Disciplinary Tribunal in March 2019. The Disciplinary Tribunal is formed under section 610 of the Legal Profession Act which provides that the 15-member Tribunal consists of 10 legal practitioners and five laypersons appointed by the judges of the Supreme Court. However, the instrument of appointment for the Disciplinary Tribunal dated 1 March 2019 incorrectly appointed 11 legal practitioners and four laypersons. A fifth layperson was appointed later in March 2019.

One of the appointed legal practitioners retired in June 2021 and a fresh instrument of appointment has been made correctly appointing the required 10 legal practitioners and five laypersons until February 2022. This instrument, dated 22 June 2021, ensures any future decisions of the Disciplinary Tribunal are valid. However, the amendments are required to remove any doubt as to the validity of the decisions made by the Disciplinary Tribunal in the intervening period.

I now move to the validation of Justices of the Peace. The Justices of the Peace Act 2018 commenced by proclamation on 1 July 2019, which enacted changes to contemporise the framework for Tasmanian Justices of the Peace who do excellent, invaluable work in our communities. Broadly, the reforms introduced a new and more comprehensive framework for the appointment and regulation of conduct of Justices of the Peace in Tasmania.

The new act, importantly, included transitional arrangements to allow Justices of the Peace or JPs to continue in their role, who have previously been appointed to the office under the repealed Justices Act 1959. Specifically, the new act provides that those JPs who were appointed under the old framework were taken to have been appointed under the Justices of the Peace Act if they notified the secretary of the Department of Justice of certain matters.

The transitional arrangements also stipulated that if these JPs did not notify the secretary by the commencement date, their appointment would be terminated. Issues have been recently identified regarding the awareness by a number of JPs about the legislative reforms and the transitional arrangements, including the notification requirements. Whilst the appointments of those JPs who failed to notify the secretary were terminated on commencement day, certain JPs appear to have been unaware of this change and continued to exercise their functions.

This occurred in instances where despite the Department of Justice forwarded correspondence to all JPs on the database at the time, to inform them of the legislative changes and transitional arrangements, as well as through communications via the three Justices of the Peace Associations, the JP either failed to return the documentation to the department that was forwarded to them to indicate their preference to remain a JP, or where they did not receive the said paperwork due to incorrect or not current contact information held by the department.

The Justices of the Peace Act does include provisions that allow for validity of actions of the JP where there is a defect or irregularity in their appointment. However, this provision only applies to appointed JPs, and not previous JPs who had their appointments terminated.

The bill, therefore, includes amendments to the Justices of the Peace Act to validate the appointments, and any actions of JPs, who are previously appointed under the Justices Act and have continued to carry out the functions of a JP. This retrospectively applies between the date of the commencement of the Justices of the Peace Act and the date of commencement of this act. Any affected JP who wishes to continue in their role, and who meets the eligibility criteria in the Justices of the Peace Act, can be appointed under the current legislation in the usual way.

The department has taken steps to update the JP register to ensure all contact details are correct or have been updated, as well as contact to all impacted JPs and previous JPs to ensure that they are aware of these arrangements and the new requirements.

I turn now to additional validation issues relating to the appointment of members of the Tasmanian Industrial Commission. This bill also responds to issues arising with the appointment of members to the Tasmanian Industrial Commission under the Industrial Relations Act 1984. These issues are largely associated with the new appointment processes and the role of additional commissioners, introduced in 2012 by the State Service Amendment Act.

This change was made following the review that recommended additional commissioners be appointed by the minister for shorter periods to assist in meeting varying workloads, or to undertake specific tasks when required. The appointment terms for these commissioners are to be defined by the minister. These commissioners are distinct from the president and deputy president of the commission, who are by appointment of the Governor for a longer period of up to seven years.

It has recently been identified that following the 2012 amendments, commissioners have inadvertently been appointed by the Governor, which is not in alignment with the act requirements. It has also recently been identified that the act's references to the appointment of members of the Commonwealth and interstate industrial bodies to the commission are inconsistent, and may have led to technical issues or invalidity in some appointments.

The bill seeks to clarify these issues, and ensure the validity of all actions and decisions made by the commission, by including retrospective amendments to the Industrial Relations Act to provide that any persons purported to be appointed as the member of the commission, by either the Governor or the minister, prior to the commencement day, is to have been validly appointed as a commissioner.

It further provides that the powers and functions of those commissioners, and the constitution of the commission - including the full bench - were not affected by the potential invalidity of any appointment. The amendments in the bill address any doubt regarding the administrative processes for appointment of commissioners, including the terms of appointments in line with processes introduced in 2012.

The amendments are retrospective, to ensure that all commissioners appointed immediately prior to the 2012 amendments continue to hold those appointments, and therefore the functions exercised by those commissioners are validated.

In addition to these matters, the bill also makes minor technical amendments under the Industrial Relations Act 1984. These minor technical amendments do not substantially change the operation of the Tasmanian Industrial Commission or the Industrial Relations Act. The amendments in the bill relating to the number of members of the commission address an anomaly in the current Industrial Relations Act, which suggests that the commission may be constituted only by the president and deputy president, and that the role of other commissioners is effectively optional. In fact, the full bench requires at least three commissioners under section 14 in order to function, so at least one additional commissioner is required.

Further, in recognition of the original intent in 2012 for additional commissioners to be appointed to the Tasmanian Industrial Commission for shorter periods, the bill amends section 6 of the Industrial Relations Act to provide that commissioners, other than the president and deputy president, may be appointed for a period of up to three years, as specified in the instrument of appointment. This reflects current practice for appointments of additional commissioners. The president and deputy president retain the appointment periods of up to seven years.

The bill also provides that the current appointments to the Tasmanian Industrial Commission continue after commencement of the Validation Act 2021. The bill also repeals section 10A and references to additional commissioners, as the term and provision are no longer relevant as the appointment of all commissioners will be defined in the amended section 5.

In summary, the technical amendments in the bill clarify that all commissioners are to be appointed by the Governor. The commission is to be constituted by at least three members. Members of the Commonwealth or another state or territory's Industrial Commission, or similar body, may be appointed to the commission. The president and deputy president may be appointed for up to seven years, and any commissioner other than the president and deputy president may be appointed for up to three years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

[12.24 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I commence by giving thanks, through the minister, to her office and her department for the briefing I received a while ago from Danielle, Bruce and Natalie.

As we heard from the Attorney-General, this bill will retrospectively validate the appointments of certain statutory officers, and therefore the decisions that those statutory bodies made over several years or even decades. It is necessary legislation, needed to deal with the discovery of an administrative error or mistaken belief that, if not remedied, would mean that potentially hundred - if not thousands - of decisions, including deeply personal ones concerning people's lives and livelihoods, could potentially be deemed invalid, or at the very least challengeable.

These decisions could stretch back decades. Not to remedy the situation would mean great uncertainty and distress for people who have had decisions about their lives made in a range of tribunals, including the Mental Health Tribunal, Guardianship and Administration Board and others. This will cause enormous uncertainty for thousands of people.

The problem that was identified stems from the reading of section 21(3) of the Acts Interpretation Act which allows for a person on a fixed-term appointment to continue making decisions for six months after the expiry of that term, as long as the position has not been refilled or reappointed to, and where there is no contrary intention in the establishing legislation. The section reads, and I quote:

- (3) Where, under a power conferred by an Act, a person is appointed to an office or place for a fixed term, then, unless the contrary is expressly provided in that Act -

...

- (b) if he is not so reappointed and no other person is appointed in his stead, the first-mentioned person may, until -
 - (i) the date on which some other person is appointed in his stead; or
 - (ii) a date not later than 6 months after the expiration of that term -

whichever is the earlier date, continue to exercise and perform all the powers, authorities, functions, and duties conferred or imposed upon, or appertaining to, the holder of that office or place as validly and effectually for all purposes as if he had been duly reappointed thereto.

It is pretty flowery language because it is old legislation, but there are a few things to note. First, it is clear that the Acts Interpretation Act has not yet had the comb of non-gendered language run through it. I encourage the Attorney-General to think about adding this task to the list for the next Justice Miscellaneous Bill because I know we have a shared commitment to attaining gender-neutral language in legislation in Tasmania.

Importantly, for the purposes of this bill, the section clearly creates the authorising environment for people appointed to certain positions and a range of tribunals to continue to exercise their relevant powers for six months after their term of appointment has expired, providing certain circumstances are met. It is clear and understandable why this assumption has been made over many years. However, as it was explained to me in the briefing, and as we have heard from the Attorney-General in her second reading speech, it has been discovered in the department that section 21(3) of the Acts Interpretation Act did not apply to a range of tribunals because the enabling legislation contained that contrary intention.

In practical terms, what this means is there were members of certain tribunals who continued to hear cases and make decisions within that six-month period after their term was over, but had not left their post, where they were technically not empowered to do so.

I hasten to add, as we have also heard from the Attorney-General, that there is no allegation of wrongdoing or misadministration within those tribunals, or any allegations or worries that the decisions were wrong in and of themselves. Rather, it was a misunderstanding of the administrative arrangements that applied to members of the relevant tribunals in that six-month period following the expiry of the term of its appointment, where, because of

section 21(3) of the Acts Interpretation Act, it was understood and became common practice for people to continue to hear new matters and make decisions during that period.

This bill will retrospectively validate those appointments and the decisions made by those office holders in those six-month periods. Not to take this action would be distressing for those members of the public who have appeared before those tribunals and had decisions made that affect their lives, potentially stretching back decades. There is a common law provision that provides some protection to those decisions, but making this legislative change will simply remove any doubt and provide the certainty needed to correct these past decisions and validate them.

The bill also makes similar changes relating to decisions made by the Industrial Commission. This change is slightly different, as it does not concern that six-month period following the termination of the member's appointment, or the expiration of a member's appointment. Rather, it concerns the appointment of members of the commission.

It was explained to me in the briefing that following the changes to the State Service Act in 2012, the Governor appointed the president and the deputy president as well as all the remaining members of the commission. However, it has recently been understood that in actual fact, all of those appointments should have been made by the Governor. The changes in this bill will rectify that oversight and validate those appointments.

Further, it makes changes to the Industrial Relations Act 1984 which are designed to deal with those changes made to the State Service Act 2012. These amendments will provide consistent appointment for all members of the commission; provide for commissioners other than the president and deputy president to be appointed for a period of up to three years; ensure that the commission be constituted by a minimum number of persons necessary to fulfil the powers and functions under the Industrial Relations Act 1984; provide that members of the Fair Work Commission, except the president, can be appointed as members of the commission subject to the approval of the minister responsible for the Fair Work Act; provide that members of a similar body to the commission of another state or territory can be appointed as members of the commission with the approval of the minister responsible for the relevant enactment legislation; and finally, provide transitional arrangements to continue the appointment of current members of the commission.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is the only part of the bill that was subject to scrutiny and questioning during the Government's public consultation on the bill. Specifically, there were submissions provided during that public consultation from the Community and Public Sector Union state branch and from Unions Tasmania, which had the same shared concern. Both those unions expressed strong opposition to the proposal that the term of appointment of commissioners other than the deputy president be limited for a term of not more than three years. They have a shared view that this should be changed to a term of not more than seven years, to reflect the appointment period of the president and deputy president.

It is a view expressed in those submissions that appointing members for a term of not more than three years creates at least a perception that the commissioners were appointed for shorter periods in order to exercise some control over their decisions, or that they would be rewarded for certain decisions through a renewal of their contract. I am not sure if there are any specific allegations that that has actually been the case, but I note that those two

submissions were made to government and I invite the Attorney-General to address them in her summing up comments.

I raised that issue during the briefing and understood the response from the department, which explained that to make such a change would represent a policy shift which would require its own consultation and wider consultation, which is beyond the intention of the validation bill because the validation bill is not changing that term of appointment to not less than three.

Ms Archer - Plus the president and deputy president deal with most of the matters and not the commissioner.

Ms HADDAD - Yes. The existing term of appointment is not being changed through this validation bill, but I suppose it was seen as an opportunity for those stakeholders to raise their shared concerns that the terms of appointment are different for ordinary members as opposed to deputy president and president. It was also explained in the briefing that while the term of appointment at the moment is expressed as 'not more than three years' many, if not all, are commonly reappointed to six or several subsequent terms.

Consultation, of course, is a good thing and there should be more of it, and I am interested in the minister's comments about those submissions.

Ms Archer - The union submission?

Ms HADDAD - Just those two. I understand they were the only two that were on the website and they had the same concerns.

Finally, the bill amends the Legal Profession Act 2007 and the Justices of the Peace Act 1959. Similar to the changes at the beginning of the bill, these changes will retrospectively validate appointments of members to the Legal Profession Board Tasmania and, therefore, the decisions made by those members as well as appointments and decisions of justices of the peace due to a similar administrative discovery surrounding appointments to these positions.

While on face value, if community members saw, they might be concerned to think that decisions might be made by people who do not have the correct authorising environment to make those decisions, it has been made very clear in the second reading speech and in the bill package documents that there are no allegations of wrongdoing or maladministration by any of the office holders or any of the tribunals or other statutory bodies concerned with this bill. Rather, it is simply a discovery in the department that administrative errors had been made in terms of the method by which people had been appointed to various positions and other administrative errors concerning information needed from justices of the peace. This bill recognises that to not act to rectify this error would be disadvantageous to people in the community and to the people of Tasmania.

For those reasons, the Opposition will be supporting the bill.

[12.35 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I indicate that the Greens will support this bill. It seems to be tidying up, and some overdue housekeeping. I respect the fact it is easy to miss these things. There seems to be rather of a lot of them that are similar. I wonder whether other agencies with ministers you have gone through, minister -

Ms Archer - I would be really careful because this is departmental territory and I would not like to reflect on people's work.

Dr WOODRUFF - No, I am not intending to do that.

Ms Archer - My answer will need to go there and I would feel uncomfortable.

Dr WOODRUFF - There are a lot of details around these things and I can understand it gets missed. It is clearly the case that your department has gone through things with a fine-tooth comb and has identified these things and is correctly bringing them here. I wonder whether this is something which has been discussed at the Cabinet level for all ministers to have the same sort of fine-tooth process so that we do not, inadvertently, in other departments that have committees and doing work where the appointment, the re-appointment and that sort of thing. It is a fine point and these things do have to be perfect if they are challenged.

I recall a recent case of a Huon Valley sitting councillor who was unable to continue in his role because he had a residence outside of the council area. Although he owned land inside, he had not updated his details in the Huon Valley Council and with the Electoral Commission to make it clear that he had property in the area. On what he felt was a technicality, he lost his position as a councillor. There was some discussion at the time about whose role it was. He argued it was a minor administrative matter. I imagine I am making the point which you make in this bill, which is that these can have quite real-life consequences.

When it comes to matters of appointees, of tribunals and commissions who are making decisions that have real life and death consequences for people, it is appropriate to be very particular about the details of the appointment of people who are doing that. I do support the changes here.

One of the questions I have relates to the validation of justices of the peace. I wonder whether you could speak a little more about what appears to be some leniency that was provided in relation to issues regarding the awareness of a number of justices of the peace about the legislative reforms and the transitional arrangements, including the notification requirements. You say:

Whilst the appointments of those JPs who failed to notify the secretary were terminated on commencement day, certain JPs appear to have been unaware of this change and continued to exercise their functions. This occurred in instances where despite the Department of Justice forwarding correspondence to all JPs on the database at the time, to inform them of the legislative changes and transitional arrangements, as well as through communications via the three Justice of Peace associations, the JP either failed to return the documentation to the department that was forwarded to them to indicate their preference to remain a JP, or where they did not receive said paperwork due to incorrect or not current contact information held by the department.

Do you mean that those JPs continued in their role because they stated that they were unaware of the fact that it had been terminated? I do not understand from this whether these people were subsequently reappointed?

Ms Archer - You do not understand why they were?

Dr WOODRUFF - No, whether they were subsequently -

Ms Archer - Whether they were. If they wish, yes.

Dr WOODRUFF - Whether they were subsequently reappointed after having had, I would think, some reasonable opportunities for someone in that position to take on board the fact that things had changed and they were required to make these paperwork changes.

I do not know the circumstances but I am thinking of the Huon Valley councillor. It seemed to many people that a small amount of leniency would have been fair given that the person had been a representative of the community for 12 years. He argued it was something he could have done in one day. It was a paperwork issue. He had willingness, he had cancer, he mounted many reasons why he had not got the paperwork done. Was leniency provided and were those people, those JPs, subsequently reappointed after the paperwork had been undertaken? If that is the case, I would expect that a person in that situation would be able to keep on top of those details. I do not want to dig too deeply into -

Ms Archer - No, it is all right. I can address it.

Dr WOODRUFF - I am not asking about personal circumstances. I am asking about the generalities. They were the only other comments I wanted to make. These are critical tribunals. They do really important work. I thank all the people who sit on those tribunals. They make some very difficult decisions and act with great expertise and in good faith on behalf of the people who appear before them. It is welcome that these details are fixed up and that we have all the paperwork sorted.

[12.43 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank Ms Haddad and Dr Woodruff for those contributions. I will attempt to make all my comments so we can get this done by 1 p.m. as I would really like this validation bill to go to the other place and get this sorted out. Members will appreciate it has been identified that frequently in the area of justice we find errors and we need to fix them.

The easiest way to explain this is that quite often they are discovered either by the judiciary or, in the case of one of the amendments here, it was an inadvertent error by the judges who appointed the incorrect number of Legal Profession Board Disciplinary Tribunal members. You can see how that can sometimes happen in a transitional phase of membership requiring a certain number of legal practitioners and lay people.

Members know, nobody has said otherwise and I am certainly not insinuating this, but it is never done deliberately. It is always inadvertent. These things just sometimes happen. It is human error and we need to fix it. It is prevalent in this area because we undertake and carry out regular reviews of these types of legislation.

Most of the justice miscellaneous legislation or validation bills that I bring before the House are as a result of discoveries made, as I said, by the judiciary, by magistrates, by heads of other tribunals and agencies and those working within an area. Because I get notified quite frequently of those things, I then usually write back and say, 'Thank you. We will consider

that'. We consider it and we put it through the next justice miscellaneous once we have been able to investigate and go out for a consultation. A lot of these technical things go out for consultation that is targeted because it is fairly high-level stuff that the public will not be interested in. We always still put it on the Department of Justice website.

In relation to the JP issue while it is fresh in my mind, my department made every effort possible to ensure that JPs would be notified of when the Justices of the Peace Act comes into force and the previous provisions no longer apply. We need to have an accurate register with all your current details and therefore you will be automatically terminated as a JP. You will need to express your interest in continuing. Those people who have already qualified to be JPs would, upon notification, continue in those roles.

It appears for whatever reason, despite the department's efforts that I explained in the second reading speech, that some were not aware. It could be an Australia Post issue. The fact this validation bill exists is demonstrating quite a bit of leniency in that regard. You mentioned leniency. This is allowing the leniency. Those who continued to think that they were JPs and still witnessed documents, we are validating that because it was done in good faith and they were previously JPs. We have no problem with their credentials or standing to be a JP. Should they wish to continue, they can express that even though it is late and it is past the date.

This is going back and fixing all that. Those who do not want to reappoint, simply do not at this point reappoint themselves or seek that they have an interest reappointing themselves. That demonstrates that there has been a lenient approach to this and one that still validates everything that has been done by those people. As I said, if they wish to continue they can.

Dr Woodruff - Through you, Mr Speaker, were many people not reappointed? Was there a small number out of how many?

Ms ARCHER - I think it is a very small number. I do not have a number. Unfortunately some have fallen out of the age restriction. For section 8 to apply, a JP must be currently appointed JP or within six months of either attaining the age of 75 or the expiration of their two-year appointment.

The intention of the transitional arrangements under the JP Act was to transfer current JPs over the age of 75 from ongoing to two-year appointments and to cease those who had reached the age limit. The drafting of the provisions means that any existing JP over the age of 75 who did not notify the secretary under the transitional arrangements cannot be appointed or reappointed as a JP under the act.

There is a bit of a catch in relation to age but apart from that no.

Going back to Ms Haddad's questions relating to the submissions from Community and Public Service Sector Union and Unions Tasmania. I thank those unions for their submissions on the amendments in the bill relating to the Industrial Relations Act 1984. The CPSU supports the amendments that restore the appointment of all commissioners by the Governor and the amendments that validate the decisions of the commission.

