



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Wednesday 22 March 2023

REVISED EDITION

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Wednesday 22 March 2023

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

QUESTIONS

Electricity Prices - Support for Businesses

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.01 a.m.]

There are approximately 5000 Tasmanian businesses on market contracts for energy that are suffering, or are soon to be suffering, as a result of your broken promise on power prices. Many are facing energy costs that are up to three times higher than what they previously paid. How many businesses do you anticipate will receive assistance through your business energy hardship scheme?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Our Government has taken decisive action to support customers in response to the volatility of the National Electricity Market. We will continue to monitor the changing circumstances in the NEM and we have always said we will take further action when required. As I said yesterday, we are working cooperatively with the Australian Government to deliver further bill relief for households and small businesses through the co-funded Electricity Bill Relief Fund and are currently engaged in bilateral negotiations on the detail of this. We will have more to say in the very near future but it is a great example of the Australian and state governments working collaboratively for the benefit of Tasmanians, which is fantastic.

Ms White - What about the detail of your plan?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am aware of Health minister Mark Butler on the radio this morning -

Ms White - What about the detail of your plan?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - again demonstrating the cooperative relationship between me and Mr Butler and the Tasmanian and Australian governments when it comes to matters concerning health.

We are also providing assistance to those commercial industrial businesses that contracted in the wholesale electricity market between 1 April 2022 and 30 June this year. We will provide support to commercial industrial customers who suffered financial hardship as a result of recontracting during this period. Assistance will be provided through a grant program open to Tasmanian commercial and industrial businesses -

Ms White - There are about 5000 of them.

Mr SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, order. This is the third time.

Mr ROCKLIFF - which recontracted during the period of high pricing and can demonstrate a significant deterioration in profitability as a result.

Our Energy minister covered this well yesterday prior to question time and was very well supported by the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the THA as well. The guidelines for the program are available on the Department of State Growth website and applications are open.

Ms Finlay - The question is how many businesses will be eligible?

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Bass.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The program is open to Tasmanian businesses that can demonstrate hardship as a result of the increase in the weighted average price of their electricity supply contract. Whether it is businesses, whether it is mums and dads, whether it is those on low and fixed incomes, whether it is those on contracts, they are there to provide assistance.

Ms Finlay interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Member for Bass, order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We do not come into this place with thought bubbles like you have, costing tens of millions of dollars with little understanding of the true impact of what your policy would result in, in actual fact. We are the ones leading the charge when it comes to renewable electricity generation. We are the ones who are working cooperatively with the Australian, Victorian and of course Tasmanian governments when it comes to the opportunity of Marinus Link to put downward pressure on electricity prices and attract some \$7 billion of investment to Tasmania. You lot continue to ignore the opportunity.

Electricity Prices - Support for Businesses

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.06 a.m.]

The Premier was unable to say how many businesses would be supported by his scheme, but what we do know is that he has already had to revise his energy business hardship scheme because of his failure to consult with Tasmanian businesses. Premier, perhaps you could think again. Can you confirm that you have budgeted for just 300 businesses to be able to receive up to \$20 000 in grant money through your business energy hardship scheme? Why will the centrepiece policy of your state of the state speech fail to assist nearly 95 per cent of contracted business customers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As I have said, we will always support Tasmanians in need when it comes to cost-of-living pressures. Electricity and energy prices are one of those. I am mindful of the cost-of-living pressures when it comes to energy and food. It has also been exacerbated by the increase in interest rates over the course of the last 12 months and many people have been caught out by having faith in the determination of the Reserve Bank around interest rate movements to 2024, so I am mindful of that.

We have always said they will be there to help Tasmanians in need and we have demonstrated that. My advice is that there are some 2100 C&I customers -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have a very capable team who are capable of answering any questions.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, order. The Premier has the call. There should be no-one else making any comments - particularly the Deputy Leader of the Opposition

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I have said before in this place, we have the extension to 30 June this year, notwithstanding the fact of the peak energy price impact in September last year. We recognise the hardship and we develop policy to support people going through that hardship, and our minister for Energy released the detail of that just yesterday. We are always open and flexible to supporting Tasmanians who are doing it tough, through the impact of cost-of-living price increases - particularly pertaining to energy, which has been a very volatile market nationally over the last 12 months. We are still very competitive when it comes to other states. Other states are in a far more serious situation than we are in Tasmania, notwithstanding the impacts on individuals and businesses - which we will always be there ready, willing and able to assist.