The CPSU and Unions Tasmania are concerned about the amendments that the commissioners, other than the president or deputy president, are to be appointed for a period

of up to three years. The submissions say that such an amendment could affect the perception of independence of the commission. Their view is, this raises the potential for political influence associated with the continuation of appointments. They say security of longer-term tenure maintains the independence of the commission. Their submissions recommend all appointments to the commission be for a period of at least seven years.

The amendments in the bill make technical amendments to the Industrial Relations Act that reflect the intention of the 2012 amendments, which were based on a state service review and reflect the current practice of three-year terms. The review and subsequent State Service Amendment Bill 2012 proposed that the Tasmanian Industrial Commission be supported by a panel of commissioners of relevant experience on short-term appointments. These amendments were passed and have formed part of the functions of the commission for almost 10 years.

Administratively, the short-term appointments have been managed through three-year appointments to allow commissioners to be available when required to constitute the full bench, or support the commission when the president or deputy president are unavailable.

The Government is unaware of any concerns the CPSU, unions of Tasmania or other unions have raised in relation to this arrangement. There is a comprehensive statutory process associated with the appointment of members to the commission. This includes the statutory requirement for the minister to consult with officers of relevant organisations that are considered appropriate to consult with, and the person must meet extensive knowledge, skills and experience requirements.

Significantly, the act requires the Governor to form an opinion that the proposed appointee is, by reason of their qualifications, experience and standing in the Australian community, a fit and proper person to discharge the functions of a commissioner. The three-year appointment period also generally reflects the appointment of other members of statutory bodies - and this is an important and pertinent point - such as the appointment of other members to the Mental Health Tribunal under the Mental Health Act 2013, and members of the Guardianship and Administration Board under the Guardianship and Administration Act 1995.

In practice, the current shorter-term commissioners have been reappointed and serve long periods on the commission, reflecting their skills and expertise in any event. Providing for maximum terms of seven years might also create unnecessary concern that one government's appointments will bind the next government, so three-year terms is about right for those. The amendments in the bill, I would therefore submit, appropriately reflect what has been the practice for many years, and are consistent with other acts.

When Ms Haddad was talking, I also said by interjection that we have a situation where the bulk of the work is carried out by the president and deputy president, but we need other commissioners to make up the full bench, or there may be situations of conflict where you might bring one in.

The Industrial Commission now deals with less work, now that we have a lot of work going to Fair Work Commission, due to awards coming under that structure when those changes were made. I am now speaking ad lib, based on past legal experience, but I notice that

the workload drastically reduced from when I was practising as well. That all happened a couple of years out from me becoming a member of Parliament, and I recall that quite clearly.

Speaking generally, there has been previous criticism of state and Commonwealth governments who have provided for long-term statutory appointments to tribunals and commissions, as it has been perceived that governments have used these to influence the decisions of a particular statutory body by long-term appointments by persons who shared the government's views. I am not suggesting we would do that, but there has been that criticism, or at least that perception.

This is despite the statutory process to appoint persons of suitable knowledge, skills and experience. The Governor must have the oversight and approve that - on, yes, recommendation from the minister and Cabinet - but it is always the Governor's practice to keep a careful eye on anything that goes through executive council.

The Government recognises that longer-term appointment of the president and deputy president to the Tasmanian Industrial Commission is necessary for certainty and stability of the commission. However, long-term appointments for the other commissioners - as proposed in the submissions from the unions to which I have referred - is inconsistent with government policy, as articulated in the amendments made to the Industrial Relations Act through passing of the State Service Amendment Act in 2012. Proposing such terms also opens the Government to unnecessary allegations of interference in the appointment of other members of the Tasmanian Industrial Commission.

Ms Haddad - Did you look at gender-neutral language in the Acts Interpretation Act?

Ms ARCHER - Thank you, Ms Haddad, for raising that issue. It is a long-term goal, and it certainly is of OPC as things come before it. Legislation is always updated to modernise and contemporise language, and the Acts Interpretation Act should be no different. I can certainly put it on the long list of things for us to do. It is very much a parent act that we use regularly, so we should have some neutral language in it. Very happy to look at that.

I would also, as Dr Woodruff did, like to acknowledge the hard work of all of the tribunal and other boards and commission heads. I do not want to reflect too much because I have tabled the TasCAT bills, which will be debated soon. What I will say is that their work, particularly in the protective jurisdictions, is quite extraordinary. All of them coming together - certainly the first nine, most of which are in the protective jurisdiction, but you also have Workers Compensation, the Forest Practices Tribunal, some very different types of tribunals coming under that one civil and administrative tribunal.

As I have said on a number of occasions, it gives us an opportunity to hand over a lot of other civil and administrative functions that are cheaper, faster, do not necessarily require legal representation - residential tenancy, building disputes and those types of matters as well. Our heads of those current tribunals remain heads of those streams under the new tribunal and still maintain their expertise in their areas. There can be some crossover, I am sure, with some of them having expertise across a few different areas.

I see it as a great opportunity to extend the expertise that exists in these tribunals. Some have been presidents of them for quite some time, and the knowledge that sits there is quite extraordinary. I have made some recommendations in relation to guardianship and

administration boards, and some new appointments there as well. I thank people for always putting their hand up for those roles. They are incredibly difficult roles, as we know. There is high media interest at the moment because of the issues and the review that is being undertaken in relation to the Public Trustee, but also hearing stories about guardianship and administration. They are highly emotive areas. We are dealing with peoples' lives. We are dealing with people who, to a certain extent, have some freedoms taken away from them, so it is a pretty big deal when we are dealing with that aspect as legislators as well - as we know from the previous amendments we have just dealt with, in relation to advanced care directives being the first tranche of some major changes to our guardianship and administration framework. These are lifechanging changes to decision-making and decision-making capacity.

I thank my department, as always, for the work they do. There are a few different types of justice miscellaneous bills that we have put through, and will continue to put through this year. There was a hold-up last year because of COVID-19, so we have probably brought through more this year than our usual two or three, but it is best that we deal with these matters as quickly as possible.

The sitting was suspended from 1 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

MOTION

Workplace Protection Legislation

[2.30 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, I move - That the House:

- (1) Recognises that the majority Liberal Government remains committed to protecting Tasmanian workers and businesses ensuring they can lawfully go to work without threats and disruptions from extremist protesters.
- (2) Notes that the Liberals have always stood firm in fighting for the rights of Tasmanians to work and earn a living for their families.
- (3) Further notes that Tasmanians have had enough of the radical extremists invading workplaces, threatening and endangering staff.
- (4) Further notes that the Workplace Protection Amendment Bill will be released for public consultation over coming weeks.
- (5) Acknowledges that the Workplace Protection Amendment Bill will reflect the Government's commitment to protect both Tasmanians' right to work and their right to free speech.
- (6) Further notes that this bill is Labor's chance to show their support for Tasmanian workers.

Mr Speaker, the Tasmanian Liberal Government makes no apology for trying to ensure that Tasmanians can go to work and run a business in a safe manner, free from threats and disruption. Tasmanians have had enough of the radical activists invading workplaces and threatening and endangering staff.

Our Workplace Protection Bill will complement legislation that has already been passed in the federal parliament where, I must say, it received bipartisan support. Labor governments and oppositions across the country have supported similar legislation. It is time that the Tasmanian Labor Opposition finally threw their support behind Tasmanian workers rather than standing side by side with the Greens and the Bob Brown Foundation.

It reflects our commitment, both to Tasmanians' right to work and their right to free speech. To be clear, this bill is not about stopping Tasmanians protesting. The government respects the right of every Tasmanian to express their views and protest lawfully. This bill will not stop legal protests happening outside hospitals, schools or protests in our streets or on our footpaths. This bill is simply about protecting Tasmanian businesses, their workers and families from illegal threats and ongoing disruption.

I want to reiterate that it does not target anyone who lawfully exercises their right to free speech or to protest. This bill is needed because the existing laws are clearly not adequate -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ELLIS - Not adequately discouraging extremist protesters from invading Tasmanian workplaces and disrupting legally operating businesses. We have listened to industry and workers, which is why we are bringing our Workplace Protection Bill legislation back before the house. It is the Liberals who have always stood firm in fighting for the rights of Tasmanians to work and earn a living for their families. This Government took our commitment to the election, and the Tasmanian people have given us a clear mandate, one of the strongest mandates of any legislation, to re prosecute our workplace protection laws.

If Labor really wants a fresh start, then it is time to support hard-working Tasmanians, support the bill and send a clear message that workplace invasions and disruptions have no place in this state. We know that the Greens think breaking the law to invade farms is 'reasonable'. They have admitted so in the Senate. However, Labor does have a choice and I sincerely hope that they make the right one. I hope Labor will support our bill in the interest of workers and workers' safety, and in the interest of protecting their right to work. I was bitterly disappointed, and I know many people in my electorate were, when Labor turned their back on Tasmanian workers -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. This is a debate that has two sides to it and you will have an opportunity to put your side to it at a later time. The member should be heard in silence.

Mr ELLIS - Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I was bitterly disappointed. However, they do have an opportunity to change their tune. We know they voted against our previous workplace protection bill earlier this year. In doing so, Labor sided with the anti-everything, anti-jobs Bob Brown Foundation and the Greens, openly opposing the rights of workers and Tasmanian businesses. It was a kick in the guts for hardworking Tasmanians who are being threatened and harassed by radical protesters.

This is not some hypothetical situation. Daily, we see the Bob Brown Foundation blocking work sites, allegedly harassing workers and even jumping in front of moving trucks on the west coast. Enough is enough. It is time to protect Tasmanian workers and their interests. It is time to protect our industries. We have listened to industry and workers, and we will continue fighting to provide the protections that Tasmanian workers so desperately need.

I hope that a new Labor Opposition takes up the fight for workers' rights as Labor governments and oppositions have done around the country, helping to pass similar laws.

This bill is supported by, among others, the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA); the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI); the Forest Industries Association of Tasmania (FIAT); the Tasmanian Minerals, Manufacturing and Energy Council, the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council and the Tasmanian Small Business Council.

I urge Labor in the spirit of bipartisanship to reconsider their position and support our legislation for the sake of Tasmanian workers and their families.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. On that side of the Chamber nobody should be saying anything.

Mr ELLIS - I know that a lot of former Labor supporters want them to do the same. There is a reason why in a place like Queenstown, that used to be Labor heartland, only 29 per cent of people voted for the Labor Party in the last election. They expect more from the party that is meant to stand up for workers' safety and workers' rights. They are not getting that. They have made their voices abundantly clear over the last three elections. We have sought a mandate, and we have received one from those people. Labor has the power to help us pass this legislation and start providing Tasmanian workers and businesses with the support that they desperately need right now.

I say enough of party politics; let us work together on the new Workplaces (Protection of Business and Workers) Amendment Bill.

I hear the laughs from the far left of the Labor Party. However, I am very hopeful that those on the right, the more moderates in the Labor Party who understand business and workers, and who understand Tasmanian competitiveness in an international market, can see that these laws are vital for the future of those industries.

It is extremely unfortunate that the Greens constantly try to mislead and misdirect. They are always seeking to turn every debate into an emotionally driven shouting match and we have seen that today.

I reiterate, this bill does not target anglers. Everyone knows that the minister is probably the most high-profile angler in Tasmania at the moment. It does not target bush walkers; that is something that is close to my heart. It does not target anyone who lawfully exercises their right to free speech and to protest.

The intent of the bill is to protect Tasmanian workers and businesses from dangerous or threatening workplace invasions which impede people's right to go to work. This bill applies to trespass on business premises and obstruction on thoroughfares. A person must both intend and cause a substantial obstruction to business activity on business premises, for example, on a mining lease. Business premises is defined in the bill and does not specify tourism businesses in the definition. I encourage the Greens to read the document rather than to continue to mislead the public for their own personal gain, although that is perhaps too optimistic of me.

What are the differences between this bill and the previous one? The intent of this bill remains the protection of Tasmanian workers and businesses from illegal, dangerous and threatening extremist protest action. This bill will more clearly define the threshold of disruption, exceptions and defences, and business premises.

This version will more clearly focus on recognising -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Mr Speaker. As a point of clarification, I would not want the member to accidentally mislead the House. The bill that he is referring to is a draft bill, for which consultation has recently finished. There is no finalised bill for him to be referring to. If he could refer to it as the draft bill, he would avoid misleading the House.

Mr SPEAKER - I am sure people understand, but the member will take that on board.

Ms O'Byrne - If they were reading *Hansard* they would not, Mr Speaker.

Mr ELLIS - I certainly will, Mr Speaker. I thank the member for her hopefully constructive interjection, and I hope there are many more constructive conversations around passing this draft bill.

This draft bill will clearly outline exemptions including hospitals, schools and charity organisations. This version will focus more clearly on recognising every Tasmanian's right to free speech and to walk at protests. The bill will alter the penalty provisions, including making them summary penalties.

There were questions from the Labor Party in the past about WorkSafe. I hope this is a learning opportunity for those opposite on how the Government is run. The Work Health and Safety Regulator is a statutory position, independent of government or ministerial influence, and that is important. Those opposite are surely not suggesting that the Government should dictate how an independent body should act.

I am advised that WorkSafe Tasmania takes all reports of work, health and safety breaches seriously, including serious incidents within the forestry sector and many other work places. The independent WorkSafe Tasmania undertakes a compliance monitoring, incident response and investigation role, identifying any aspects of unsafe work practices within workplaces throughout Tasmania, but this is all a smokescreen for the Labor Party. Labor are desperately trying to divert attention away from the fact they opposed - a number of times - the

very laws which would have addressed this issue and provide the protections that businesses and workers so desperately need.

If the laws as they currently stand worked, we would not be seeing the protests that we are currently seeing from the Bob Brown Foundation in places like forestry leases, mining leases and farms.

Ms O'Byrne - If you had wanted to fix it properly, you could have. You have chosen not to fix it.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Bass. You will have an opportunity to comment. You know you should not interject on a member who is on his feet.

Ms O'Byrne - I do not tell untruths when I stand in this place, though.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ELLIS - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Perhaps my comments are directed to an old Labor Party. I really hope the new Labor Party that sits before us with their new members will be supportive of a commonsense action, commonsense legislation that has been supported by Labor governments and oppositions in almost every other state and territory in this country. That is the opportunity you have, to be in lock step with everyone else.

Anthony Albanese said the Labor Party is not the party of vegan terrorists, it is a party of workers. This bill is about protecting workers, in many cases from people who would do enormous damage to and sabotage the interests of business workers and the economy of Tasmania.

There are questions such as, will teachers and nurses get caught up in these laws? Labor has tried to spread false information about our previous bill. Dr Broad previously stated that nurses and factory workers could even be fined or jailed under the legislation. This is completely wrong, and Labor knows it is wrong. I hope they reflect on misleading the Tasmanian people in this way.

Section 5(2) of the act, which is not amended by the proposed bill, specifically excludes hospitals from the definition of business premises. It is in black and white and could not be simpler. Hospitals are explicitly excluded, under the previous bill and under this bill. We do not want our nurses to be caught up in this legislation. No-one wants that. We are not proposing that. It is a silly straw man argument.

We know what the problem is. It is radical activists invading workplaces in productive industries - people who are fundamentally anti-capitalism, anti-jobs and anti-productive industries in Tasmania. They want to shut down mines. They want to shut down forestry, fish farms, and a whole range of other productive activities. They are not going after nurses. They are not going after our hospitals, and we want to protect those people and the fantastic work that they do every day.

This act also provides certain exemptions for protected and lawful industrial action. I know that is passionately supported and felt amongst the union movement in particular and their members. We do not want to have people in those situations caught up by these bills. If

their industrial action is lawful and is protected, we see no reason why we would need to put these provisions to apply to them.

It is something the left of the Labor Party feels quite strongly about. Labor is clearly embarrassed at their own stance on the bill, and they did resort to misleading claims. Dr Broad was unfortunately referring to school-based bullies in a previous version of the Opposition, but we are offering them an opportunity to not just squabble amongst themselves and with the school-bus bullies, but to come up to the front of the bus, sit next to the bus driver, and we can get us to a better destination in Tasmania.

Let us talk about the proposed penalties. Under the new bill, penalties can only be a fine or imprisonment, but not both. A summary penalty is reduced maximum imprisonment penalties for trespass offence (2) - 60 penalty units or 12 months' imprisonment, but not both, for both and subsequent offences, the same as the current penalty under the Police Offences Act 1935 for trespass in a dwelling.

This penalty regime has been well understood by Tasmanians for nearly a century. The actions of some of these radical activists are in high-risk situations with lots of machinery, and an incident that caused the death of a person - whether it is someone's workmate or one of these radical activists - would be with that person for the rest of their life.

I know people who have been operating heavy machinery in such situations, and I never want them to come home from work ending the life of a person, despite the enormous frustration with the illegal actions taking place now on our mine sites and forestry leases. These people do not want to hurt people, even if they are the people who are stopping them going to work. They just want to be protected to go about their lawful business, and to earn an income, put food on their table, and maybe save up for a house deposit. So, 60 penalty units or 18 months' imprisonment, but not both, if the offending caused a serious risk, or 120 penalty units and 30 months, but not both, for a second such offence.

We know some of these people are recidivist offenders. The Bob Brown Foundation in particular uses the number of arrests that take place as one of their KPIs. If these people continue to do these actions time and again, there will be serious penalties.

In the past, as I mentioned before, Labor has said that WorkSafe should do more. If the laws worked, we would not be seeing the kind of radical activism that we are seeing on mining leases in Rosebery or forestry leases in Circular Head. We want to make sure these people have the book thrown at them, and that the penalties continue to escalate if they are recidivist, radical professional activists, which we see in some of our worst-offending organisations.

Let us talk about the need for action. There has been an escalation across Australia, not just Tasmania, in organised actions targeting business activity, including on farms. The National Farmers Federation President, Fiona Simpson, warned of the impact on farmers. She said:

We have seen groups of 100 people clad in black uniforms, storming onto farms while streaming live on social media platforms. These tactics are simple, to bully, to threaten and intimidate.

Mr Speaker, I know there are farmers in this place, including yourself, and a farm is not just a workplace. It is the place where your family lives and where your children live. To have 100 black-clad activists come onto your land and to threaten and intimidate your family and the people you provide for is a disgraceful attack and there should be harsher penalties.

Former Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association CEO, Peter Skillern, highlighted the concerns facing family farms. Farmers as a rule acknowledge and support the rights of individuals to have their own views and philosophies on life. However, we do not support anyone's right to impose that view on others. It is not the Australian way. That is the problem with these activists. Rather than seek a legal means, rather than seek a civil discussion, they force themselves upon these businesses and upon these workers to stop them going about their lawful activities.

The Australian Government has introduced new national legislation with bipartisan support, which I mentioned earlier. Anthony Albanese has spoken very strongly in support of the national version of these laws. New South Wales, Queensland - a Labor government - South Australia and Western Australia - another Labor government - have also moved to tighten their laws. It is a sensible approach because it is about protecting people who have a legal right to go about their business to provide for their families.

These bills will complement existing trespass laws. Though Tasmania already has the offence of trespass, this new offence specifically deals with intentional impediment of certain business activities. Accordingly these new offences carry higher penalties than current offences as well as additional powers of arrest. These offences look more like invading someone's home because we know about the extraordinary and damaging impacts these actions take.

What about claims that the penalties are too harsh? The maximum penalties available under this bill are reasonable and they are scaled appropriately. The maximum sentence of 12 months' imprisonment for a first offence of trespass with the intent of impeding lawful business activity compares to a maximum of three years' imprisonment for a similar first offence in New South Wales. These laws are less strict on their penalties than some other jurisdictions in Australia.

Stronger penalties here will only apply to repeat offenders. Some of the people involved in these protests are tricked by people like Bob Brown. They are well meaning in some cases and get brought out to these places to take part in what they think is a good and noble cause. They are massively misguided but they are not necessarily bad people. They are put in a situation by some of the leaders of this movement that are simply disgraceful.

If you want to talk about the kind of misleading that the Bob Brown Foundation does to some of its activists you only need to look at the situation that occurred at the gates of the Venture Minerals Riley Creek mine earlier in the year. Protesters came down from the mainland and other parts of Tasmania hoping to find majestic forests. They turned up at the gates and realised that there is nothing but button grass and scrub. Wanting to do a tree-sit, they had to bring in their own power pole to tie up at the front of the mining gates.