LGBTIQ+ Counter-rally on Parliament Steps

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.10 a.m.]

Yesterday outside this place, love and inclusion resoundingly defeated hate and exclusion. The counter-protest to fake feminist hate preacher Kellie-Jay Keen, amid support of the rainbow community, was one of the most powerful events I have seen in my time in politics. Had you attended, you would have seen the LGBTIQ+ community and trans defenders outnumber by about 50 to one Kellie-Jay Keen supporters. You would also have witnessed the assault of a young woman on our parliament steps - the doorstep of our democracy - being struck and shoved repeatedly by one of the turfs. It has been captured on video.

Yesterday, you restated your commitment to the LGBTIQ+ community and called yourself an ally, yet you did not stand with the rainbow community yesterday on the lawns or parliament steps. Will you today ask your Police minister to have this clear assault of a peaceful protester and trans ally fully investigated?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I am aware of some of the circumstances of yesterday's rally. I will never condone and will always condemn any assault or attack in the strongest possible terms.

Yesterday was an example of an expression of democracy and people exercising their rights to freedom of speech. You have asked me to effectively intervene and I am unable to do that.

Ms O'Connor - I have asked you to ask the Police minister to investigate.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is an operational matter for the police. I am sure the police service will take great interest in some of the matters of yesterday and will act accordingly.

Health - Investment

Mr WOOD question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.13 a.m.]

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is delivering on our agenda to improve the health and mental health of Tasmanians by creating more treatment and care options in the community. Can you update the House on recent milestones in this important area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his interest in this matter. I know members are very excited about \$700 million worth of health infrastructure investment in Bass, in Launceston, coming online as a result of the LGH redevelopment and Calvary co-location. All of us are excited in anticipation of that considerable investment.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is working to improve health and mental health for all Tasmanians through prevention, early intervention and new support options at all levels of our health system.

Earlier this month we announced more options to access hundreds of types of prescription-only medications, with pharmacists now able to supply individuals with those medicines if they are unable to see their GP to renew their script. I am informed that since it began on 6 March, the roll-out has already been highly successful in helping Tasmanians manage their ongoing conditions, with around 300 Tasmanians a day accessing these arrangements across community pharmacies so far. It was World Pharmacy Day yesterday, and a number of members participated in that, visiting their local pharmacy, as I did in Valley

Road in Devonport. Importantly, this innovation is also helping to ease pressure on GPs, providing greater capacity in the system for medical appointments.

Another innovative approach is our work to implement a Tasmanian Government scholarship program to provide a \$25 000 cash bonus to up to 45 allied health professionals completing their final year of study in 2023. I understand this is the most generous incentive in the nation, and will encourage allied health graduates to stay or relocate to Tasmania to begin work in the Tasmanian health service from 2024.

In the workforce space, we are also working to convert to permanency, 97 temporary Ambulance Tasmania positions that were deployed in response to COVID-19. We will soon also release a statewide endoscopy four-year plan to outline the activity that will be delivered following our Government's commitment to deliver an additional 22 000 endoscopies over the next four years to ensure Tasmanians can access these procedures sooner.

Last week I was pleased to open the Peacock Centre redevelopment, which provides an innovative, first-of-its-kind mental health facility in Tasmania. Our approach is in line with the best practice mental healthcare models not only in Australia, but internationally. Having access to quality community-based mental health support earlier can reduce the number of people needing to go to a hospital. The opening of the Peacock Centre brings a significant injection into the mental health workforce, with over 40 new positions, including peer workers with lived experience - a truly world-class facility that will have an extraordinarily positive impact.

We are also kicking off the next part of our patient travel assistance scheme reforms. From today, residents of our remote islands - including King Island and the Furneaux Group Islands - will be eligible for more support when travelling for treatment, as well as support to some allied health and preventive health services not available on island.

Today, I am also pleased to release the first implantation plan of the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy, which sets out our vision over the next five years. We are supporting this first implementation plan with a \$3.75 million commitment to support its actions, including those population groups at greater risk.

Key actions for 2023-24 as part of the implementation plan include establishing the Premier's Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Council, working closely with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to support the implementation of programs such as Culture Care Connect, embedding LGBTIQ+ inclusive practice online training for all Department of Health staff, establishing LGBTIQ+ peer navigators partnering with Movember to improve men's health awareness, and developing an action plan to implement recommendations from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide in Tasmania.

As always, if anyone listening is experiencing distress, please seek help and support from Lifeline on 13 11 14, or the suicide call back service on 1300 659 467.

Our Government is focused on building Tasmania's future by ensuring Tasmanians have the healthcare system they deserve - and we are delivering. Those opposite have no plan, no policies and only negativity to offer.

Transit Officers on Public Transport

Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr FERGUSON

[10.19 a.m.]

The ongoing crisis with Metro continues to worsen. For over a year, you and your Government deliberately chose to ignore the concerns of bus drivers and the travelling public about worsening antisocial behaviour on public transport. We have seen brawls break out on buses and the impact this has on commuters such as my constituent Leanne, who stood with me in a Rosny bus mall to call for action after she and her son were threatened.

While your announcement yesterday for a transit officer trial is a good start, it is far too slow, and it is just another trial. You ran a trial of these transport officers over a year ago, but despite it being hugely successful, you shelved the idea after just two weeks.

Why has it taken you over a year to do the bleeding obvious and introduce transit officers, albeit for a limited trial? What is stopping you from simply withdrawing this initiative when the community pressure quietens down?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I appreciate the member's interest and thank him for his question. I will take the last part of his question first. That is because it is actually about public safety, not about media interest. That is the answer to the question. That is why you can safely -

Mr O'Byrne - What has changed from 12 months ago.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - That is why you can safely believe that it will not be about withdrawing something just when the media pressure would come off, because it is about safety.

In respect to the broader matters, Mr O'Byrne and through you Mr Speaker, the Government has been working appropriately through the Safe Public Transport Working Group. It has been a very good forum for the union, Metro, Kinetix, as the biggest non-government owned GA provider in Tasmania, together with the TasBus Association, the Department of State Growth and Tasmania Police.

They have all been there and focused on real solutions. It has been a very positive process. Members of the working group have said variously in different ways, including the union publicly, that it has been worthwhile. I reject the claim that it has been, I think the member may have said, 'one year of doing nothing'. We have been working with Metro to support them through a time of significant pressure on the workforce for heavy vehicle licensed drivers. There is a national shortage that I have been very clear on. We have to keep recruiting in a Tasmanian economy which is booming right now, with half the unemployment rate when Mr O'Byrne was the economic development minister at 7.8 per cent, in the bad old days of Labor and the Greens. It was a lot easier back then because there were a lot of workers looking for jobs. Those days are over.

What I am focused on in supporting Metro and the other providers is any evidence about safer ways of providing public transport. There is not a silver bullet here. Antisocial behaviour is a fact of life across Tasmania. That is very regrettable. If we can stamp it out we intend to do that. If we can suppress it that is our goal. We do not believe that it will be fixed overnight, nor will the transit officers on their own be the solution. We hope, Mr O'Byrne, to enable passengers on buses to have an easier way of reporting antisocial behaviour and things that are just not right taking place on the buses.

There is a particular technology being considered at the moment that will allow people to, more or less, anonymously and in real time report things that are wrong, that are harassing people on public transport, or something they are seeing out the window at a bus mall, for example, or a driver who is being abused by one of these thugs.

Throughout this time, we have provided special resources, financial resources, to Tasmania Police. We now want to add another layer of support so it is not just about police and law enforcement but also about appropriately authorised officers who are empowered to take matters seriously when they are occurring on buses. It is a clear demonstration of the Rockliff Liberal Government improving public transport: more services, more direct services that customers are telling us that they want but also safer services by working together through a collaborative process.

National Electricity Market - Commitment to Delink

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.23 a.m.]

Yesterday and once again you tried to downplay the undeniable fact that the Energy minister was deliberately dishonest when he told ABC radio the Liberal Party never had a policy of not being part of the NEM. The community is left to conclude that you are too weak and lack the integrity to hold him to account. Will you at least answer the question that Mr Barnett would not? When did you decide to break your promise to delink Tasmanian power prices from the national electricity market?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we have gone through this. Mr Barnett covered these matters. The minister has clarified what he meant, which is that the Government never had a policy to physically disconnect from the NEM. You have come in here today, once again throwing all sorts of figures around, including your 5000 figure. I do not know where that came from. My advice is, when it comes to businesses on unregulated pricing, it is 2100 or thereabouts.