These people are not the sharpest tools in the shed. That is why we want to make sure that the penalties are scaled. If they keep doing it, if they are the kind of professional dedicated,

extremist activists, then we will throw the book at them. That scale will continue to escalate accordingly and in a way that is reasonable.

Will this bill capture people who accidentally impede business activity? This is a straw man argument. The bill has been carefully drafted to avoid capturing people who inadvertently impede business activity. I am not sure what that would possibly be but it applies specifically to people who act with intent to disrupt a business while trespassing or obstructing access.

People in the real world cannot possibly imagine in what situation you would accidentally find yourself trespassing and impeding someone's business in an unlawful way. We have been careful to make sure those people, whoever they are, not the sharpest tools in the shed, as I reiterate, are taken out of these kind of laws. It applies only to people who act with intent.

We have spoken before about union activity. This bill is in no way aimed at unions. Some of the strongest supporters of this legislation are union members themselves - people who work on the west coast in our productive industries, people who work in Circular Head. They just want to be able to go about their business. This bill contains provisions to make it clear that people whose acts are part of lawful and protected industrial action are not in contravention of the key offence provisions. This is something I hope Labor can support.

We have been very careful to make sure this legislation does not pick up union members and union organisers. We are not going after the AWU; we are going after the BBF. Tasmanian businesses have told us that they support this legislation. The Tasmanian Minerals, Manufacturing and Energy Council said:

Being able to earn an income and provide for yourself and your family from legal employment is a fundamental right of all Tasmanians. TMMEC implores members of parliament to protect workers who want nothing more than to go about their jobs, earn an income, and look after themselves and their family.

I know there are members opposite who are very strong supporters of TMMEC and are regularly at their events and speaking with their members. I am looking at one right now. The other one is, of course, the shadow treasurer. I know they support these people. These people are telling us that we need these laws. Come on board with us, come on board with TMMEC. These are credible organisations that have been employing thousands of Tasmanians for generations. They deserve our support, not our disdain.

The Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry says:

The TCCI supports absolutely the right of people to protest lawfully but not to conduct economic terrorism.

They are strong words from CEO, Michael Bailey.

We have seen vegan protesters invade abattoirs; forest protesters chained inside machinery - dangerous for both the protesters and those workers trying to extricate them - and environmental protesters chaining themselves to wooden furniture in Tasmanian furniture stores.

This is not fair, safe, or easily managed under current legislation. Tasmanian businesses and their workers should be able to operate lawfully without trespassers interfering with their work.

The Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the peak body for small business in this state, is telling us loud and clear whether you are operating a forestry business, whether you are operating a big mine on the west coast or whether you are just selling wooden furniture in Launceston, these people have a history of targeting these businesses. In many cases they are unhinged.

Ms Finlay, a new member in this place, a member for Bass, is a big supporter of small business. I know Ms Finlay is a big supporter of the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. I welcome that. We want to see the Labor Party backing them in the way that we know that they have backed them before and pass workplace protection laws that will protect members of the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry right around the state.

The Tasmanian Small Business Council, another fantastic organisation which is looking after its members, said:

It is untenable that a protester of any sort should feel that they have the right to interrupt a business of any size operating legally within Tasmania. There are a multitude of mechanisms for people to object to any given business practice or activity but to summarily choose to disrupt a business operation, put the jobs and potential lives and livelihoods of people working within that business at risk, is untenable and should be outlawed immediately.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we have the opportunity to protect small business in this place by passing these laws. These businesses, their peaks, are calling for us to take action. I know that there are members opposite who take their views very seriously. I know that they have a genuine desire to see these businesses succeed. The time to act is now. This is an opportunity for all of us to come together: perhaps not the Greens because we know that they are radical, tied to an ideology that is fundamentally anti-capitalism, anti-work and anti-productive industries in Tasmania. However, there are 22 of us in this House who can pass these laws and there is a majority of members in the other place who could do the same.

If we come together and act in the spirit in which these laws are intended to allow people to legally go about their business, provide for their families and save up that deposit for a house, then we know that Tasmania will be a better, more productive place. We have heard a lot about the views of the peak bodies in this speech; but it is not just those with big voices who are committed to these laws. It is the people who are forgotten by these extremists. They are the small, one-man band forestry contractor. They are the female boiler maker apprentice who is working in the mines. They are the coxswain who has just got their ticket and who has got their first job out on a fish farm.

Their voices, their families and their communities matter. We are going to keep fighting for them. We will not stop. We keep getting a mandate for this but we want reasonable parties, parties of the centre with a broad coalition of support to come on board with us as well - in the spirit of bipartisanship, but most of all in a 'team Tasmania' sense. You should be able to go to work, earn a legal income in this place and not have your work disrupted by radical activists who want none of that.

[3.02 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, that was a little awkward, wasn't it? Someone has written a motion and a speech for Mr Ellis and he has not understood what he is debating in the House. He has a motion today that he has not addressed. What he has talked about is the bill, the Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Amendment Bill 2021. He calls on us to support it, but the bill has not even been finished.

The work has not been done. The consultation process has only just finished. If Mr Ellis has read every submission to the consultation, that would have been an interesting piece of work for the parliament to have discussed. It would have been great if he could have told us what was said. However, he has not done that either, because he put a motion on the books weeks ago that is no longer relevant. It has been outdated. He has called upon us to support a bill that is not even before the House.

This is the problem when someone else writes for you, Mr Ellis. It means you muck it up. You can try not to make eye contact with me, because I tell you, that was embarrassing.

Let us go quickly through the motion before the House; not the speech that Mr Ellis gave about a bill that we are not debating because it is not finished. The motion says:

That the House recognises the majority Liberal Government remains committed to protecting Tasmanian workers.

That is rubbish, isn't it? In my contribution on this debate we will deal with the lack of support they have provided for Tasmanian workers.

Notes that the Liberals have always stood firm in fighting for the rights of Tasmanians to work and earn a living for their families.

Once again, what rubbish. That point has some merit if he had not undermined it entirely with his argument.

That Tasmanians have had enough of radical extremists invading workplaces and threatening and endangering staff.

If that was true, if this Government was concerned about it, do you know what they would have done by now? They would have fixed it. This Government does not want to fix that. It wants to look as though it is fixing that. Mechanisms have been provided to this Government to resolve this issue that they have chosen not to take.

Further notes that the Workplace Protection Amendment Bill will be released for public consultation over coming weeks.

I am wondering where Mr Ellis' amendment was. Does Mr Ellis not know the consultation commenced in early September and ended on 21 September? We cannot vote for something that is untrue and factually incorrect.

Further acknowledges that the Workplace Amendment Bill will reflect the Government's commitment to protect Tasmanians' right to work and the right to free speech.

I am glad Mr Ellis knows that, because we have only seen a draft bill from which consultation has not yet been published; so how does Mr Ellis know that? Again, we cannot vote for that.

I love this last one:

Further notes that this bill is Labor's chance to show their support for Tasmanian workers.

I will not be lectured about how you support workers by someone who has been in this parliament five minutes and done nothing to support workers. I have made a career out of supporting workers, and I will not be lectured about how to do that by the kid that turned up five minutes ago -

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Ms O'Byrne, please refer to members by their correct title.

Ms O'BYRNE - I quote you now. I will not be told by a member who has been here for five minutes on how to stand up for workers because I will put my record of standing up for workers against this man's record any day.

There is no way we can vote for the motion because the motion makes no sense. It refers to a process that is apparently about to take place, but in fact has actually taken place. It sets the Liberal Party up as some kind of defender of the worker. If they were, they would have fixed this before. All it is is a political stunt, otherwise you would not be asking us to think about a consultation process that is going to come in recent weeks which finished three weeks ago - and your Government has not published anything on it.

I wonder why the Government has not published anything on it? They must know that bill is as fundamentally flawed as every other time they have tried to do this. Every time they are given a proper strategy to protect workers, they are found wanting.

Before I deal with the substantive motion, which is something that the member did not do, let us talk about what a waste of time it has been. It does not make sense. You were not even organised enough to amend your motion or put a new one on the books that actually made sense. That is how hopeless you were at this approach. This Government does not know how to manage its legislative agenda, cannot manage its private members' time and you cannot make sure that your motion makes sense in current time lines. What a joke.

It has been brought on by someone who has no history in this space. When he was reading the speech that somebody else must have written for him, he talked about how we knocked it off only earlier this year. Let's talk a little later about the time frame, shall we?

This 'minute member' sets himself up as an attack dog to attack Labor. That is all this bill and this motion is about. He sets himself up to do that; he individually named the members he thought he should call out, and set himself up as an attack dog. It is like being savaged by a halibut. The contribution was petty, it was whiny and, interestingly, it was completely at odds with what the minister's advisers told us in a briefing.

This member has come into this House and produced a motion that is at odds with the advice that we were provided in a briefing. If there was a genuine attempt to get support, you

have acted to undermine that. We were told in the briefing - and I do not know if you have had one because somebody wrote that for you - that the draft bill was not political; that this was an attempt to genuinely work on a solution; that we genuinely want to get protection for workers in place and that this was in no way political. If that was the case, we would not be debating this motion right now, would we?

Either this member is at odds with his minister, or the minister sent his members and his staff in to brief us without being honest with them, and did not tell them it was political, letting them believe that it was genuine, or they lied. I cannot believe for a minute that the public servants who came in to brief us lied; I will not believe that. That leaves us with the other two options - that the minister has been dishonest with them, or that this member does not know what he is doing, and this is all about having a local political fight while he is working to undermine an attempt to get a resolution on the problem.

Your motivation is now, as it has ever been, pure, petty politics. Workers deserve better than that. Workers' industrial bodies deserve better than that. Those of us who have protested in the past with workers, deserve better than that. Tasmanians deserve better than that.

This motion is clearly a pathetic little game because at the heart of this Government, at the cold heart of this minister and his protege, Mr Ellis, is a desire for conflict. If they genuinely wanted to protect workers they could ensure that dangerous actions were prevented if they wished to. They have had mechanisms put to them time and time again when this pathway has failed that they have chosen to ignore. If they wanted to fix this problem, they could at any time. At any time during the many years when this dog's breakfast of a piece of legislation has come to the House it could have been fixed. Maybe the new legislation will do it? The draft certainly does not but maybe at the end of consultation they will produce a good piece of work. The draft legislation does not resolve it. Members know that because they do not want it to be fixed.

You should hang your heads in shame. Do not lecture the Labor Party on how to take care of workers because we will not take it. How hypocritical; how shallow; how pathetic.

Let us turn to the motion in detail. Let us seek any thread of a desire for genuine reform. I read the bill, which Mr Ellis clearly did not do. I read the consultation paper. I had a briefing from the department. Mr Ellis clearly did not.

The first point recognises that the Government is committed to protecting Tasmanian workers and businesses, ensuring they can lawfully go to work without threats and disruptions from extremist protesters. That is not true. If that was the case, why sit on the last version of the bill for 16 months? Mr Ellis does not seem to realise that this bill was first debated in the House on 27 November 2019. It was gagged by the minister at 2 a.m. when he could not answer the basic questions about whether he thought the legislation would stand up to a High Court challenge and whether the Solicitor-General had provided him advice that the legislation was sound.

We had to bring in that order because it was so urgent to get dealt with quickly. The Government was so concerned about workers that it did not bring it in for debate in the Legislative Council until 25 March 2021.

If it was so important, if you actually cared about it, you would not have rammed it through here in 2019 without debate and then let it sit there, unless you did not care about workers for that period because there was an election coming. It could not have been because it was politically motivated.

If you want to argue that you remain committed to protecting Tasmanian workers, how about resourcing WorkSafe Tasmania so it can investigate breaches and reports properly, and enforce workplace safety? You do not want to keep workers safe because you like the fight. You would rather have the fight than the solution. You could reinforce and properly support WorkSafe Tasmania so it could do that work. It has had a lot on its plate this past couple of years with COVID-19 and under-resourcing.

How about legislating industrial manslaughter? There has been no demonstrated committed by this Government to do anything to protect workers. Nearly every other jurisdiction in the country has legislated industrial manslaughter. Not you. You say you care about workers coming home safe at the end of the day? Well, legislate industrial manslaughter. Prove it. Do not come in here and pretend to care about workers and not do the things that would fundamentally make a difference, that have been proven to make a difference to safety in other jurisdictions.

What about protecting us from wage theft? There is a thought. You could make sure they were not having their wages stolen. You will not do that because you do not actually care about workers. You care about the political fight.

We know that workers are safer if they have secure jobs and they can identify risk. We know that workers are safer if they know that their job is a safe one. They can raise those concerns about a safety risk or about a wage theft risk, or any of those things. We know they would be safer if they were in secure jobs. You will not act there, because once again you do not care about workers, you care about the fight. Isn't that right, Mr Ellis?

The second point on this motion notes that the Liberals have always stood firm in fighting for the rights of Tasmanians to work and earn a living for their families. That is not true because we have gone through that already: industrial manslaughter, wage theft, resourcing WorkSafe Tasmania to do its job.

Let us talk about the wage cap workers had to fight against for months. That is not something that would indicate a genuine concern for worker safety and wellbeing. Do not forget when the Liberals first came into Government it tried to sneak through a legislative change so it could cut workers' wages, public sector wages, through regulation. Remember that one? No, I do not think any of you were here. You do not know about your own history, do you?

If you are that concerned about the right of workers to work and earn a living in Tasmania, let us have a look at this. We currently have the highest unemployment rate in the nation of 5.5 per cent; the under-employment rate is 8.4 per cent; and the youth unemployment rate is 10.3 per cent. More than 28 000 Tasmanians are currently receiving JobSeeker, a higher proportion of the population than any other state. About 8 per cent of all the jobs in the tourism and hospitality sector have been lost since July, about 1900 jobs. The west coast and the north-west, Mr Ellis, you might be interested because apparently you claim to care about workers there, your own electorate has the highest unemployment rate in Tasmania. The unemployment

rate for women on the west coast and the north-west is 9.6 per cent. Do not come in here and tell us that the Liberals have always stood firm in fighting for the rights of Tasmanians to work and earn a living for their families. What rot.

The third point tries to set up an argument as if somebody, Labor in particular because this motion is all about Labor, thinks that radical extremists invading workplaces and threatening and endangering staff is good. Of course we do not think that. That is why we have been trying to get you to bring in aggravated trespass. It is why every time you have had this debate, positive solutions have been supported. Positive solutions have been put forward, which you have ignored on every occasion because you do not want to fix it. Everyone has the right to go to work and come home safely. People on this side of the House have been fighting for that for years: not just for a political stunt but because we believe in it.

Maybe Mr Ellis has seen this fabulous new bill, but the draft bill does not fix it. Unless you know what the amendments are what are you doing bringing this motion up? What is the point?

Point 4 further notes that the workplace protection amendment bill will be released for public consultation over the coming weeks. You did not amend that. I genuinely thought you were going to amend that because it is a fundamental flaw of your motion. The workplace protection amendment bill went out for public consultation on 2 September and closed on 21 September. Submissions have been received but not published yet. You have made a farce of the motion because you could not get your act together to either put another motion in the House that made sense or amend it. You woke up in the morning and thought, 'I seem to have made a mistake on point 4, I will put an amendment in that notes that the consultation took place'. Somebody else wrote the motion and somebody else wrote the speech and they are not at work today. Is that what is going on?

Point 5 acknowledges that the workplace amendment bill will reflect the Government's commitment to protect both Tasmanians' right to work and the right to free speech. There is nothing about this bill in any of its iterations that have done that. It is a blatant political move. This is about face-saving after the embarrassing High Court defeat. It was a matter that was dismissed by this Government because it did not want it to work. The Government wanted the fight.

I would like you to care enough about the people who go to work every day to do things that make their life safer. You could do that by getting more money to WorkSafe Tasmania. You could do it by industrial manslaughter legislation. You could do it by ensuring that workers have secure employment - continued secure employment. They are things you could do.

There were also suggestions given to you on how you would achieve this particular thing. I do not want workers to be put at risk in any environment by people going in and creating havoc but every time you bring a so-called solution to this House, you do so in such a clumsy, clunky and legislatively impossible way that it gets knocked off, because you want it to get knocked off. That is the thing I probably find the most distressing.

There is a way to fix this. Other jurisdictions have worked to fix this. Other jurisdictions have looked at their trespass laws. Other jurisdictions have looked at their police offences provisions. There are other ways to fix this if you genuinely wanted to do it, but you do not.

You want to keep them being at risk because that allows you to have a fight, a fight that you want to have. The workers do not want to have it. I do not care what the Greens want to have or the Greens process - that is a matter for them. We do not want to have it.

We want you to do the right thing, but every time we have suggested a genuine solution to resolve it, you do not want to do it. The only thing you want to do is to keep playing this little game. It is the only thing you want to do.

The final point further notes that this bill is Labor's chance to show their support for Tasmanian workers. I have made a working career out of supporting Tasmanian workers. I do not know if the member who raises this has; I very much doubt it. We support workers every single day. We had election policies leading up to the elections that were strong policies for supporting workers. Workers are our party. That is the kind of party that we are, and we do listen to them.

I tell you what, we have been listening to their representatives on this issue, because they want this matter fixed as well - but they also know that if the bill that you are going to bring forward is this draft bill, there are significant problems with it, because you do not resolve the problem that you claim you wish to resolve. You create the fight because that is what you would rather do. Just do the work properly. Amend the existing legislation to resolve this, because what we want is a clear and unambiguous response.

We do not want you to keep coming into this House with legislation designed to create fights, because that is all you want to do, and that is the most disgusting thing. It is more about your ego, your game-playing, your politics, than the people who turn up to work every day.

This motion is farcical. This motion does not make sense. It was written back in August. Nobody bothered to check to see if it was still current or legitimate. It makes claims about the Liberal Party that simply cannot be upheld in any argument about support for workers. You do not do the things that would support workers any day of the week, and here you are expecting us to vote for this motion - despite the fact that the speech you gave was about a bill that does not even exist before the House. Quite frankly, I am tired of playing your little games.

When you, or any member on the other side, want to come into this House with a solution that actually makes workers safer, I will support it. You bring in industrial manslaughter, I will support it. If you talk about more funding for WorkSafe Tasmania, I will support it. If you talk about secure work, I will support it.

None of those things are in these bills, and they never have been, because this is about picking a fight rather than doing the job.

[3.24 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I will have a short say on this motion. I would like to talk about the kids who work in retail outlets: our kids who want to be safe at work in McDonald's and Hungry Jack's and Kentucky Fried Chicken and all those outlets. They want to be safe from people invading a workplace.

Yes, this is a bit of a mumsy contribution, but my kids have gone through those jobs and lots of the kids right across our communities have worked in those roles. What we have seen happening - particularly internationally, not so much in Australia yet - is invasions of those workplaces. We have seen - I want to say well-meaning - people coming in to protest about

things they are obviously passionate about, but protesting in a way that is inside the boundaries of people's workplaces.

We want everyone to have the right to protest. It is very important. I have been to many protests myself. I protested on the lawns a number of weeks ago in relation to what was happening in Afghanistan. It was a very sad day - I still feel quite emotional about it - for women and children in particular, but I did not see any members of the Labor Party there. I was quite surprised. Nonetheless, we want that right to protest -

Ms O'Byrne - We had one in Launceston.

Ms OGILVIE - No-one was there. Where were you? I do not know.

Ms O'Byrne - We live in the north. Went to the one in the north.

Ms OGILVIE - You have members here. Where were they? It was very sad, but I think everybody else was there. I certainly was, having had a long engagement with the issue with refugees. This issue about protesting, freedom to protest, freedom of speech, it is all very important stuff. We all agree with that.

What we do not agree with is people coming into the workplaces of our kids, our brothers, our sisters, our families, our neighbours and causing disruption - and in fact doing things that are unsafe. It is that safety issue that I particularly worry about when I am talking to my kids about the right to protest. That day on the Parliament Lawns for the Hazara and Afghanistan was the first time my son had come with me to a protest. I was super proud of him; beautifully well-behaved as well. It was a worthwhile cause.

There is a difference between expressing your view about a matter of importance, having and exercising your right to free speech, and doing that in a sensible way that does not cause impact on those who are trying to go about their daily business. This is a space I look at it from. In fairness, it is a bit easier for me in Clark to say that, because the sorts of issues we have are not as deep perhaps as those in the north around the forestry industry.

We have to address this because it is about safety, and the right to work. It is about being safe at work - that you have to go to work and come home safe as well. I know you are in a pickle on it. I understand that and I feel your trauma, but it is going to have to be addressed. We are going to have to be adults about this and make sure particularly that our young people who are working in those environments are safe, protected and do not have people coming into their work environments and causing problems.