This is about you asking questions that are clearly not based on facts. I am happy to answer any question before us, but do not come in here making things up like you have already done this morning.

Last night, on the adjournment debate, the member was correcting the record in the dying minutes of last night's parliamentary session over a previous question, of which you misrepresented the facts.

Ms White - I corrected the record. Why does he not?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a shocking indictment of the way you come in here and throw all sorts of accusations around not based on fact.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Standing Order 45, relevance. I ask you to draw the Premier's attention to the question, which is, can he please tell us when he decided to break the policy delinking from national prices on energy?

Mr SPEAKER - Order. The point of order is not an opportunity to re-ask the question.

Ms WHITE - The Premier is not addressing the question, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER - The Premier is fully aware of the question. I take the point of order and I remind the Premier about relevance. I will allow the Premier to answer it how he sees fit.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have touched a nerve, because you have come in here today using false figures. In the rush to always try to score a cheap political point, you come in here, you do not do your homework and you get your facts wrong.

Ms White - You do not understand the business community. You do not know what you are saying.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms White.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Member for Franklin, order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Last night was an example of where you had to correct the record because you came in here on a very serious matter involving a family in Tasmania and you got your facts wrong.

Ms White - No I did not. That is not true.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. The House will come to order. I will give everybody a chance to settle down. The Premier has been asked a question. I am going to allow him to answer the question without interruption. I do not wish to ask anybody to leave the Chamber, but I will if you continue to interject on the Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Speaker, it is a pattern of behaviour from not only the Leader of the Opposition, but the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. A couple of months ago, the Deputy Leader -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Just as important. You can laugh, but the Deputy Leader came in here throwing falsehoods around or in media releases. Ms Dow declared last December there was a disturbingly high number of deaths on arrival at our hospitals compared to other states.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know you are sensitive about it. So you should be.

Dr BROAD - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Standing Order 45. How can this possibly be relevant to the question? Something that happened two months ago?

Mr SPEAKER - Order. I have already made a ruling on relevance. I have asked the Premier to be relevant. I will allow him to continue answering the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is relevant because when you come in here asking questions, we are never quite sure whether you have your facts right. A lot of the time, you have not. I am happy to cop it on the chin when we can do better. Ms Dow was again trying to frighten people and failing to do her homework on the basic facts. If Ms Dow had done her homework, she would have found out that it is a longstanding practice in Tasmania that when a person dies at home, a medical practitioner is required to pronounce life extinct and they are transported to hospital by ambulance for that to happen.

Dr Broad - How is this relevant?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is relevant because you come in here, you throw out media releases in a rush to grab a cheap headline without doing your homework. That is why it is relevant.

We have covered aspects of the NEM and how we are delivering for Tasmanians and supporting them through the volatility of the energy market.

Morton Group Medical Services - Funding

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

[10.29 a.m.]

Morton Group Medical Services has been partially funded for Primary Health Tasmania to provide healthcare from 6 p.m. on weeknights at no cost to patients. These pop-up clinics visit Elizabeth Street Mall and similar locations, targeting the most vulnerable in our community who simply cannot access a GP, either because finding a GP who bulk bills is close to impossible, or in any event, most GPs have closed their books to new patients.

Unfunded activities of this service include a clinic at the Glenorchy Salvation Army and Flint House, where bulk-billed healthcare is provided. Funding was sought from the Primary Care Support Initiative Grant Round 3. This funding would have allowed the continuation of unfunded daytime services and the expansion of other services to five days a week. Sadly, the

service was unsuccessful in its funding request. As a direct result, daytime services at the Glenorchy Salvos and Flint House must now cease next month.

This is a low-cost service that has been philanthropically funded by Moreton Group Medical Services, run on very little money but a huge amount of goodwill. It is exactly what we need because clients will now clog up the Royal's emergency department, which is exactly what we must avoid. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Will you revisit the funding of this service that helps so many people who otherwise cannot see a GP?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. It is a very important matter, and a matter of timely access to our primary healthcare service, whether it be access to a GP, and I have mentioned the cutting of red tape when it comes to our reforms in the area of pharmacy today as well. What you have highlighted really has been longstanding neglect from the Commonwealth government.

Ms O'Connor - It's always someone else's fault.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Primary healthcare is the responsibility -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, order. Premier, please address your questions through the Chair.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Primary healthcare is the responsibility of the federal government. I am pleased with the way we are working with the new federal government in this space and there are a number of examples of that, but it is primarily the responsibility of the federal government. The point of our after-hours service is the Tasmanian Government reaching into federal government responsibility and investing so the policy settings that we have are the right ones.