I will leave it at that.

[3.27 p.m.]

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Education) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I listened to Ms O'Byrne's impassioned contribution and I would like to point out the deep hypocrisy, given the fact that members, or ex-members, of Labor - indeed, Tim Jacobson - said the Labor Party has been failing workers, and failing them over and over again.

This side of the Chamber is defending the rights of workers to go to work safely and to conduct their work safely within their workplaces, and to actually go to their workplaces.

The hypocrisy and irony, considering the commentary we have seen from representatives of unions that are now distancing themselves from the party, who are walking away because of the chaos, and making public statements about the fact that the parliamentary Labor Party no longer stands for workers of Tasmania, speaks volumes.

The fact is, this side of the Chamber continues to have a policy - which we have taken to several elections now - to defend the rights of Tasmanians in productive industries around the state to go to work, and to be safe at work.

Once again, this is the Labor Party and the Greens getting together to stop productive industries. We have seen it time and again. Indeed, in recent question times when we are looking at the forestry industry or mining industry or aquaculture, this is the side of the Chamber that is defending these industries so they can continue to employ thousands of Tasmanians in regional areas. We are the side that is ensuring that, as we go into a future that is embracing Tasmania's environmental credentials, we are doing it in a way where we are supporting these productive industries, and not shutting them down - as the Greens outlined this morning that they want to do.

It is very clear from the contributions we have had from parliamentarians, not only this afternoon but in recent weeks, days and months, the fact that not only has the Labor Party failed Tasmanian workers, they are once again in lock-step with the Greens.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Mental Health and Wellbeing of Young People

[3.30 p.m.]

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

That the House -

- (1) Recognises 9 to 16 October 2021 is National Mental Health Week.
- (2) Acknowledges that -
 - (a) half of all lifelong mental health problems begin before the age of 14;
 - (b) half of Australian kids with mental illness are not getting timely professional help;
 - (c) one in 10 young people aged 12 to 17 years old will self-harm, one in 13 will seriously consider a suicide attempt and one in 40 will attempt suicide;

- (d) suicide continues to be a leading cause of death for young Australians; and
 - (e) three out of five school age children in Tasmania identify mental health as a growing problem.
- (3) Agrees that early intervention is crucial in helping prevent mental illness later on in life.
- (4) Notes that the report of the Commissioner for Children and Young People's Wellbeing Consultations, 'We call it happy', concluded that as part of a more responsive education system participants wanted 'Improved and more available school-based support services (mental health, social work, counsellors)'.
- (5) Further notes that:
- (a) the average wait to see a school psychologist in Tasmania is four months for assessment and three weeks for intervention, with many students waiting significantly longer;
 - (b) there are just 69 school psychologists employed across the entire state, meaning there is one school psychologist for every 890 students enrolled; and
 - (c) the staff to student ratio for social workers is one for every 1025 students.
- (6) Further agrees that Tasmanian children and young people deserve better.
- (7) Calls on the Liberal Government to recruit mental health workers to all Tasmanian state primary and high schools by July 2023.

I have brought this notice of motion to the House today because it is a very important motion. Unlike the prior contributions from the Liberal Party, this is not about politics; this is about young Tasmanians and the additional support that they need in our community and across our school communities. I hope that those on the other side support this very important motion today, here in the House.

This notice of motion and debate today is important, and an opportunity for this parliament to acknowledge the importance of continually improving the mental health and wellbeing of Tasmanians, the mental health services provided to Tasmanians, and the resilience we instil across our communities.

This focus should not only be during Mental Health Week - it should be front and mind every day and in any decision we make in this place that impacts on our community.

It is widely accepted that there is a mental health crisis across Tasmania, and I firmly believe we need to do more for Tasmanians when it comes to mental health and wellbeing. It

is equally as important as their physical health and wellbeing; in fact, the two are very closely linked.

We need more early intervention, more services, particularly in rural and regional areas and better access to mental health beds across our state. Our public emergency departments and psychiatric units are stretched beyond capacity by heightened demand, and sadly our suicide rate is growing. This should ring alarm bells for all of us in this House and the minister of the day. What is this government and minister doing to address the mental health crisis we are seeing across the state? It is interesting to note that the minister is not even in the Chamber for this notice of motion.

The Labor Party believes it is the role of government to provide evidence-based, best practice mental health services which must focus on prevention, early intervention services and initiatives embedded in our communities, not just focus on acute treatment options. The lived experience of those within our communities is so important, and should be the voices alongside clinicians that inform policy and service development.

There is now a greater focus worldwide on the importance of mental health and wellbeing and we should be integrating this in every policy of government in Tasmania. This is critical to our economic recovery, productivity and the health of Tasmanians. Our people have suffered right across the globe. Many of the measures put in place to protect our physical health have significantly impacted on our mental health and wellbeing, those being long periods of isolation and being separated from our loved ones and social and professional networks for extended periods of time.

We are in the midst of a global pandemic during which governments, public health professionals and our community have come together to do everything we can to keep our fellow citizens safe and to inhibit the spread of COVID-19. I would like to see a point in time in Tasmania where there is a similar, dedicated focus on the mental health and wellbeing of Tasmanians by this Government. The mental health crisis and suicide across our community is a silent pandemic that we need to raise awareness of and elevate in our community, and our Government needs to elevate it within its priorities. Too many Tasmanians' lives have been lost to poor mental health across our communities and this devastates and breaks families, schools, workplaces and our close-knit communities.

We all know in this place that it is a fine line between good and bad mental health. I am sure there is not one of us here who has not experienced a dreadful time in their life, and have come to understand how quickly that imbalance can be created and the need for additional support. Life is not easy, and we need to acknowledge that mental health and wellbeing is a core responsibility for us in this place, as we work to make our communities better, but also for us as part of our communities. We should be doing everything we can to provide that early intervention and support in our communities.

This week is Mental Health Week in Tasmania and this year's theme for Mental Health Week is 'awareness, belonging and connection'. Awareness is about understanding the things we need to maintain and boost our mental wellbeing, knowing when we need to reach out for help and where to get it. Belonging is about looking out for each other, ensuring we feel safe and supported and understanding that however we feel, we are not alone and there are others going through the same thing.

Connection is about our relationships with our friends, families and those we care about, as well as the groups, clubs and networks around us that we rely on to help keep us happy and healthy wherever we live, work or play. I should have worn orange today in the chamber because that is the official colour of Mental Health Week. I did not but I would encourage my colleagues to wear orange this week to proudly promote the importance of Mental Health Week and to raise the importance of good access to mental health services within our community, and looking after one another in our local communities.

The point I make today, is that we should not only be talking about mental health and wellbeing in Tasmania during Mental Health Week. We need to make it a priority every day in our communities, in this parliament, and across our Government. Closely related to this is Carers' Week, which is also being celebrated this week. I want to extend my thanks to all our wonderful carers around Tasmania who give so selflessly to others and provide such an important service to our community. It is pleasing to note today that the Government is working towards the development of carer recognition legislation, which we wholeheartedly support. However, we want to see that the consultation that occurs as part of this is genuine and consultative right across our communities.

This motion is an opportunity for us to work together as a parliament to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our school students, their families and our future generations in Tasmania. Yesterday, the Government said we were undermining the health system and Tasmanians' confidence in the health system by asking some simple questions in this place. That is untrue. We are here to hold this Government to account and that is exactly what we intend to do, and I make no apologies for that. I will be making mental health and wellbeing a key priority for my shadow portfolio and I am calling on the responsible minister to do the same.

I spoke about the importance of us in this place learning from the lived experience of others and those providing services to our communities on the ground across our communities. This motion focuses on children and adolescent mental health.

I will begin with a recent piece from the ABC about my local community in Braddon where our young people and their families cannot get access to the care they need right now. We are losing amazing young members of our community to suicide. This is incredibly sad and preventable if we could just provide better services.

Last night I watched the ABC news piece 'Youth Mental Health in the north west', which profiled Tarkyn Whitehouse and his family's story. I became very emotional because it is a tragic story. We have a responsibility in this place to do all we can to ensure that the right policies, initiatives, support services and community and acute inpatient facilities are provided by the government of the day. If we are to make a difference to the lives of our fellow Tasmanians, which should be the sole purpose in this place, then what are we doing in situations like this? If you have not watched this story on ABC iview, I encourage you to do so. I have no doubt that it will impress upon you the importance of this notice of motion today.

I am now going to read into *Hansard* this article which was posted on Sunday 8 August 2021. It is titled 'With no designated youth mental health ward in this region, it was up to Tarkyn's family to keep him safe':

Anna Whitehouse is living every parent's worst nightmare. Her teenage son took his own life nine months ago.

'I am struggling to accept he's gone because I really don't want to believe it', Ms Whitehouse said. 'Forever is a long time.'

Tarkyn Whitehouse, 17, was a promising basketballer and a much-loved coach of the under-10s in Somerset in north-west Tasmania.

But despite his talent and strength on the basketball court, off-court Tarkyn could get nervous and self-conscious.

'He got labelled pretty quickly as being really confident, and as a parent that was hard to watch because you knew that it was actually the opposite. He was really self-aware,' his father, Anthony Whitehouse, said.

Tarkyn was in primary school when the family first sought professional help when he was bullied.

At 15, he made his first suicide attempt.

But with no designated acute youth mental health ward in north west Tasmania, it was up to the family to 'ensure his safety'.

'We had a plan to follow ... he showered with the bathroom door open,' Ms Whitehouse said.

'I even slept in his room at night. But ultimately we were left wondering if it was enough.'

Suicide is the leading cause of death amongst people aged 15 to 44 in Tasmania according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Boys aged 15 to 19 years old are three times more likely to die by suicide than girls nationally.

Tasmania has also seen a 38 per cent increase in suicides - from 78 to 108 - between 2018 and 2019.

Data for youth suicides in the north west is difficult to access but Robert Waterman from Rural Health Tasmania believes it's the biggest issue facing the region.

'Tasmania's got the highest rates of completed suicide per population of any state outside of the Northern Territory, and it's double what Victoria has,' he said. 'It's got to stop and we've got to do more. We've got to have a look at our systems and do something about it.'

Mr Whitehouse said the services needed to be more 'proactive' rather than 'reactive'.

'The problem is so big. The way [Tasmania's] system is set, we can't deal with it at the moment. So there needs to be a serious rethink,' he said.

'It's hard enough for kids to front up to a doctor's appointment and divulge their troubles with mental health,' Ms Whitehouse said.

'Then the wait lists are so, so long that their moment of bravery dwindles before they see someone - and in some cases it's too late.'

This article goes on to talk about the specialists who are struggling with demand.

Devonport-based psychologist, Kristine Bull, said specialists simply could not keep up with the demand.

'I closed my books about November last year, and it's now July and I haven't been able to open my books again,' Dr Bull said.

'I don't even know who to refer new referrals to because all of the psychologists are just so overwhelmed.'

Dr Bull said last year that she and a group of other psychologists were so concerned that they wrote to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Jeremy Rockliff, about the lack of youth mental health services in the region.

The article goes on to talk about the review that is being undertaken by the Government around Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). That came to the attention of the Government after there was an extensive review of those services. I will talk more about that in a moment.

The other parts that I wanted to touch on from this article were about alternative education models which are making a difference. The article says:

In Devonport, a new education model is helping some teenagers overcome mental health challenges.

Up until this year 16-year old Nikita Paul struggled to attend school or even get out of bed.

That all changed in February, when she enrolled in Devonport's Indie School - an independent school for 70 high school students, many of whom are battling with mental health issues.

'It doesn't feel like a school. It's a calm, chill environment and we can wear what we want and just be ourselves and don't have to worry,' she said,

'Whereas in a normal school you are anxious about what people think.'

Principal Nic Page said all staff have had specific training in trauma-informed practice.

'I think the way our school is set up and alternative models such as ours - having a quieter, smaller, intimate environment where there are more opportunities to form positive relationships - makes a significant difference,' he said.

He said there has been a significant improvement to students' attendance.

'We're not waving a magic wand over students and all of a sudden their mental health issue is solved,' he said,

'But the fact that they are engaging with us and having some routine in their day, the majority of students are definitely feeling better about themselves.'

The school, which also operates in the Hobart suburb of Glenorchy, is expanding to Burnie and Launceston next year.

The article goes on to talk about a great skate school that has been set up in East Devonport which is all about early intervention and support for young people. It is important to put on the record that it is having great successes with young people in the East Devonport community and is a good example of grassroots projects targeted at early intervention. It could perhaps be rolled out in other communities.

We need to do more to support Tasmanian families and their children and our young people living with poor mental health. What is the Government doing right now, not in three years' time, to improve services?

I recently also met with Lily and Heidi, two young women who wanted to share their story and passion for better access to adolescent mental health services across Tasmania. They wanted to share with me what services they are aware of that are currently available. These are:

Clare House;

Headspace across the state;

Private and public psychologists and psychiatrists, for which there are significant waiting times for young people;

School counsellors, who I know through meetings that I have had with them are extremely burdened with their workload;

Call and chat lines such as Kids Helpline and Beyond Blue; and

The two rooms for adolescent mental health at the Royal Hobart Hospital. They are the only two beds in the state dedicated to adolescent mental health. That is concerning.

I thank all our hardworking professionals and clinicians who work across our mental health service. They are doing a great job under incredible pressure. We should be doing more

to support them in their endeavours while looking to a more dedicated focus on recruitment and retaining our staff in our mental health services.

A number of the time frames outlined in the recent CAMHS review are a long way away. The dedicated adolescent inpatient unit has been pushed out to 2026. These are a long way away for those young people and their families. I am keen to hear from the Government in its contribution today about more services being provided locally to support our young people and their families and their mental health and wellbeing.

This brings me to the Notice of Motion, which clearly outlines the evidence base for Labor's Mental Health Workers in School policy. We have held and proudly promoted this policy for a number of years. It was a critical part of our COVID-19 recovery package and part of our election commitments at the last state election. We acknowledge that we were not to be the government of the day. That is the decision of the Tasmanian people but we do not think that we should stop advocating for better services for our school children and for all Tasmanians. We will continue to do that. In relation to this motion we think that this policy is so important that we want to work with the Government and the parliament to make sure that it is implemented. That is the background to this motion today.

The data that is presented in the motion has come from questions we asked through the estimates process, and is about young Tasmanians who cannot get the help they need right now. It also comes from feedback directly from the voices of our young people. I will read a few quotes from the recent report that was done, which I alluded to in the first part of my contribution. One of those was:

Some kids use school as a place to get away from their problems so maybe there should be a support system there, not necessarily Headspace, just someone that you can talk to about anything. Some kids at my school, they use school to get away from whatever is going on at home.

That was a young person between the ages of 9 to 18 years.

Another one was from the parent of a zero to 4 year-old:

The wait list for a school counsellor extends into next year. There is no real school support.

It is important to hear the voices from those on the ground. Through the work done by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, it became clear that people wanted more in-class support for students experiencing learning challenges, and improved and more available school-based support services including mental health, social work and counsellors. That information further substantiates the importance of this motion.

Issues about access to health services came up in the consultation done by the commissioner. I note comments made by those involved in the consultation:

Psychologists are very expensive, even with a mental health plan. There is a psychologist that visits the doctor's clinic every third Tuesday of every month and she is booked out till March which is five months away.

As part of the health consultation, they said more counsellors, psychologists and acute mental health support for children and young people is required across Tasmania. It is important to share that feedback from the Commissioner for Children and Young People with the House this afternoon.

That brings me to our policy on mental health workers in schools, to provide some context for the House. Our mental health workers in schools will assist in destigmatising mental health, foster more supportive peer networks, and build skills among school staff to manage student mental health. They will provide direct counselling support and early intervention services, as well as coordinating appropriate support for students with more severe needs.

A key aim of the initiative is to reduce Tasmania's youth suicide rate, which is amongst the highest in the country. By identifying and treating mental health, you are helping children, and we can reduce the number of acute mental health issues presenting at our hospitals. Mental health and wellbeing is vital for learning and life. Children who are mentally healthy learn better, benefit from life experiences, and have stronger relationships with family members, school staff, and peers.

Good mental health in childhood also provides a solid foundation for managing the transition to adolescence and adulthood, engaging successfully in education, and, ultimately, a happier life. We can all agree that is what we want for everybody, young or old, right across Tasmania.

In concluding my contribution today, Mr Deputy Speaker, I reinforce the importance of this motion; the opportunity to work together for better mental health services for our young people across Tasmania, the importance of raising awareness of some of the very poor statistics which exist across Tasmania when it comes to access to mental health services. Those statistics are people. They are our young people and right now they are struggling to get the help they need.

Anything we can do in this place to make a difference to them can only be a very good thing. I call on the Government to support our Notice of Motion.

[3.54 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank Ms Dow for bringing on this motion today. It is of deep importance to many of us. There was much to like about her motion because I and, I believe, everyone else, would read it and feel it was more or less depoliticised and was about actually doing the right thing by parents and children.

I will talk a bit more about my reflections on that in a moment. First, I acknowledge that it is Mental Health Week. It is an interesting week, because it is a time when we can all focus on making sure we are doing all we can in the mental health area. It is also a time when some people may be reflecting on things that have happened in their lives and feeling they need more support. I have these phone calls from time to time at my office, and I am sure that others do as well. I am particularly thinking about the tragedy at Port Arthur and those issues, which are real and live for people this week; a layered effect because of things that are happening in the community as well. Like everyone in this Chamber, I care deeply about the happiness and mental health of our constituents, everybody in this House, and family and friends.

I thank Ms Dow. Your offer to genuinely want to work together and help is productive and helpful. There are moments where we can do more of that in this place - as we did during the pandemic. Having said that, I have a small amendment which I will circulate. We gave this a lot of thought. I gave a lot of thought to how much we needed to tinker with what was substantially a good motion. We are proposing a small amendment to paragraph (6) and to leave out paragraph (7). Let me be clear: leaving out paragraph (7) recognises that yes, it is Labor's policy and that is why we have decided to depoliticise the motion and propose to leave that paragraph out. I hope to have the support of the House for this amendment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, should I hand this out now?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - You need to read the amendment out in full to formally move it.

Ms OGILVIE - The entire motion as amended?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - No, just the amendment.

Ms OGILVIE - I move the following amendments -

Amend paragraph (6) by deleting the word 'better' and replacing it with the words 'more access to mental health support and services' which we feel broadens the request.

Leave out paragraph (7) in its entirety.

In this place, we know that education is the key that unlocks possibilities and opportunities for everybody in our great state. I thank our teachers, our school leaders, professional support staff and all of those who work in our schools and child and family learning centres. It is their dedication, professionalism and expertise that positively shapes the lives of Tasmanians and our young learners, and shapes those lives for generations.

Children and young people who feel safe, connected and secure are more likely to engage in their learning; that is a straightforward concept. A strong sense of wellbeing enables our learners to explore, to experiment, and engage actively in their learning environment and to have confidence and take advantage of the opportunities. We care about peoples' wellbeing and we care about our learners' wellbeing. Wellbeing means that children and students feel loved. The love part of this is something we should dwell on more on in this place.

When people feel loved, they get that sense of wellbeing. We want them to be happy and to have access to material basics. When they have those, they will be learning and participating and have a positive sense of culture and identity. This is genuine good. It is like a magnet attracting good things. I think about - and Ms Dow mentioned this - about times in my own life where things have been pretty hard and later on I will talk a little about Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support (SANDS) in perinatal mental health. I see the Australian government has recently made a large commitment. I do not want to upset anyone, so I will talk about that later on, but how important it is to understand that good mental health is a lifelong journey. It is this holistic approach which acknowledges the many factors which contribute to the wellbeing and mental health of our children and students and looking at that whole family unit.

There is no one single solution to dealing with mental health issues. We need to adopt a holistic, multifaceted approach. Issues will be different for different people; the context will be different for each child and each family. We need to make sure that we are addressing the students' needs, because each one of those needs will be different and bespoke to that person. Our approach supports the wellbeing needs of all students, and we are also seeking to ensure that additional targeted support is there for those who need it to engage in learning.

We recognise the importance of professional learning to ensure staff are well placed to support the mental health of students. We need people to feel empowered and confident, to be able to do the task that needs to be done.

This Government has a strong record in mental health services and providing what we need to keep our learners safe, happy and engaged, and to be addressing mental health issues. I am proud of how we have prioritised mental health and wellbeing in our schools since we came to government. In this Budget, we are committing a record \$8 billion for education, skills and training. We are ensuring the resources are there, so our children and young people do have the best possible opportunities. In fact, we have committed an unprecedented \$81 million to support mental health and wellbeing in our schools since 2014.

It is easy when you talk about these big numbers to think well, what is the number, what does it relate to? Every dollar is an investment in providing the services our Tasmanians need. It is the substrata that allows us to give people what they need, and to help address mental health issues.

Under our Tasmanian Liberal Government, we have seen a record number of professional support staff, including speech pathologists, social workers, school psychologists and school nurses, and we have increased our employment in these areas by 88 FTEs since 2014. That is 88 more people on this task. We have provided \$1 million over four years to help deliver the SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY program in Tasmanian Government schools.

There would not be a kid in Tasmania who is not aware of this program. Social media gets it out there as well. It is helpful, and I particularly think our boys are connecting with it; that is a very good thing as well. The Stay ChatTY schools program aims to raise mental health awareness, and build support and student confidence to enable them to seek help for themselves and for their peers, and to connect with each other on issues that might be hard to talk about, particularly for teenagers. The program is delivered to students in years 9 to 12 in approved Tasmanian Government schools, and was recently extended as an election commitment through to 2026. That is a genuinely good thing.

Another \$14 million has been provided to build capacity in schools to support children and young people impacted by trauma. It is trauma that I have a particular interest in. We are having an unusual week in Tasmania because of the conversation around Port Arthur, but there are many other people who suffer from PTSD - friends and neighbours. People do not necessarily let you know that things may not be going smoothly for them. Think about the police. What has happened to people on the front line, veterans, all sorts of different scenarios. The trauma piece is important.

The introduction of an annual wellbeing survey to guide resources and investments is about finding out what the demand is, so we can meet that need, with support and wellbeing teams established in every school. To support the mental wellbeing of students, we have

invested significantly in resources, at both a universal and targeted level. Again, this is a jigsaw puzzle of demand and meeting those needs. How we put that together must be a good fit for each student.

Our approach is not one size fits all. It is a sophisticated approach to what each individual learner or child may need when it comes to mental health services. We are committed to providing extra support to students when needed, such as allocating additional funding for students impacted by trauma.

Our principals and teachers are critical in ensuring the positive wellbeing of our students. That is why we are also committed to key actions to support principal and staff wellbeing. We are all in it together. We can quite genuinely say that.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is employing record numbers of professional support staff to assist students with participation and engagement, early learning, health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. This includes more speech pathologists, social workers, school psychologists and school nurses, and we have increased our employment in these key areas by 88 FTEs since 2014.

It is also important to note that we have also seen some really good advances, particularly with the university, in being able to train people locally in some of those areas. I applaud that work. This is part of an overall increase in our education workforce by more than 800 FTEs - including more teachers, more teacher assistants, these professional support staff, so there are more people in the system looking after our kids, supporting them to learn and perhaps even identifying when some kids might need a little bit more help.

To help further meet demand, a permanent relief pool of 12 FTE professional support staff has recently been approved to assist with managing waiting lists, providing additional assistance in relation to critical incidents, and to increase flexible service provision in identified areas of priority. I do want to thank every one of our hardworking staff who help students across a range of programs and approaches, including individual assessment, therapy and counselling, group therapy, class programs, teacher assistant programs and home programs.

The last couple of years during the pandemic have been a trying time for our learners, our staff and schools, and they have done well in managing through that. Tasmanians are good at rising to a challenge, but nonetheless, pandemic life has been a little trying. I can say that as a mum who probably failed badly at home-schooling.

In addition to all of this, as part of the 2021 election commitments, our Government will invest \$3.82 million in providing access to speech and language pathologists, school psychologists and social workers for each Child and Family Learning Centre. We are not only employing more staff, we are working right across our schools to support students. This includes the introduction of an annual wellbeing survey to guide resources and investment, with support and wellbeing teams established in every school by this Government.

The Respectful Schools Campaign is promoting respectful adult behaviour in and around our schools and school communities; let us hope that that extends to online behaviour as well.

Investing an additional \$8 million in trauma support for students in Tasmanian government schools has boosted our investment to \$22 million. With the new nation-leading

needs-based funding model for students with disability in Tasmanian government schools, overall it is estimated that there is more than \$90 million funding to support students with disability in 2021; and the Tasmanian Government is providing \$56 million over four years in the 2021-22 Budget to support the needs-based model.

Money, as I have said, is the petrol that goes in the engine, allowing us to deliver what students need. As somebody with a great interest in the disability sector in particular, and also disability in our schools, I am very pleased that it is receiving a substantial amount of money.

We also do not shy away from national recruitment challenges. Highly skilled staff are highly sought after for good reason, and I commend the University of Tasmania on its new speech pathology qualification. I believe they are doing occupational therapy as well, which will commence next year - a very good thing that is happening locally, in my electorate.

I would like to talk a bit about school health nurses. A key part of professional support in schools is the school nurse program. The core focus of the school health nurse is prevention, early detection, health promotion and education. School nurses provide advice and support around complex medical conditions and other things. This successful contemporary model of school health nursing was introduced in 2015. It recognises the link between good health and positive education outcomes, and has resulted in over 23 932 individual students being seen by a school health nurse for one-on-one sessions, and 29 691 health promotion sessions from July 2015 to March 2021.

We are also providing 50.1 FTE grade 4 school health. A total of 186 schools and senior secondary colleges will be supported to foster healthy choices, create positive outcomes for students and a culture of lifelong learning.

Access to school nurses post-vaccination has also contributed to the implementation of the vaccination program for young people in our schools. I am sure we all have kids who are going through those processes.

Let us be very clear: this is the Liberal Government's record, and it was a key pillar of the 2014 election campaign - but it was actually Labor who cut the school nurse program. What a sad thing that was. On that topic, in the last term of government, Labor and the Greens tried to close 20 schools. Seriously, how was that supporting the wellbeing of Tasmanians? You cannot go around closing 20 schools and not have an impact, particularly in regional areas. There was a real sadness to that.

We are not only recruiting more staff, we are looking at building the capacity of all staff. That means we are rolling out professional development in trauma and student mental health for all school leaders, teachers and teacher assistants. This will ensure they all have the knowledge and skills to adapt teaching practices to support the learning of all children and young people.

Priority for accessing these professional development programs will be given to graduate teachers and those in rural and regional schools. School staff now have access to two online learning modules - supporting wellbeing and mental health, which explores a universal approach to supporting students' wellbeing; and an online learning module on attachment and trauma theory, which explores a more targeted and trauma-informed approach in a school setting. This initiative supports the Government's broader commitment to improve the lives of

Tasmanian children, young people and their families. It is also notable that many schools have offered training to staff on mental health first aid.

We have also introduced an inclusive practice team, which is made up of inclusive practice coaches who are highly experienced teachers with the expertise in practices that maximise learning outcomes for students with diverse needs. It is that diversity that our jigsaw puzzle of services at both the state and federal level speaks to.

Inclusive practice coaches work with school support and wellbeing teams to identify and develop strategies for supporting students with diverse learning needs who are not successfully engaging in learning. They also help to maximise engagement with schools. They support staff - including social workers, speech and language pathologists, school psychologists and school nurses - and awareness of additional support, so people know where to go, and the kids will know when and how to ask for help.

Let us talk about the student wellbeing surveys. We recognise that listening to students and understanding their needs is key to improving student wellbeing. The annual student wellbeing survey - again introduced by this Government - provides schools and the department with critical data on the wellbeing of its students, which will further guide our approach. This is about finding out what the need is, what the demand is, and then enabling us to target the funding, services and training to meet that need.

Approximately 30 000 individual students completed the survey in 2020. The survey provides schools and the department with critical feedback on the wellbeing of students. Key findings from the 2020 survey included 96 per cent of students reporting they had good relationships and support from their teachers. That is a marvellous figure, 96 per cent. Also, 91 per cent of students felt connected to adults in their home; 86 per cent of students felt safe at school - again, a great figure, but it could do better - and 76 per cent of students felt that teachers and students care about each other and treat each other with respect. I loved reading that - they care about each other and treat each other with respect. What a great thing to measure. At 76 per cent, there is room for improvement, but it is a good figure.

The Education department's child and student wellbeing unit is working closely with student focus groups and the school improvement team to understand and learn about effective engagement programs, using the wellbeing data as the benchmark and improvement measure. This is something that we have been doing.

Turning to cross-agency support, across government much work is happening to ensure we have a shared understanding of children and young people and how best to support their needs. There are a number of whole-of-government initiatives that support child and student wellbeing. These include the CAMHS reforms; Strong Families Safe Kids; Safe Home, Families, Communities; Rethink 2020; and importantly, It Takes a Tasmanian Village, which was released in Tasmania's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy for 0-25-year-olds, and has a specific focus on the first 1000 days from pregnancy to baby's first two years. Strong Families helps to achieve child and youth wellbeing, which is why supporting Tasmanian families is a top priority for the Government, of which I am proudly a part.

As the Premier has said on many occasions, it is our Government's vision that no matter where you live, your background or your circumstances, opportunities will be there if you want to grasp those opportunities. We want a better life to be within everybody's reach. The Child

and Youth Wellbeing Strategy is another step forward towards that vision. Who would not care deeply about this? It is something that is so important in our small state, with our families and our kids, to ensure everybody has the opportunities to move forward, and that we remove the barriers around mental health that may get in the way of our young people becoming successful.

Our \$100 million strategy provides a long-term direction for government, and the sector, to improve wellbeing outcomes for Tasmanian children and young people aged 0-25 years. This strategy reflects what the Tasmanian community, including children and young people, have told us is important to them. We have talked to people. We have asked questions. We have listened. We have gathered that information and we are responding to that. I care about the way we go about our business as a government. Our processes and numbers and strategies are one thing, but we have to make sure that at the centre of everything we do is the child. The child-centred approach is the way to go.

The feedback we have received has allowed us to develop our aspirational vision. Children and young people in Tasmania have what they need to grow and thrive. The strategy includes a set of 10 principles that were also developed by feedback into the strategy to guide implementation. This will ensure that we keep top of mind what is important to our children and young people, and to their families, at every step of this process.

The strategy also includes a four-year action plan with 65 actions, with a key focus on supporting families and their children during the first 1000 days. I know and you know that by working together and implementing the actions within these sorts of strategies, we will have a true and genuine impact on the wellbeing for young Tasmanians.

I will wrap up, but I want to again highlight the \$133.5 million the federal government has announced for child, youth and perinatal mental health programs. This is an area of interest for me, as things can go wrong in the first two years, and I have had an experience that perhaps could have been addressed with a little more intervention in those early times, so I am strongly for this.

I have in the past sought and achieved funding for SANDS, which did not exist in Tasmania for quite some time. It folded. We had to bring it back. Now there is more funding for that as well. It is a little before the school age, but it is so important so I am very supportive of that.

I have tabled a small amendment, to expand the request in subparagraph (6); and, while I appreciate that you are promoting Labor policy in subclause (7), we would prefer that subclause be removed. However, I thank you for bringing on what is a fulsome motion, much of which can be supported. I look forward to working with you going forward in this area.

Mr SPEAKER - To be clear, we are now on the amendments.

[4.20 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, speaking to the amended motion is, substantially, speaking to the underlying motion. Given the time, I will comment on this amendment.

I thank Ms Dow for bringing this motion on. National Mental Health Week is an important time for us all to reflect on the lives of people who are living in mental health distress, or with a mental health illness. The statistics show that most of us will, to some degree or another, have periods of mental ill health. It is normal, in that it happens often to many people; but that does not mean that it is unavoidable and it does not mean that it should not be prevented in every opportunity possible.

The science and the social research tells us that there is an abundance of ways we can help people who are in mental health crisis or suffering from mental ill-health, and very importantly, we can do a lot in the early stages of life helping families to make sure that mental ill health does not occur amongst children, or in later life, as a result of trauma and experiences in childhood that are often entirely preventable. The Greens commit to working on the underlying conditions that give rise to the epidemic of mental ill health in our community. We recognise that most of those conditions have some social injustice at their core and there are ways of dealing with that.

We can make choices as a society where we put our resources, how we help people and how active we are with groups at stamping out inequality and poverty and the other conditions that lead to real stress for working people and for families. There are some situations where all we can do is alleviate the suffering of people who have had terrible experiences but, as a parliament and as the government, our role should be at least to do no harm in the policies and in the resource application of government.

Doing no harm means not having policies which, at their core, are driving the social inequalities which we know lead to extreme mental health breakdowns, distress, poverty, violence, abuse and neglect. That is why we cannot pass without noting the awful irony of having the pokies legislation come on during Mental Health Week; to have this today and not to mention things like the structural inequalities which give rise to the social conditions that lead to families living in extreme poverty, families living in crisis, workers working in appalling conditions.

The pokies legislation that is before this House tomorrow - and shame on both the Labor and Liberal parties for their intention to fundamentally support the status quo for a forever future in Tasmania for pokies in our communities. It means that we are committing, as a Parliament, to entrenching social disadvantage and harm. That is a specific case that is right here, right now, where policy makers, legislators, can vote to not be part of a piece of legislation that will enshrine the continuation of harm and damage in communities around Tasmania.

I am sure Ms Ogilvie, the member for Clark, would be more than familiar with the stories of people in her electorate - the harm, the damage to people's lives, the neglect, the abuse, the mental desperation, suicides and the violence that goes with people who have become addicted to poker machines, which are designed for people to become addicted. I hope Ms Ogilvie will reflect on that tomorrow, when the legislation comes before us.

It is so important that we all take responsibility for the people in our electorates and for the people of Tasmania. It is also a terrible irony that the Premier has announced an essentially greenwash target for 2030 which ostensibly is signalling to young people who will be at the climate strike on Friday 'don't worry, we have got this one, we are doing everything we can'. If only that were true.

The two things that are on the table that this Government can and needs to do, to be showing national leadership on climate action, is to have sectoral targets for the sectors that have had emissions growing year on year since 1990, in transport, agriculture, industrial processes and energy. We have to have a plan to reduce emissions. It is not good enough anymore to have softly, softly, chats to businesses, give them a little bit of help. We need that too; but we need a bit of stick. It has gone past time for carrot. We have been doing carrot for decades and carrot has not got us anywhere -diddly squat, on the world stage, and we are part of that.

While our forests, which have been protected under the Tasmanian Forest Agreement - thank you, Labor-Greens government - have been doing the heavy lifting of having us be net zero for six years now, everything else has been business as usual. This is the problem. We have to stop business as usual. We cannot keep doing it.

It will only be five years' time, three years' time, two years' time, when we will be sitting in this place and a whole lot of systems around the world will be unravelling. We have the finance sector waking up all around the planet, and they are coming for Australia.

Tasmania, as much as we might like to think we are long way away, we are part of Australia and will be caught up in it. If the Premier does not get on the phone and have a talk to his Liberal mates and make it really clear that if we want to have an opportunity for a future for our businesses in Tasmania by 2030, then he needs to get over to Glasgow and make some positive commitments, not only greenwash and spin. It is in our state's interest for the Premier to be talking to his mate, Scott Morrison, and to be saying, 'You need to do this for us; you need to stop listening to the coal and gas lobby. You need to listen to the science'.

It is fundamentally about not doing harm first and then helping people as best you can. I have no problem with the amendment that is on the table from Ms Ogilvie. She talks about young people deserving more access to mental health support and the services, but I do not understand why it is in principle. I would never take away a general point when there is a specific one there.

The Labor Party's motion is calling for specific action. It is not calling it for next year. It is calling for it by July 2023. We are not talking an unreasonable length of time. Given the gravity of what you have just talked about, Ms Ogilvie, and the importance of action I would have thought you would be more than happy to sign up to this. We are talking two years away. I could say maybe it should be 2022? Can we wait that long? However, we will go with what is before us.

It is more important to have actions rather thoughts so on that basis, although I appreciate what you are doing, I do not think it is any substantial change to the motion we have before us, so I will not be supporting the amended motion. Not because I do not agree with it, I just do not think it goes as far as the original one does. On that basis it is better to have the original one.

National Mental Health Week is an important marker and there has been some progress. However, there is still not nearly enough effort put into young and adolescent mental health, not nearly enough resources for people who need access to psychologists and psychiatrists. The minister probably understands that you cannot whistle these people up. That should be very instructive for why we have to take the approach with nurses and midwives that we have

not taken with psychiatrists. We have to get on with this stuff. There is a long lag time to getting people here.

Anything that we can do to improve the conditions for social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists living in Tasmania and trained here is to everybody's advantage because there are a lot of people living with trauma. The more we understand about the impact of trauma on brains and bodies and physiology the more we realise it is good value to be helping people early in life to start processing some of the experiences that they have had so that they can have a full and flourishing life and contribute to the community as much as they would like to do.

[4.32 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to make a small contribution to this. I am pleased that the minister is here and, I assume, will be one of the later speakers in this debate.

I commend my colleague, Ms Dow, for bringing the motion before us. National Mental Health Week can too easily be seen as something that we give a tick and flick to, that we say is really important, that we care about the week and we produce the slogans and we have the stickers, yet we do not invest ourselves in what National Mental Health Week is asking us to do.

It is asking us to have a much greater reflection on the way we approach mental health and those whose mental health is not as healthy as they would like it to be. That comes down to the stigma that still exists around mental health, around asking for help and the delays from asking for help to receiving help.

That is why I am not comfortable with the amendment that has been moved. I accept that the member who has moved it has been trying to find a way through that to make it a tolerable thing. I do not think this is seen as an aggressive move. I am conscious that the member has tried to make it as palatable as possible but it does fundamentally change something we think is really important.

When we go through the rest of the motion that has been accepted, the broad concept of recognition, it is acknowledging what we do know and that is the significant mental health issues that begin when children are quite young, before the age of 14. We understand that half of Australian kids with mental illness are not getting timely professional help. If we think it is half, we have to accept that there is more because identification is a very brave thing to do.

One in 10 young people between 12 and 17 self-harm. One in 13 seriously consider a suicide attempt, and one in four will attempt suicide. I have lost family members through taking their own lives as a result of mental health challenges. I know as a parent who has just gone through those very difficult adolescent years with my children's friends and the experiences that they have had in trying to access support, just how challenging it is and how frightening it is. Suicide continues to be a leading cause of death for young Australians. Three out of five school-aged children identify mental health as a growing problem.

The member accepts that early intervention is crucial. We have the report from the Commissioner for Children and Young People's wellbeing consultations. We call it 'Happy'. We have said we need a more responsive education system because participants want it improved and more available school-based support. In our public schools there are a number

of children who do not identify and do not ask for help. There are those who do. If there has been a point of trauma or distress that leads you to seek mental health support and that mental health support is not provided, we sometimes do greater damage.

I am a huge fan of the programs in schools. They have worked with children to understand mental health and wellbeing and to understand it is an illness in the same way any other illness exists. However, if through that process the child identifies and they are not given support straight away, we can be compounding and causing greater damage. When we look at the questions we asked in Estimates about access to psychologists and social workers, when we asked social workers we found there was no average wait time for a social worker. When a social worker is unable to see a student then the social worker will refer the student to an alternative service.

I am confused about what that alternative service might be and whether that alternative service, which is not run necessarily by the state or by the Education Department, might then have a waiting list. I have spoken to a lot of young kids who have gone to see the school counsellor, gone to see the school nurse, gone to speak to a teacher that they trust, and there is a significant wait before they get to see a social worker, not necessarily a school psychologist. We will deal with that one in a moment. Seeing the social worker is not something that happens straight away.

We need to support our vulnerable young people and our young people who are asking for help. The wait for a school psychologist, according to the answers given in Estimates, was four months for an assessment and three weeks for intervention. As I said, untold damage can be done in a child's life in that time. Time has a different construct for us than it does when you are 12 or 13 or 14, or even when you are 19. The waits are difficult. While the federal government provides 10 mental health GP assessments, many GPs will refer young people and adolescents to counsellors, to social workers, who have mental health accreditation. It pays for part of it but it does not pay for all of it. There are a lot of kids who are still trying to find \$70 or \$80 gap in order to access those services.