One of the biggest challenges we acknowledge in health for Tasmanians is access to an affordable general practitioner. In fact we hear from our GPs across Tasmania -

Ms O'Connor - You've made it worse by removing PCR testing.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor. This is the third or fourth time today.

Mr ROCKLIFF - and the AMA that Medicare does not reflect the increasing costs of delivering primary care services. This is making it more difficult for all Tasmanians, especially vulnerable Tasmanians, to access the care they need when they need it. I am aware of the Moreton Group and the work they have done and, indeed, through the pandemic the service they provided in cooperation with the Salvation Army, if my memory serves me correctly, around ensuring access to vaccinations for vulnerable groups in our community.

For our part, we have introduced an \$8 million GP After Hours Support Initiative to help increase access to GP services for Tasmanians. The initiative provides financial assistance to GPs and other service providers to offer after-hours and extended services to their local community. The latest round of this initiative, which I believe you were referring to, prioritises support for vulnerable Tasmanians across the state, including those experiencing homelessness who may find it particularly tough to access a GP.

As with all funding under this initiative, the Department of Health is responsible for receiving, reviewing and approving all applications. I am advised the department also engaged an external probity adviser who provided advice and guidance to the panel that was established to determine the successful applicants. I certainly appreciate that some providers may be disappointed to miss out in this round but I can assure the member that the programs are done at arm's length from myself as minister. I am advised, however, that unsuccessful applicants were provided with the opportunity to receive feedback from the assessment panel and I certainly encourage any organisation to take up that opportunity.

I assure you, given your interest - and thank you for that - that our Government is committed to providing all Tasmanians with the health services they need. We are also committed to supporting our primary healthcare providers where we can. I am pleased to say that we will soon be launching another round of the GP After Hours Support Initiative and I encourage any interested organisations to apply. Thank you for the question.

Electricity - Policy to Cap Prices

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.35 a.m.]

After almost a decade in office, your broken promises are piling up and nowhere is this clearer than with energy policy. Power prices have soared after you abandoned your 2018 election promise to break away from mainland electricity pricing. At the most recent election in 2021, you pledged that in the event of future energy market volatility you would, and I quote, 'protect Tasmanian households and businesses from future price hikes through legislated, capped, regulated power prices'. As of this morning, the policy is still on your website. Is this still your policy, and if it is, why have you not capped electricity prices for Tasmanian households and businesses?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I have detailed in this place over the last two days the actions we are taking. The minister for Energy has detailed in this place the actions we are taking. I have referred to C&I customers today, over 2000 of them, for whom we are providing hardship grants. We have supported those on fixed and low incomes, vulnerable Tasmanians, with our winter bill buster payment last year.

As to the volatility in the energy market, if my memory serves me correctly, it peaked between April and October last year. We are particularly mindful of the impact on C&I customers and have responded with a policy that will support them, should they meet the criteria, through hardship.

We have also supported organisations that support vulnerable Tasmanians when it comes to cost-of-living pressures more broadly and our Neighbourhood Houses are a very good example of that, some 35 of them, with considerable investment to support them. Our Energy Saver Loan Scheme is another example of policy intervention and listening to and supporting Tasmanians who require that support, given the volatility we have experienced in the marketplace. Other states have had the determination from their regulators in terms of expected price increases and that was last week.

This is a national challenge on which the national government and the Tasmanian Government are working together.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The RER pointed to some \$33 million of Tasmanian government investment in partnership with the federal contribution to support vulnerable Tasmanians and small businesses as well with respect to that national package. What I can guarantee is this: power prices will always be lower under a Liberal government than a Labor-Greens government, because when the Labor-Greens government were in power -

Opposition members interjecting.

Member Suspended

Member for Franklin - Mr Winter

Mr SPEAKER - The member for Franklin can leave the Chamber until after Question Time. You cannot yell across the Chamber.

Ms O'Byrne - Sorry, Mr Speaker, I was waiting for the same thing -

Mr SPEAKER - The member for Bass will be following him if they are commenting while another member is leaving. The House should be silent.

Mr Winter withdrew.