Anything that makes it harder for young people to access those services is potentially contributing to where their mental health journey ends. As we have seen from the data, the end of some people's mental health journey is not a healthier one, is not a safer one, is not a stronger one. I only wanted to touch on why I am uncomfortable about the change because we know, as the motions says, that the ratio of social workers to students is one for every 1025. Going on the Government's own answers on the waiting list for social workers they must be referring them to other services because you cannot possibly be seeing them at the rate they are identifying. Does the minister have any information on that?

I do not support the Government amendment. Six says it agrees that Tasmanian children and young people deserve better. Saying the words with 'more access to mental health support and services' is not seen to be undermining 'better', but we should commit to doing better. If we are going to call on that then we need an action point.

I applaud the additional services that are in schools. That is fantastic, but I am talking to young people who are unable to access a social worker, are not able to access a psychologist, kids who drop out, kids who cannot cope with what is going on at home, kids who cannot cope with what is going on at the school. The damage is untold. We do know, and I raised this when the minister had the Education portfolio, that there are still some significant bullying and

harassment issues in schools. He and I discussed particularly some of the issues around some of the racism that occurs in schools. If you are experiencing that and you are calling for help and you cannot get a social worker or a psychologist for - well, however long it takes when you are referred if the social worker is busy or the four months for assessment and three weeks for intervention - then we are not doing the right thing by children.

We do need to ensure that they get what they deserve, which is better, and we do believe that the Liberal Government should recruit mental health workers to all state primary and high schools. We think it is a matter of urgency. We think it is a matter of investing in our children and it is investing in our children's future and our critical mental health issue.

[4.40 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank members for their contribution. I thank Ms Dow for tabling the motion and bringing it forward for debate today.

I listened to Ms Dow's contribution, whether I was in my office or the Chamber, and I have been here listening to others as well. I appreciate everyone's comments. I am speaking as Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing but also a person, a member of parliament, who has had a longstanding interest in issues of mental health within our community.

We are all committed. As members of parliament we have different ideas in the policies we put forward at election time, but genuinely, we do need to work further in ensuring that young people and, indeed, all Tasmanians have access to high quality treatment and care for the people who need it, including our young people.

Many people have been sharing with me their personal experiences and ideas for delivering better services and supports to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young Tasmanians. Hearing people's experiences is very important in understanding and for us, as a government, as policy makers, to identify areas for improvement.

I was pleased late last year to release the Government's response to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service's review in what was a significant step forward towards developing an integrated pathway for children, for adolescents, for families and carers to better navigate the mental health services and supports. The CAMHS Review was a key action of the Tasmanian Mental Health Reform Program which commenced in 2019 with the task of implementing 21 recommendations from a report of the Mental Health Integration Taskforce. Last year's state Budget invested \$4 million to commence phase 1 of implementing the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Review.

We accepted all those recommendations and, in line with PESRACs recommendations following that, we also announced in March this year that we are investing an additional \$41.2 million to fully fund both phases 1 and 2 of the Government's response to the CAMHS Review and this investment was reflected in the 2020-21 Budget.

All objectivity, irrespective of your side of politics, would have to conclude that that is a huge and enormous investment and well directed in that sense. This includes establishing statewide leadership roles to guide the changing service and facilitate a single unified CAMHS and to ensure a consistent service response across the state; supporting changes in the way that

CAMHS responds to demand; and acknowledging the need to respond to children and young people who have the most complex and challenging mental health presentations.

Changing models of care will enable CAMHS to realign services so they can build stronger partnerships and linkages with other services and government agencies. For example, part of CAMHS work under this shift in service delivery will involve engaging more closely with school nurses and other relevant programs within schools. We will also begin developing new programs to ensure everyone receives a specialist age-appropriate service. One example is improving mental health services for children in out-of-home care. We will establish two highly specialised intensive mental health intervention and consultation services for young children and young people, and children and young people on an interim or finalised child protection order.

Two youth early intervention services will be established, focusing on early recognition and care for young people. Key elements of the service will include flexible access for assessment and treatment, assertive outreach and interventions tailored to individual needs.

The establishment of eating disorder day and evening programs in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie, and the establishment of a statewide youth forensic mental health service, securing appropriate contemporary facilities for community outpatient services. This investment supports an increase in the capacity of the existing perinatal and infant mental health service to provide coverage in the north-west of the state and includes the north.

To date, the following progress against recommendations has occurred. We have employed a statewide CAMHS director, highly experienced Professor Brett McDermott who was on southern radio, ABC, earlier this morning; employment of a project officer to begin implementation of a service for out-of-home-care for children; employment of a project officer to begin implementation of the youth early intervention service; and further consultations with services including perinatal, CHaPS, indigenous health and paediatrics has occurred. The statewide CAMHS group director position has been advertised and a new CAMHS child and adolescent psychiatrist has been recruited, which is very welcome.

The top five current priorities of Professor McDermott, as the statewide CAMHS director, include reviewing the workload and model of care for the perinatal mental health service; project planning for the service for out-of-home care children; project planning for the early intervention service for youth; working with job design for fast tracking creation of new positions; and working with the University of Tasmania to create a centre for mental health service innovation.

We will require additional staff, and as a government we are pleased to be expanding the ranks of our mental health staff. It is an important area of investment, as we would all agree. The mental health reform program team has dedicated resources to support the recruitment of specialist positions across the state. The position of executive director of the Workforce Development has recently been created and commenced last month to oversee workforce development across statewide mental health services, including CAMHS.

The action we are taking as a government signals a fundamental shift in the delivery of our child mental health services in Tasmania, with a focus on integration, changing models of care to enable CAMHS to respond to demand, particularly in relation to severe, complex cases

addressing service gaps by developing new programs and building better links with other services in government agencies under a new organisational structure.

It is important to have preventative and community-based options as well. One example of that is the new early intervention, low to moderate intensity mental health service we are establishing in the Circular Head region with a focus on young people that will commence next month. That new service is provided by Life without Barriers. It will offer intake and assessment, brief interventions and psycho-social support to assist young people to improve mental health and wellbeing and psycho-social functioning, and group programs to promote resilience.

We are investing \$8.5 million over two years for a mental health hospital in the home pilot in the north-west, which will have a youth focus and will be the second phase of the youth early intervention service that I briefly mentioned earlier. This will enable young people to receive intensive, short-term support in their own home. As a government, we are committed to getting this right for our children and our young people. I am confident this work will ensure that young Tasmanians can receive more access to holistic mental health support and services when they need them.

Ms Dow mentioned in her thoughtful contribution, the area of the number of Tasmanians dying by suicide. This is a tragedy and a very sensitive subject for many people. Tragically, the ABS data released in September 2021 shows that 87 Tasmanians died by suicide in 2020. They each had people who loved and cared about them, people who now miss them and grieve their loss. Their deaths have a devastating and widespread impact on all their families, their friends, children, workmates and the communities. I offer my deepest sympathies to all people who have been affected by suicide.

It is important to recognise that the reasons people take their own life are complex. They are not always connected to mental illness. A range of circumstances impact on mental health and wellbeing for individuals and communities such as quality of housing, economic stability, relationships, job opportunities and the environment. I am deeply committed to working with all Tasmanians to ensure that everyone who experiences suicidal distress can access compassionate care and support when they need it.

This area is a whole-of-government, whole-of-community issue in terms of suicide prevention. It is up to all of us to do what we can to support each other, to reach out to others in times of disruption and distress, and to build hope for the future.

Part of the response to the Mental Health Integration Taskforce Report is we are developing an integrated response for people in suicidal crisis. Part of this response is the development of safe havens for people in suicidal crisis which are supported by people with lived experience of suicidal crisis. The havens will form part of the integration hubs which are under development at the Peacock Centre at St Johns Park and will make access to mental health support including for those in suicidal distress more seamless.

The updated Rethink 2020 Implementation Plan also includes suicide prevention as a priority area. A key action under Rethink 2020 is to update Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022. There are a range of ongoing initiatives in this area. The Connecting with People training program has been rolled out to priority workforces and it is very important. We are learning more about suicide through the information collected by the Tasmanian Suicide

Register. This will be a valuable tool to inform more targeted suicide prevention initiatives and better support people in suicidal distress.

For this financial year we have committed nearly \$3 million to a range of community-based mental health and suicide prevention services, suicide mitigation training, community action planning and statewide suicide aftercare services. Relationships Australia Tasmania is funded to deliver the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Community Network, the Annual Suicide Prevention Forum and the Tasmanian LiFE Awards which were held recently, and the Community Action Plans across the state.

Rural Alive and Well Inc will be an organisation familiar to many people. It receives funding to deliver suicide prevention services in rural and remote communities. In March this year we signed a bilateral agreement with the Australian Government to adopt the Way Back Support Service in Tasmania which will be delivered by Anglicare Tasmania and this new aftercare service will provide intensive support for Tasmanians aged 15 to 65 plus for up to three months following a suicide attempt or suicidal crisis.

What is important - and we have many programs and dedicated organisations - is all Tasmanians can play a role in suicide prevention by giving people a sense of belonging or a feeling of connectedness and, again, in terms of this week being about mental health awareness, belonging and connection, reducing stigma, listening without judgment, showing compassion and instilling hope and importantly developing their skills to recognise and support someone in crisis including to encourage the seeking of professional help if required.

We can each make a difference by regularly checking in with the people around us and encouraging discussion, especially if there is something going on in their life. If they are having a tough time, experiencing major changes in their circumstances, or if we notice any changes in the way they are behaving, it is important to get help early.

I have mentioned the Suicide Register Report and one report has been released covering the years 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. Soon another report will be released and this is all about ensuring we know as much as we can about the stresses that people who die by suicide are experiencing and using this knowledge to inform more targeted suicide prevention initiatives. That report, as I have said a number of times, provides an in-depth analysis to the 359 deaths by suicide reported to and investigated by Tasmanian coroners from 2012 to 2016. The register, which has been in operation since 2017, provides the most comprehensive data available on the impact of suicide on the lives of Tasmanians and the circumstances preceding their deaths.

The report puts us in a much stronger position to ensure that we have assistance for people at risk of suicide, and makes sure that services we fund are the right mix and are available at the right place and at the right time, for people in distress. There were some key findings in what was a very sobering report.

Ms Dow mentioned some statistics relating to young people, and I also have some statistics. The key findings were the highest suicide rate was among 45 to 54 year olds. The lowest rates of suicide were among 0 to 24 year olds and 25 to 34 year olds. Two-thirds of people who died by suicide had a reported physical illness and half experienced chronic or cancer related pain. Nearly four times as many men as women died by suicide. More than half of those who died by suicide had at least one previous diagnosis of a mental illness, with a

higher rate among females than males. Most had experienced at least one interpersonal or family stressor, with a separation from a partner most frequently identified, followed by the death of a family member and conflict with a partner. Half of those who died by suicide had contact with police, courts or corrections during their lifetime.

This report is sobering. It represents the tragedy of 359 Tasmanians who ended their own life. Each had people who loved them and cared for them, and people who now miss and grieve their loss. We need to work much harder in understanding the impact and the reasons for people who die by suicide.

I will leave my contribution there. I support the amendment as it is more encompassing and inclusive. I have had discussions with the Opposition a number of times around their policy on more mental health workers in schools. I do not disagree with the intent. We have a range of supports in our schools, including school nurses and access to other services as I have mentioned before. I want to ensure that help available. It is so important for people to access those services. Tasmanians should consider calling the Mental Health Services hotline 24/7 on 1800 332 338, and if they are experiencing distress as a result of listening to this contribution there are other services available 24/7, by calling Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467. If anyone is in immediate danger, it is important they call 000 immediately.

I commend the motion and the amendment. I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words on no more important topic, particularly in Mental Health Week. Suicide and mental health is something we need to speak about this every day. RU OK Day, needs to be every single day of the year.

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

The House divided -

AYES 11

Mr Barnett
Ms Courtney
Mr Ellis (Teller)
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Jaensch
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Street
Mr Tucker

NOES 11

Dr Broad
Ms Butler (Teller)
Ms Dow
Ms Finlay
Ms Johnston
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms White
Mr Winter
Dr Woodruff

PAIRS

Ms Archer

Ms Haddad

Mr SPEAKER - The result of the division is Ayes 11, Noes, 11. In accordance with standing order 167 I cast my vote with the Ayes.

Amendments agreed.

Motion as amended agreed to.

MOTION

Native Forests Management - Motion Negatived

[5.05 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) Mr Speaker, I move -

- (1) Acknowledges the paper 'Fire risk and severity decline with stand development in Tasmanian giant *Eucalyptus* forest', by authors James Furlaud, Lynda Prior, Grant Williamson and David Bowman published in *Forest Ecology and Management*, issue 502, 2021.
- (2) Understands the paper assesses how fuels, microclimate, and resulting fire risk and potential fire severity changed among four stand-development stages from regrowth to old forests.
- (3) Accepts the paper's findings that -
 - (a) later development forests had a significantly moister understorey, an increased abundance of rainforest trees, and more vertically discontinuous fuels, resulting in a significantly reduced fire risk;
 - (b) high-severity fire was much more likely to occur in forests in the early-stages of growth; and
 - (c) intensive disturbance creates large areas of regrowth stands with increased risk of high-severity fire, which increases the likelihood of landscape-wide, demographic collapse.
- (4) Agrees with the paper's recommendation that these findings challenge assumptions about the fire regime of Tasmania's native wet eucalypt forests and indicates the need to update the approach to their management.
- (5) Calls on the Government to prioritise community safety and update the approach to the management of our native forests accordingly.

The Greens are bringing this notice of motion on today because we wanted to bring to the House's attention a very important piece of Tasmanian-specific science which affects us all. The paper has been published in the journal *Forest Ecology and Management*, issue 502 this year, titled 'Fire risk and severity decline with stand development in Tasmanian giant *Eucalyptus* forest'. The authors were University of Tasmania James Furlaud, Lynda Prior, Grant Williamson and David Bowman.

Before I proceed I draw the House's attention to two guests, Dr Jennifer Sanger and Mr Steve Pearce. They are valued scientists and valued tall trees promoters, lovers and activists. I welcome them to the House today to hear the debate on this motion.

This very important paper by the authors compares the stands of different ages of tall, wet eucalyptus forest in south-east Tasmania. It presents the first empirical measurements that we have of all live and dead fine fuels, along with understorey microclimate across different age spans. The age spans that they compared were from regrowth to old forest ages. They used fuel measurements, microclimate measurements and fire behaviour models to estimate how fire risk and fire severity changes as our forests age.

They found that the understorey microclimate becomes more moist and the canopy gets higher as our wet eucalypt forests mature. This results, they found, in high-severity fire becoming much less likely in the later stages of forest growth. Very severe fires were much more likely in younger forests. They also found the understorey composition changed as forests developed with an increasing proportion of less flammable rainforest species being in the understorey area. This means that fire risk goes down as these forests develop.

They also found that the intensive disturbance of forests creates large areas of regrowth stands with increased risk of high fire severity in Tasmania and that that increases the likelihood of landscape-wide demographic collapse. It is an extremely severe condition which has happened in other ecosystems around Australia. It is happening in some areas in eastern Australia, particularly after the extreme fires of the summer before last. The first author of the report, James Furlaud, who is a wild fire ecologist, said that the study found fire risk in older forest was much lower than in young forests and that clear felling, the practice of removing all trees from a coup, could increase fire risk.

We have had some further writing on this issue but this is the latest in a substantial body of evidence that we now have before us in the Australian and international literature, papers and reports that show that logging increases the risk of fire. There are no scientific studies from Australia that show that logging forestry decreases the risk of fire. I am quoting now from Dr Jen Sanger who had a piece in *The Examiner* on 12 October. She said:

Regenerating forests are usually dryer and contain young, highly flammable eucalyptus trees growing closely together.

These young trees create a fuel ladder which allows a fire to easily travel to the canopy of the forest where it can become very difficult to control.

Old forests, in comparison, have a wet understorey which contains rainforest species.

This moist understorey environment means that the forest is less likely to burn.

It is not rocket science. It is a phenomenon that every person can see for themselves when they visit these forests.

It is a notable difference to the wet eucalypt forests that are so prevalent in south eastern Tasmania compared to the eucalypt forest in other parts of Australia. It would be a mistake to

make a direct comparison. That is why this Tasmanian-specific research is so important in providing us with detailed understanding of what is happening in our own forests and the fire risk that is created by different forestry management practices.

We also have some information from -

Ms O'Connor - Sorry, Dr Woodruff. Mr Barnett fled the table seconds after you got to your feet.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Dr WOODRUFF - It is interesting. I was so busy talking about this important piece of research that I assumed that there were members from the Government in the Chamber who were listening. Clearly the minister is not prepared to listen to this science. It is extremely important science and is germane to the way he manages his portfolio responsibilities.

On that point I seek leave to table this paper now. I circulated it to the Opposition, the Government and other members yesterday. Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the paper from *Forest Ecology and Management*, 'Fire risk and severity decline with stand development in Tasmanian giant *Eucalyptus* forest'.

Leave granted.

Dr WOODRUFF - I hope Mr Barnett will read that paper or have someone explain it to him if he does not have time. Professor Lindenmayer has done so much incredible work over decades in south eastern Australia. The message is clear: logging always contributes to higher severity fires. The evidence, he says, is compelling from studies not only in parts of Australia, from Victoria, New South Wales and now Tasmania, but also from Patagonia, western North America and eastern North America. They are showing exactly the same dynamic.

This information is important because it gives us an opportunity to change our practices and keep communities safer. We have a rapidly heating climate. We have a rapidly changing and drying landscape. The ecologists who are being trained today at the University of Tasmania will be leaving in only three or four years, depending on the length of their degree, into a different landscape to the one they started out in four years previously. It is changing that fast.

It is amazing to have scientists who are doing this work on the public's behalf - independent scientists who are not receiving money from lobby groups. They are not part of industry, they have no conflict of interest. They are working for the public good, doing this research.

That really is what this motion today is about as well: understanding that when we receive information from scientists, it is their work on our behalf, looking at the way things are. It is up to us to see it in that light, and understand that they are not, and cannot, be attacked and blamed because the evidence that they provide us makes us uncomfortable, and challenges our systems and how we operate.

We need to accept the science. We have had situations recently - to the shame of some members of this House - where scientists have been attacked. They have been slandered,

blamed and they have been publicly hung out to dry by people like Dr Broad. Dr Broad had a frenzied attack when another paper from the University of Tasmania appeared in the journal *Fire*, from an early career researcher, Suyanti Winoto-Lewin, Dr Jennifer Sanger and Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick, who is a well-established, significant and globally recognised figure in his field. This work was the subject of a football debate in this parliament, with Dr Broad on one side, Mr Barnett on the other side, and the unfortunate ball in the middle that was being kicked around was our scientists. The comments made by Dr Broad were really slanderous. He talked about the paper besmirching the reputation of foresters -

Dr BROAD - Point of order, Mr Speaker. There are some quite horrendous allegations being put accusing me of slander. I take offence to that and I ask the member to withdraw.

Dr WOODRUFF - Mr Speaker, I will respond to that. I cannot withdraw what other people are saying.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. The member has taken personal offence to your comments. I ask you to withdraw those comments.

Dr WOODRUFF - I will not withdraw the comment about slander, because it is what other people have said, and I am about to read it into the House.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. No, when a member says something about another member and they take personal offence, it is a tradition in this Chamber that you withdraw that personal offence. If you have to talk about it in another way, then you may. I am asking you to withdraw that comment.

Dr WOODRUFF - What was the comment that I withdraw?

Mr SPEAKER - That he made slanderous -

Dr WOODRUFF - He made slanderous implications about scientists.

Mr SPEAKER - Has that been proved? I am asking you to withdraw that comment and reword it in a way that you wish. Do not accuse the member. I have given you a direction. Will you please withdraw that comment?

Dr WOODRUFF - I will withdraw. I cannot remember what the comment was, but I withdraw the word 'slander', that he 'slandered' somebody. Instead I will read the words into the House that other people have said, which I am entitled to do, because this is from a newspaper and it is published. If he wants to take *The Guardian* to task, go right ahead, but meanwhile, these words have an effect. Dr Broad is more than happy to attack scientists and besmirch them and to use them as part of his political attacks on the Greens. We can take it. That is why I got elected. It is my job to come in here and represent people. He does this to me every day. So what? It says more about him than it says about me.

But it is not okay to attack scientists, because we need scientists to remain independent and fearless about doing research into the way the world really is - and that is the most important thing. In the changes that are coming, the changes that are happening now, we have to hang on to the reality of the way things really are. Otherwise, the hot air in this place will evaporate anything about the way things really are.

Dr Broad, you should know the effect of your comments. In parliament, you were referring to the paper, 'Propensities of Old Growth, Mature and Regrowth Wet Eucalyptus Forest, and *Eucalyptus nitens* Plantation, to Burn During Wildfire and Suffer Fire-Induced Crown Death'. That was the Winoto-Lewin, Sanger and Kirkpatrick paper. You referred to that as besmirching the reputation of foresters - but it also exposes the disdain, you said, 'which some academics hold for their colleagues who publish research which contradicts their views'.

You also said:

The issue is that the scientists did not check that the maps were accurate ...
that that was the fault.

You said:

The authors did not ask the holder of the data whether it was accurate ...

You said on 15 September that they could not be bothered.

You said the scientists could not be bothered to check the data.

Dr Broad - I will check *Hansard*.

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, you check it. I have it here. It is all marked up. You said the words.

Dr Broad, the point is, in reality those researchers were frustrated with the difficulty of not being able to access the high-resolution forestry coupe data that was being held from them by Forestry Tasmania. We had forestry industry coming out and also using it as an opportunity to stick the boot in. We had people from the forestry lobby demanding that the University of Tasmania - formal complaints against the integrity of the scientists. The University of Tasmania did do an investigation and, guess what, they did not find anything, any problem, with what the researchers had done.

Instead, while they were at it, the Australian Forest Products Association called the paper 'fake bourgeois research' and claimed it was thrown out by an independent journal. Jamie Kirkpatrick made the point that it was slanderous that the paper had not been thrown out, but that was withdrawn at the request of the scientists.

The point is, Dr Broad, that your comments on two occasions in parliament had a damaging effect on those scientists. One of the things I found very disturbing to hear - and this was reported on 3 September, a year ago, in *The Guardian*. I do not know if you have met Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick, but he is a wonderful, very kind gentleman who has done quiet, gentle work for decades. He said in relation to the attacks from Dr Broad, from the Forest Products Association, and also from Mr Barnett -

Ms O'Connor - Who has fled the Chamber.

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes. A whole media feeding frenzy. Professor Kirkpatrick said:

We all make mistakes. I find it devastating to be part of.

He was the co-author of the study, which was retracted by the authors themselves from the journal *Fire* when they found some small errors - but they had intended to get the information from Forestry Tasmania. Whether they are doing that work or not - I am not sure where it is up to - they identified some errors in the forestry coupe maps. Where is the problem really at in Tasmania, if our researchers cannot get high-quality information? Professor Kirkpatrick said:

I have written 333 refereed papers and this is the only one I have ever had to retract.

Ms O'Connor - And he did the right thing.

Dr WOODRUFF - He did the right thing and yet -

Dr Broad - That is right. I am not arguing that.

Dr WOODRUFF - No, he was vilified by you.

Dr Broad - I have never vilified him for that.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Dr WOODRUFF - He was vilified by you.

Dr Broad - I did not say he was - people are outrageous. You are outrageous.

Dr WOODRUFF - Mr Speaker, what is important to understand is that the minister, who is not in the Chamber at the moment but I am sure he will take note, has also made some false statements and he needs to correct the record. On 30 August last year, he put out a media release in relation to that earlier paper and he said:

Tasmania's native eucalypt forests naturally build up large amounts of fuel which increases the likelihood and intensity of devastating bushfires.

That is false. It is incorrect, and that is exactly what this study has found. The minister says earlier in the media release that: 'The Government has a scientifically-backed sustainable forest management practice'. He needs to update the science behind his forest management practice, and that is the message of today's debate. We can have many conversations about whether and when we need to end native forest logging. However, the clear message that the researchers make very strongly in this paper is that it vindicates the main findings of the Winoto-Lewin paper that is now retracted, that there is a lower flammability of older forests.

Importantly, it points to the need for us to shift our conversations in this Chamber, and set aside the conversation about whether we agree on ending native forest logging. Clearly, we do not. That is something the Greens will continue to prosecute because we know that the science is behind it. We know we have to do everything we can to keep our carbon stores in the ground. We know that when you only have 300 swift parrot breeding pairs left - at the very most - that we cannot take habitat that those birds, and so many other critically endangered and threatened native animals, need. There are many animals that need habitat in our forests and there are so many reasons why we cannot continue with native forest logging but it is

abundantly clear that the Labor and the Liberal parties are not at that place yet. You will get there; but you are not there yet.

The message of this paper here today is that there are things that not only can be done but must be done to look at the forest practices we have in place at the moment that are making our communities less safe, are threatening not only the settlements of people living in forested areas in Tasmania, but are also threatening the World Heritage Area. They are threatening Gondwanan landscapes that can never be replaced; and they are especially threatening communities like Geeveston, which suffered in the bushfires nearly three summers ago now. People in Geeveston live in a landscape which is surrounded by a mixed patchwork of forests.

Dr Sanger makes the point in her *Examiner* article last week. She said:

If we continue to log our native forest we are making the landscape more flammable ... It is the cumulative impact of logging that counts. Don't be fooled by the small proportion of forest that is logged every year, it is the cumulative impact ...

Between 1997 and 2016, 33 per cent of Tasmania's southern forests were logged. That means that vast areas of the Huon Valley are now up to seven times more likely to have high severity fires. This is putting our communities at great risk. That is something that people who live in the Geeveston community understand very clearly.

They know that they live in a varied landscape, and some of that landscape is more flammable than others. The landscape that has the old Tasmanian wet eucalypt forests with the moist understorey, the very tall trees with canopy high up in the air, those are the landscapes which are less flammable than ones which are in the regrowth stage.

We must get more information about how to manage our eucalypt forests. James Furlaud says that his paper is highlighting the fact that we need to think about modernising and developing innovative new management and logging techniques that can reduce fire risk - unlike clear felling, which this paper is suggesting and at least in the Tasmanian case, that may be increasing the risk of fire.

We obviously need to have a conversation between Forestry Tasmania and scientists like Dr Furlaud, Dr Sanger, Dr Kirkpatrick, Dr Prior and Dr Williamson. These are people who are out in the field, conducting on-ground research. They are modelling, with a high degree of detail, the fire behaviour, fire flammability and looking at the risk and severity for different fire conditions and different age spans of trees.

Mr Speaker, it is important that Mr Barnett comes into this place and makes a statement about his commitment to looking at the changed forest management practices that need to occur, in the new understanding we now have of the risk in the Tasmanian landscape from legacy Forestry Tasmania practices and the continuing operations of Forestry Tasmania.

We have decisions to make about how we manage our *nitens* population plantations. We have to understand how we can reduce the fire risk of growing plantations. Clearly, we have commitments to plantation growth timber in areas, but there is a lot we can do to make them safer. Many of those plantations are right on the border of rural towns, small townships that

are not necessarily close to fire truck protection; houses and little settlements. These are the sort of places where we need to be looking at the proximity of the plantation forests, the proximity of regrowth coups and we need to understand and grade the risk. We need to look at how we can redeploy Forestry Tasmania expert staff into not clear-felling new areas of wet eucalyptus native forests, but to come in and use their techniques to make the forests that have already been cleared, safer. We have options, and we can do that.

Thank you, minister, I look forward to hearing your response now that you have turned up. You might like to at least get the message that this paper is critical research. It is something that Forestry Tasmania needs to understand in minute detail and probably needs a briefing from staff about the implications for forest practices.

I am very pleased to have some of the scientists in the Chamber with us here to rewrite the balance. They have been spoken of badly, and there is no doubt that they do their work in good faith for the benefit of us all. It is our children who will be living in rural Tasmania into the future, who really need to be confident that this government is doing everything it can to make their communities as safe as possible, to protect the biodiversity of their local forests and to have forests which are able to survive the changing climate and fire conditions - and to have the best shot at survival in what is an increasingly hotter, dryer climate and landscape.

[5.35 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, I will address the retracted paper. Scientists take a robust series of steps. You do the experiment, you write it up, you submit it to a journal, it is peer reviewed and it is published. After it is published, it does not stand unchallenged.

There were errors in the paper in question. I have personally spoken to Dr Sanger and discussed the errors in this paper. They were picked up by somebody looking at her GPS coordinates on Google Maps. This paper was subsequently withdrawn.

Ms O'Connor - By the authors.

Dr BROAD - That is irrelevant.

Ms O'Connor - An excellent example of research integrity, says *Fires* editor-in-chief.

Dr BROAD - Absolutely. Withdrawing a paper with fundamental flaws in it is exactly the right thing for an author to do.

Ms O'Connor - Why did you attack them?

Dr BROAD - Because there were errors in the paper. The paper was flawed. That is what happens in science. You point out the errors -

Dr Woodruff - Why did you attack them for doing the right thing?

Dr BROAD - I did not. I pointed out that there were errors in the paper and subsequently, after I and others raised the issue of errors, the paper was withdrawn. That is the scientific process. If you do not agree, go back and have a look at the time lines. I raised the errors that were in that paper, in the parliament, before it was withdrawn. That is exactly what science is about. It is about challenging. Show me your data, they say. It is not about opinion, it is about

the data. Show me the data. The data gets challenged. If the data does not hold up, then the paper should be withdrawn. That is the scientific process.

I will now talk about the paper that is in question today. Dr Woodruff, the member for Franklin, did not talk a lot about it. It is an interesting piece of work. I will go through what it says and not what the Greens say it says. Reading from the abstract -

Dr Woodruff - I read from the abstract.

Dr BROAD - You have had your turn:

Forest fire risk, and how it changes over time, has important influences on forest dynamics. Two common models describing how fire risk changes with stand development, known as flammability functions, are (a) the 'moisture model' -

And there is another model that is also commonly used called the Olson model:

... where fire risk increases ...

Basically, this paper is delving into two models to figure out which model is the most applicable in the circumstance of Australian tall wet eucalypt forests (TWEFs):

It is unclear, however, which function is more appropriate for TWEF, as there are little empirical data describing fuels and microclimate, two important influences on fire risk and potential severity, across the long lifespan of these forests. Accordingly, we use a chronosequence of TWEF stands in southeast Tasmania, Australia, to see how fuels, microclimate, and resulting fire risk and potential fire severity changed amongst four stand-development stages ranging from regrowth to old forests.

This paper sets out to test those two models and find out which one is more applicable to Tasmania's circumstances. It does not talk about whether it is set up to decide whether native forestry should end or whether communities are in danger. The final line in the paper says:

We suggest that fire and forest management incorporate techniques mimicking low-severity disturbances to create more resilient landscapes.

It does not call for an end to native forestry.

Dr Woodruff - I never said it did.

Dr BROAD - No, I am pointing out what this paper actually says. It is quite an interesting piece of work. It talks a lot about obligate cedar forests are susceptible to switching to an alternative non-forest state when they are burned a second time before their saplings have matured to produce seeds. They are especially vulnerable to fire induced mortality because their short stature exposes them to flame contact. In other words, if a low level -

Dr Woodruff - You do not have to mansplain it to me, Dr Broad. I know all about it.

Dr BROAD - I was explaining it to the whole House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Dr Woodruff - Well, you were looking at me as you doing it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Dr BROAD - That is an outrageous slur. I am reading from the paper and you are saying I am mansplaining it.

Dr Woodruff - You were looking at me like I need to know. I have read the paper inside out.

Dr BROAD - What an outrage. Then it goes on to talk about most of these assertions are largely theoretical and it talks about landscape traps. You can read the paper too. It talks about how:

... most of these assertions are largely theoretical, as changes in fuels and microclimate, along with the associated changes in fire risk, have not been well-documented across the lifespan of [this particular type of forest] ... there is debate about whether the TWEF flammability function is best described by the moisture model [or this other model].

So, there is a debate. That is what science does, it is a debate.

Dr Woodruff interjecting.

Dr BROAD - Mr Deputy Speaker, I mean, come on.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff, please.

Dr Woodruff - He is trying to insinuate there is a debate in here.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Dr BROAD - I am not insinuating anything. I am reading from their paper. This is their words.

Dr Woodruff - You are taking it out of context.

Dr BROAD - I am reading straight from the paper.

Dr Woodruff - I know but this isn't what the paper is about, that debate. He is just reporting on another paper and another debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff. You were given 40 minutes as the mover of the motion to speak. Could you please listen to the other contributions in silence?

Dr BROAD - One thing the Greens like to say that the science is settled. We draw a line under it. We do not need to do any more work. Whatever we say is the science - and it is not. There is significant debate in this area, as I have highlighted in the past.

I am trying to find the particular point; but it talks about that when it comes to flammability in forests and in forestry itself, there is debate, there is ongoing debate. That is the way that science should work. This paper is another step. It adds an interesting dynamic in talking about which model should be used to discuss flammability in this particular type of forest:

However ... studies reported some conflicting results: mature forests exhibited decreased vertical continuity of fuels and predicted rate of spread when compared to regrowth forest, and increased understory cover of mesic species. These three aspects are associated with low fire risk. The conflicting results underscore the complex nature of TWEF flammability dynamics and a lack of consensus on the issue.

The small number of empirical studies on fuel moisture have also come to conflicting conclusions: some found the understory microclimate was moister in mature forests than in regrowth forests consistent with the moisture model. Others, however, found microclimate was drier in mature forests which is inconsistent with the moisture model, and would make an Olson curve flammability function more plausible, as fire risk would increase with increasing fuel load.

It goes on and talks about that this is not settled. This is a piece of work that adds to the scientific discussion. Science is an ongoing process. It is not a 'draw a line under it'.

Greens members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff and Ms O'Connor. I could see the interjection building up in you, Ms O'Connor.

Dr BROAD - I have moved on to the site selection, which is 2.2, and there is a bit that says how they used clear-fell burn sow silviculture as a surrogate for standing replacing fire in a sapling stage at warra.

Dr Woodruff - Have you some authority in this area?

Dr BROAD - I am not an authority in this area. It talks about what they actually use - clear-fell burn and sow silviculture was used as surrogate. It was not the focus of the study. It was used as a surrogate to determine which of these two models should be used; and it goes on. There are some very complicated statistical methods used here -

Dr Woodruff - Does that mean you do not understand them?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Dr BROAD - I challenge you to talk about binomial GLMMs and gamma GLMMs and various dispersals and Bayesian modelling and so on if you are an expert in this. I would be very impressed.

Dr Woodruff - Read the findings.

Dr BROAD - I am getting to that. The fuel load in the intermediate canopy - and there are a lot of findings and a lot of detailed data in this.

Ms O'Connor - What about the key findings?

Dr BROAD - I am getting to that. Be patient.

We talk about in the discussion:

... flame heights did not differ between stand-development stages, the likelihood of low- and high-severity fire did, despite high inter-annual variation ... Low severity fires -

The way the Greens talk about severity is in terms of lives being put at risk, danger to communities like Geeveston. What I am getting out of this paper is they are talking about the severity of damage to the forest itself.

Low-severity fires were significantly more likely in older stands, and high-severity fires were significantly more likely in younger stands.

That is one of the key findings. That does make empirical sense because the trees are smaller, they are more vulnerable -

Meanwhile, low-severity fire, in which the *Eucalyptus* canopy remained undamaged, was significantly more likely in the three later stages [of the development scale]. Importantly, high-severity fire was significantly more likely than low-severity fire in the sapling stage, but the reverse was true in the spar and late mature stages.

These are not actual results, they are model results. There is an old adage in modelling that all models are wrong, some are useful. I think that the discussion of these two models is definitely useful. In the discussion, which is the author's interpretation of their results:

We showed that fuel load did not significantly change across stand-development stages, but that the understorey microclimate becomes moister and the canopy higher in later stages. ... Furthermore, except in the sapling stage, there was rarely enough fuel on the forest floor alone to cause crown fires, indicating the importance of the elevated fuels as ladder fuels. ... As outlined below, our results indicate that chronological trends in the flammability of TWEF follow that of the 'moisture model' where fire risk decreases as forests develop.

One of the main outcomes of this paper is that the moisture model is the one that best describes the Tasmanian wet eucalypt forests.

Dr Woodruff - One of the outcomes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Dr BROAD - That is in the discussion. And other things that they found were low and dense crowns of regenerating TWEF were thought to render them particularly vulnerable to high-severity fire, especially as combustibility of live standing fuels is known to positively correlate with bulk density. The composition of the elevated fuels greatly increases the likelihood of crown damage.

Dr Woodruff - You do not actually have anything to respond to the motion before you, Dr Broad, on behalf of Labor and your constituents in communities?

Dr BROAD - I am reading the paper. I am trying to explain what the paper actually says:

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff, we have 10 minutes to go. I am asking you to please be silent until 6 p.m.

Dr BROAD -

Our analysis of spar-stage stands suggests that in clearfelled sites there is a higher fuel load in the *Eucalyptus* overstorey and a lower live fuel load in the non-*Eucalyptus* understorey than in burnt sites. This is likely due to the artificial seeding of stands post clearfelling, which is designed to achieve high *Eucalyptus* densities.

They said that one of the risks in these types of forests is that if the trees are burnt before they have time to seed then it can convert to another type of forest or to grassland. That is not a risk in a forestry situation because they seed. They clear-fell, they seed and then they burn.

Dr Woodruff - We are talking about risks to people as well as risks to forests.

Dr BROAD - It does not talk about risks to people.

Dr Woodruff - No, we are though.

Dr BROAD - This has absolutely got no -

Dr Woodruff - It is the implication of burning forests.

Dr BROAD - It does not mention risk at all.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Dr BROAD - In this paper there is no mention of risks to life. There is no mention that native forest logging should end. That is not in this paper. The results make some good suggestions:

Our results suggest that management regimes in TWEF have the ecological capacity to incorporate techniques mimicking low- and moderate-severity disturbances such as irregular shelterwood harvesting, variable-density thinning, or dispersed-retention harvesting followed by low-intensity burns. ... Given the importance of ladder fuels, mechanical thinning and removal of the understorey along with 'shaded' fire breaks have the potential to be effective fire-management strategies in TWEF on the wildland - urban interface.

It makes a number of practical observations backed by their data saying that this is how native forests should be treated -

Ms O'Connor - No.

Dr BROAD - That is what it says:

Given the importance of ladder fuels, mechanical thinning and removal of the understorey ...

Ms O'Connor - You are drawing a long bow.

Dr BROAD - No, this is what it says. I am reading it:

Given the importance of ladder fuels, mechanical thinning and removal of the understorey along with 'shaded' fire breaks have the potential to be effective fire-management strategies in the wildland - urban interface.

They are describing how risks can be minimised. It is in the paper.

Dr BROAD - They are the lines just above the conclusion. That does not say that native forestry should end.

Dr Woodruff - That is not our motion.

Dr BROAD - No, but you are saying that this paper demands an end to native forestry. It does not talk about risks to people's lives. It makes some sensible discussions. It talks about which model is best to use. It does not say that lives are in danger. That is what the paper says.

Dr Woodruff - Update the approach accordingly is the motion, Dr Broad.

Dr BROAD - I will just finish at that point.

Ms O'Connor - Be really clear with *Hansard* what you read because we do not want people to read this and think they are your words.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Dr BROAD - I have read it all. They were all bits out of the paper.

You come in here saying the science is settled and science is finished and we do not need to have any more discussions. This paper is a discussion. It is adding to the scientific discussion. It is not drawing a line under it and saying everybody says that native forestry should end.

Dr Woodruff - That is what our motion calls for: have a conversation.

Dr BROAD - That is the conversation the Greens always have because it always comes back to trees. It always comes back to ending native forestry. It does not matter what anybody says. It does not matter where the situation of the science is, it always comes back to ending native forestry irrespective of what the paper says. This is a decent piece of work but it does not say what the Greens say it says.

[5.52 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, what an incredible arcane waste of time this poor House has been subjected to over the last hour. We have literally wasted an hour of the people's time tabling a document that is already public and then discussing it endlessly.

The Greens are fundamentally opposed to native forestry. They are fundamentally opposed to the fire management that comes from well-managed sustainable native forestry.

I appreciated Dr Broad's general comments about it. It was a bit of a doctor-off between Dr Broad and Dr Woodruff that wasted everyone's time. The key point is that active forest management is an important tool in bushfire mitigation. We do not agree with the Greens that ceasing all native forestry is the best approach for mitigating bushfire management and climate change. This is what this private members' time is all about from the Greens.

I hope that the Tasmanian Labor Party is more sensible than the Western Australian Labor Party and Victorian Labor Party who have sold out workers in the forest industry in those states by shutting down native forestry. We know what Daniel Andrews has done to timber workers in Victoria. I know that you are ashamed by it. I know that you are ashamed by what Mark McGowan did. I know that you shake your head at the actions of those Labor leaders. I am glad that we have you in this place, Dr Broad, because at least you are somewhat a voice of reason among those benches compared to the absolute rabble that is coming from the Greens.

I do not think that anyone in the Tasmanian community could really believe their ears when it turned out that the Greens are now opposed to a net zero 2022 target in Tasmania. It has truly been one of the most bizarre displays of anti-everything since Bob Brown was opposed to building a hydroelectric dam and his solution was to be a coal-fired power station in the Fingal Valley.

We know what you people are about. You are not about the environment. You are not about making people's lives better. You are just fundamentally anti-capitalism, anti-jobs. You talk about wanting to make sure that kids in regional Tasmania can grow up with a bright future. They are about the depopulation and the deindustrialisation of Tasmania. They want us all to withdraw into the suburb of South Hobart and hope that we can live off government benefits for the rest of our lives.

It is a sad indictment of where the Greens have got themselves to that they are now opposed to net zero 2030. They have no plan how to get there because they are opposed to

hydro, they are opposed to wind farms. Scott Jordan said the wind farm that is proposed just north of Granville Harbour, the best wind farm in the country, would be a wind farm apocalypse.

These people are completely out of their minds. They are opposed to trees, the ultimate renewable. They are opposed to wind farms, they are opposed to hydro. They are opposed to fish farms - some of the most environmentally friendly protein that you can possibly eat if you are a human being. Maybe they are into crickets and grubs and whatever else. But the fundamental point about what we do here in Tasmania is that we are some of the most sustainable native forestry operators in the world.

The alternative to Tasmanian hardwoods is going into orangutan habitat in Borneo and ripping the joint up, because that is what happens when you shut down a sustainable and managed industry and you ship it offshore. We are already an importer of timber in this country, and do you know where it comes from? It comes from countries that cannot look after the place, that trash their forests. You want to take Tasmanian jobs away so that you can send it up to Indonesia and you can wreck the joint.

That is what you guys are about, because you are fundamentally anti-everything. People have cottoned on to you guys. That is why there are only two of you sitting here. There were five when Ms O'Connor became the leader of the Greens, if you can call it leadership. She has fundamentally failed in trying to look after the environment. When a party that actually comes in here and is serious about governing says we are going to get to net zero in 2030, what do they say? 'It is greenwashing.'

The swing is on from the Greens, we keep getting told, but I do not think they will ever get there, because they continue to trash every bit of credibility that they have. Anyone that has ever seen a *nitens* plantation compared to some of our sustainably managed native regrowth in the Arthur-Pieman will tell you that the fire risk that you have from a *nitens* plantation is far higher than from a sustainably managed native forestry operation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, that is their alternative. Their alternative is to shut down native forestry in this state and replace it with plantations. It is quite plain to everyone that the fire risk from a plantation is far higher than native forestry. The alternative to timber is concrete, which is a coal by-product; steel, which is a coal by-product; plastic, which is an oil by-product. They have no plan for the future of our civilisation, because they prefer that we shut everything down and live in mud huts.

At least we would probably get to whatever they want more than net zero by 2030, but it is fundamentally a failure of leadership - which is what we are all meant to be doing in this place - to come in here and say that we should not have native forestry, we should not get to net zero by 2030, we should not have mining - particularly for some of our sustainable rare earths, which is what we do down the west coast. They have whinged and complained about who is in this place at whatever particular time. These people could not even be bothered to show up for the workplace protections motion.

We know the Labor Party is lazy. I did think better of Ms O'Connor, but to come in here and whinge about people's presence in this place is true hypocrisy.

Less than one per cent - about 0.27 per cent - of our native forests are harvested here in Tasmania in any given year. We have over a million hectares of Tasmania's old growth forests. That is about 85 per cent that are permanently protected, and do you know what? We do not get most of the benefit in terms of our carbon accounting, because they are already locked up.

Mr Deputy Speaker, they are fundamentally opposed to common sense and decent management. Tasmania was the first Australian jurisdiction to achieve net zero emissions. It did so for the first time in 2013, and has consistently done so under this Government since 2015.

Research also shows that a mixed strategy of conservation and timber production is more likely to be optimal for atmospheric carbon reduction, but it is also more likely to be the better solution when it comes to managing fire risk.

The thing these people do not fundamentally understand when they go back to their apartments in South Hobart is that the rest of us live in the real world. We live around trees. We live near the bush and we want to look after the joint. We know that it is going to be harder if it is all plantations.

We are committed to a long-term sustainable management of Tasmania's forest for the benefit of all Tasmanians, not just the whingers that the Greens think that they should be representing. The Government is continually monitoring new scientific research like this to ensure that we regulate forestry in a contemporary way that is best practice.

Time expired.

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

The House divided -

AYES 3

Ms Johnston
Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

NOES 20

Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler (Teller)
Ms Courtney
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Mr Gutwein
Ms Haddad
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Tucker

Ms White
Mr Winter

Motion negatived.

ADJOURNMENT

Scientific Link between Logging and Bushfire Risk

[6.05 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to talk about the link between industrial native forest logging and increased risk of bushfires, and while we are not to reflect on the vote - which I will not do - I am going to say a few words about what passed for a debate in the chamber over the past hour.

We had Dr Woodruff rise to her feet with a scientific paper in her hand, which is peer-reviewed, which is the eleventh example of a scientific paper which has confirmed a link between logging and bushfire risk.

The first thing that happened was that the Minister for Resources, who is responsible for native forest logging, fled the Chamber at about 5.05 p.m., arrived back only moments after Dr Woodruff was winding up, and did not contribute to the debate.

Dr Broad just read from the paper and made no substantive argument whatsoever. Then we had the most puerile, insulting and childish contribution from Mr Ellis, who is only in this place because Mr Brooks had to resign - even though he was elected - because he has allegedly committed crimes.

It is important that this House listens to scientists. Call me old fashioned, but independent scientists who work in the public interest are people that policymakers need to listen to. It is because policymakers around the world have been ignoring climate scientists for the last 40 years that we are in the deep trouble that we are in.

We are at risk here again on this little island - with its wild forests, its rich carbon stores - of having both the major parties in here play deaf to the science.

If there was just one paper establishing a link between logging regimes and increased bushfire risk, I would think Dr Broad's scepticism was warranted - and I find the minister's inability to contribute unforgivable - but there is not. There are 11 papers establishing the link between bushfire and logging regimes. Eleven peer-reviewed papers, and all we asked of this place was that there be a conversation -

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - I need you to stay away from the actual paper itself, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, I understand that. All we asked was for this House to listen to scientists at the University of Tasmania, who have undertaken work in the public interest that raises an alarm bell if you are thinking clearly about community safety, about the resilience of our wild places to bushfire, about the resilience of our infrastructure to bushfire.

That is surely something that every member of this place should be concerned about. There are many frustrating days in here when you are a Green. You get vilified. You get misrepresented. You get a bit depressed when you look around and realise how little people here are thinking about the future, but that debate was one of the worst I have had to sit through.

I ask members of this place to reflect on the reason we were elected. We were elected to represent the people of Tasmania. We were elected to do the right thing. We were elected to make good policy in the public interest. I think we were elected to be part of looking after this place. We were certainly elected here to tell the truth, and to behave with integrity and ethically, and we did not see that over the past hour. Every member of this place has a solemn responsibility to read the paper that Dr Woodruff tabled today.

I found that debate so disheartening. For the young people who will be striking for climate on the lawns here on Friday, they want to see change, they want to be part of the solutions, they want to see an end to native forest logging and see our carbon stores protected. They want that desperately.

We get accused in here when we raise the science of scaring children. I have said it before and you all know it is true, children are scared by a lack of leadership. They are scared by elected representatives who do not listen to science. They are scared by adults who tell them that they are not old enough to make up their own minds and to get back to school. Most of all, they are scared by a lack of leadership.

I will finish on this. Mr Ellis, who has now fled the Chamber after that puerile contribution, says that we do not support a net zero by 2030 target. As a matter of fact, Mr Ellis, I know it is hard for members in this place to think about the Greens being part of something good, but Tasmania reached net zero emissions because of our carbon sinks in 2013 under the Labor-Greens government because we set aside 570 000 hectares of forest under the Tasmanian Forest Agreement. Because you had a Greens minister for climate change, we undertook a forest carbon study which tells us that there is about four billion tonnes of carbon in the forest.

We need to start listening to science in this place. If the major parties in this place cannot do that, then we are lost in the 21st century when you have accelerating global heating, massive biodiversity decline, impact on eco systems that sustain not only us, but all life on Earth.

It is well past time the major parties in this place stopped denigrating scientists, started listening to them, invited them to the table and encouraged independent research.

Time expired.

National Carers Week Motor Neurone Disease (MND)

[6.12 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I have two matters I will quickly raise tonight. The first is about Carers Week. As you know, this week is National Carers Week and it seeks to recognise and celebrate the 2.65 million Australians who provide care and support to a family member or a friend. The theme is 'A Million Reasons to Care'.

Nationally informal carers contribute 2.2 billion individual hours of care. If they were paid, the cost to the Australian economy would be \$77.9 billion. There are more than 80 000 unpaid carers in Tasmania. That means one in six of Tasmanians are in that role. Of these, nearly 10 000 are under the age of 25, some 9300.

Recognising them this week is the least we can do. I look forward to some genuine action arising out of the Government's Carers Community Consultation. If people would take the time to participate in that consultation, if they can find the time to participate in their very busy caring roles, their very busy lives, then we owe it to them to not only listen, but to act.

Speaking of caring, I will talk about one of the matters that has a significant impact for carers. Motor neurone disease (MND), which is also termed amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), is an insidiously progressive neuro-degenerative disease which results in a gradual weakening of muscles, swallowing and speech disturbance, respiratory failure and ultimately death. Memory and thinking can be affected in over 50 per cent of sufferers while in others the mind remains intact while sufferers are left motionless and trapped in their once active bodies.

Despite the first description of MND over 150 years ago, it remains a terminal diagnosis with no effective treatments or cure. There continues to be no effective therapies to slow or halt the progression of MND. We require urgent action and innovative solutions. Although rates of progression vary, the average life expectancy from diagnosis is 27 months.

FightMND was established in 2014 and is Australia's leading independent MND foundation. Its vision is a world without motor neurone disease. It works to raise awareness and funding for vital research into effective treatments and a cure for MND. It also funds vital care equipment to help improve the lives of those who are currently fighting the disease.

Since inception MND, Vitamin D has invested more than \$63 million into MND research and care equipment for people living with MND. The funds raised support clinical trials, drug development projects, impacts grants scholarships to accelerate the development of effective therapies, support high-throughput drug screening programs, precision medical programs to improve tightening of treatments. It also supports the Sporadic ALS Australian Systems Genomic Consortium. It funds research fellowships and scholarships and holds summits. In Tasmania since 2017, it has provided more than \$134 000 to MND Tasmania to enable the purchase of care equipment to support the 51 Tasmanians living with MND.

The funds to provide this support are raised through key events like the very well-known Big Freeze. Myself and many other Tasmanian MPs have participated in this. There is also Daniher's Drive and the 27 Challenge as well as regular donations and community fundraising events.

I and a dear friend have started a 27 Challenge. For us it is very personal. Our best friend was diagnosed with MND late last year. It has been heartbreaking for her and her lovely family and to all of those who go through this know that there is very little that we can do but to be her friend. Catherine is, in some ways if you can be, fortunate, as she receives incredible support and care from her family. It is not about raising money for her personally, it is because 27 months is simply not long enough. It is because we want more time, because we hope to do more with her, because we want a cure. In fact we desperately need a cure and that means research dollars.

Why the 27 Challenge? Because although the rates of progression vary, the average life expectancy from diagnoses is 27 months. We formed a 27 Challenge team called 'For Catherine' and we have all pledged to do 27 things in some way. Liz and I are doing 27 push-ups, sit-ups and squats a day. You would not be able to tell but I am. Catherine's young son, Lachlan, has added burpees and star jumps. Other friends and even parents from the primary school that Catherine taught at have joined. On 23 October, the Birralee and Districts Pony Club is fundraising at its gala day at Gravelly Beach, raising funds for Catherine and for research.

We hoped to raise a couple of thousand dollars over our 27 days; however, we raised \$5000 in our first five days. We are nearly at \$7000 and our target grows as our support does. We are all doing our bit so I encourage members, and anyone watching, to donate to the 27 Challenge or to FightMND. Join our team if you would like to or start your own team. Every dollar counts. There are families across Australia who need it. Two Australians die every day from MND and two more are diagnosed on that same day. There are about 2000 Australians living with the disease and 51 Tasmanians are currently living with MND. Please support FightMND, consider joining the 27 Challenge, ours or someone else's, help us find a cure or an effective treatment because 27 months is not long enough for those living with MND, their families or their friends.

Motor Neurone Disease

Eric Mobbs - Tribute

Leigh Gray - Tribute

Brighton Primary School - Keep Australia Beautiful

Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania

Meander Valley Community Radio

[6.17 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I concur with Ms O'Byrne on her excellent contribution and support for FightMND. I really appreciate where the member is coming from and the support for that wonderful cause and personal relationship with a fine Tasmanian who has MND.

My father passed away with MND. I am a former ambassador of MND Australia so I concur entirely having done the Ice Bucket Challenge and helped support fundraising for FightMND as have other members in this Chamber and elsewhere around Tasmania. I pay tribute to so many people who have helped raise those funds and awareness for MND. It is certainly close to my heart.

I want to pay a tribute to the late Eric Mobbs, 79, who passed away from cancer very recently. He was a chemical engineer who worked for Dulux. He was a long-time passionate contributor to the north west coast and to his community in Devonport. He was an enthusiastic member of the Liberal Party. I had a long relationship with Eric over a number of decades. He was enthusiastic to the core.

He did so much community work and had a strong work ethic. He was president of the Devonport Chamber of Commerce and Industry for a long time and a member and contributor extraordinaire. He mentored students and others in his community. He was a member of many

community groups and organisations. I would like to acknowledge that, pay tribute to him and pass on my sincere condolences to his wife Anna and the Mobbs family more generally.

I also share a few remarks and congratulations to the new mayor of Brighton, Leigh Gray, who was recently elected mayor. He is, in my view, going to be an excellent mayor. He has leadership skills and capacity and will do so much for the residents of Brighton. It is a wonderful municipality and Leigh has contributed over many years already in that space. I also pass on congratulations to the incoming councillor, Aaron De La Torre, and recognise Tony Foster, the long-time mayor of Brighton. He was the longest serving mayor in Tasmania and delivered an amazing contribution to the people of Brighton over that period. I have known Tony during my time in the Senate and in state parliament, and he has always been a fighter for his community.

It was great to catch up with the Brighton Primary School recently, on the Keep Australia Beautiful Campaign, providing a \$2000 cheque to support the Keep Australia Beautiful Campaign. I represented my colleague Mr Jaensch, on that day and it was good to catch up with the students, who are keen on growing more vegetables. They have a wonderful vegetable garden there. I was able to share about my own vegetable garden and the benefits of growing vegies and having a healthy active lifestyle. The \$2000 grant will help upgrade the composting system there and support for growing more vegetables. It was also part of the Keep Australia Beautiful Campaign and to help the school to reach their zero waste to landfill target. They are doing a terrific job and it was great to catch up with the kids and the teachers at the school. I also heard about the toaster I helped fund in recent years. It has been well used with the breakfast club at the Brighton Primary School.

I also commend Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania and the annual conference which was opened by Deputy Premier, Jeremy Rockliff. It was held in Deloraine, where I have my office. It was fantastic event, with the spirit of camaraderie, support and encouragement for one another demonstrated, and not just during the conference. I was there for the celebration dinner that night with many others. It was a full house at the Rotary Pavilion in Deloraine. I pay a tribute, particularly to Deloraine House. They do a fantastic job. They support our community in and around the Meander Valley and they are always reaching out, trying to help, going the extra mile. They received an Australia Day Award earlier this year. Thank you to the volunteers involved in that.

When I was in Deloraine a couple of weeks ago, I was able to spend a bit of time on the Meander Valley Community Radio. I was interviewed by Dr John Phelps, and it was terrific. We were going down memory lane, learning a little about the history and heritage of the Meander Valley. I was born and raised at Hagley, the historic home at Quamby. It was a very run-down property when mum and dad first bought it and there has been so much time spent renovating it. I pay tribute to John and the team at the Meander Valley Community Radio and I acknowledge all the work of the volunteers. They are involved in so many community-led initiatives. I passed on my thanks on the radio to them directly, but again, I pay tribute to the Meander Valley Community Radio.

Beaconsfield Bendigo Bank - One-year Anniversary

[6.25 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - This evening I acknowledge a significant anniversary last weekend in Beaconsfield in the beautiful Tamar Valley. That was the one-year anniversary of the opening of the Bendigo Bank agency in Beaconsfield, hosted by the Beaconsfield H Hardware and Bendigo Bank agency, a real heart centre for the community.

One year of this agency's operations has continued to create a heartbeat in this community, not only for the local businesses that need somewhere to bank, but for members of the community and community organisations that otherwise would have had to travel a long distance to do their banking with the withdrawal of a service over a year ago.

On reflecting on the importance of this one-year anniversary, I want to remember the time when this service decided to leave the community, because it was right in the middle of COVID-19, and right in the middle of winter.

You had a regional community in Tasmania that for a really long time had been able to do their community, school, organisational and business banking in their local town. That was taken away at a time when we had older members of the community who had been holding physical paper passports for many years and going to the bank weekly to withdraw their cash to live their life for the week. Older members of the community were required, without notice - an email went out almost at midnight to some members, but not all members of this organisation on a Friday evening. It caused panic within the community, particularly in older members, not knowing what was happening with their bank accounts, and that they were to have just a few short weeks to determine how to continue to access their funds under management at the bank.

What I love - and one reason why I want to acknowledge this tonight - is that often when something goes wrong in community, the community calls out. They need someone else to fix something, they call on the government, or the local council, or they call on someone else and say, you have to fix this.

What happened in Beaconsfield is that a local member of the community called and said, this is not right, what can you do, and so a local community working group was formed. The community determined who were the people of influence, who were the people of action, and who were the people who were dedicated and passionate about their local community. They got together to form a working group to find out all the different types of banks and all financial services that could be offered in the community, and who would be willing to take the journey with this community.

A number of entities were approached, but in the end, it was Bendigo Bank that put up their hand and worked with the community to transition local banking into an agency to be hosted at the Beaconsfield H Hardware.

I raise this because community empowerment to provide outcomes and to continue to support their communities is really important. Who would think that a local hardware store would be the place of banking for a community? But over the years, what is affectionately known as 'la la land' has been a centre for that community. I want a shout out particularly to Lisa and to Taylor. It is a family-owned business and a family community centre. They

personally invested time, effort and confidence. They were willing to take a risk to host this agency, which required them to physically build it within their operations, and to put their effort into the marketing and promotion of the success of this agency for the local community.

Taylor and Lisa, without you this would not have happened. To the Beaconsfield community and to the working group, without you this would not have happened.

What I have heard since is that this one project, which showed what a community could do when they worked together, has actually inspired other activity. The West Tamar Rotary Club was active in this process to secure this agency, and since then, in Beauty Point, they have raised funds for the extension of a playground to create all-abilities access to a playground through local community action, leadership and fundraising. Again, it is a community saying, what can we do to provide the outcomes that we want in this community? It has touched lots of other communities through the West Tamar on this model of support in a local community.

I also want to shout out to the leadership of Bendigo Bank, but in particular to Jodie [tbc], whom we all love, who has taken that journey with us, and is onsite now, regularly providing her great advice and assistance to the local community.

When an agency or a community bank comes in, they commit to reinvest certain funds back into the community. One of the really lovely things on the first anniversary celebration was an oversized cheque, gifted by an oversized pig, the mascot of Bendigo Bank to the Beauty Point Mini League. It is great again to see that local effort and local support being reinvested back into the community.

Today it is a shout-out to the Beaconsfield and the West Tamar community. Congratulations, it is one year down. As we all know in business, it is the first few years that are the toughest, so if you continue to support the agency, it will continue to support the local community and it is great to have that first year celebrated and behind us and looking forward to a positive, continued service of the agency in the Beaconsfield and West Tamar council areas.

The House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.