Mr SPEAKER - Premier, if you could conclude, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Speaker, I do not want to present the facts to further disrupt the parliament, but the facts are that between 2010 and 2014, when 10 000 Tasmanians were sent to the dole queue, power prices increased by some 65 per cent. What I am saying is that under a majority Liberal government, power prices will always be lower than under a Labor or Labor-Greens government.

Spirit of Tasmania - Progress of New Vessels

Mrs ALEXANDER question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr FERGUSON

[10.40 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the progress of the builds of the *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels, and the success in including our local businesses in this long-term investment?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank my friend and Bass colleague, Mrs Alexander, for her question. The tourism and business economy is booming in Tasmania at the moment. Tourism and hospitality businesses and the state have enjoyed a very buoyant season, not just with strong visitor numbers but, as the Premier announced last week, a huge yield now, which means money in the pockets of Tasmanian families and the businesses that they are connected to. We know from our tourism numbers that tourists cannot get enough of our beautiful state at the moment, and there is strong and continuing demand to travel here.

We want more and more people to experience the beauty of our environment and the friendliness of our people. That is why, as a state, we need to continue fostering development and planning for the future, particularly of exciting new and growing tourism developments in the state as well.

That is why we have a strong, long-range plan for a 30-year view of the TT-Line, not a four-year view - with two new *Spirits of Tasmania*, and the new port developments at both ends of Bass Strait, at Geelong and at East Devonport. The best way to provide more capacity - noting that our current *Spirits* are so busy, often now trying to do double sailings - we need to build bigger ships. That is exactly what is now happening with the new ships currently in construction.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - I am glad to hear the support of the Labor Party. It is a rare treat when we hear positive noises from the opposition about the good things happening in Tasmania.

Despite an appalling war in eastern Europe, those two ships are now under construction. They will have about 40 per cent more capacity. We need that, with 3.7 kilometres of vehicle lane.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - I am not sure the support is still there anymore.

All of that 3.7 kilometres will be overheight for caravans and campervans, so we can have fewer people struggling to get access to the ships, because our economy is going so well - to, I think, the disappointment of the Labor Party. This is a massive 1.8 kilometre of extra lane

space. That is about a 70 per cent increase for overheight capacity, which we often hear about from our constituents. This in itself is a game-changer for the *Spirits*. Those ships will carry 1800 passengers a day. That is the capacity, meaning more people will be able to bring their cars to enjoy our beautiful state.

As part of the new ships' build, we made the bold decision - which was opposed by members opposite, unbelievably - that we would see up to \$100 million of local content for the new ships. It was unbelievable that Labor would oppose this -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - That is the noise of opposition by the way - in an effort to boost our economy through advanced manufacturing and supporting local jobs. We wanted to make sure Tasmanian businesses had the best opportunities to supply local goods and local services.

I am pleased to advise the House that it is paying off, with RMC and TT-Line locking in a number of Tasmanian-based contractors to supply content and services for our new vessels. Penalty provisions are included in the contract in the event that those provisions are not satisfied. It is working, and we have not wavered in our commitment to get Tasmanians a better share of this historic infrastructure spend.

A big shout-out to Crisp Bros/Haywards. The first contract was provided for that proud northern business for steel lashing points that were manufactured in Tasmania, and have been shipped to Finland to be welded to the vessel vehicle decks. Those lashing points form part of a system that locks freight trailers down for the Bass Strait crossing. That is good news for our northern economy. It is good news for Tasmania. That again shows the importance of that decision we took, which was again opposed by those noisy people on the other side of the Chamber.

Also some good news that I hope the House will welcome today, I will be joining with Hobart-based Tasmanian Shipping Supplies, which has secured a \$1 million contract to supply catering and hotel equipment to the first of the new *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels under construction. This is really good for Tasmania. It adds to the health and vitality of our economy that we are experiencing at the moment. That is money into the pockets of Tasmanian businesses, that is food on the table -

Ms Finlay - What money was taken out of their pockets with the delays?

Mr SPEAKER - Member for Bass, order.

Mr FERGUSON - of their working families. We have been very supportive of any Tasmanian businesses providing content for the new vessels.

Ms O'Connor - Five minutes.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Speaker, there is more good news. The list of Tasmanian firms that have already been awarded contracts by RMC and *Spirit of Tasmania* keeps growing. It now includes Haywards Steel that I mentioned, Norfolk Blinds -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, Standing Order 48. This is a Dorothy Dix question. The minister of self-love has been talking for at least five minutes and I ask you to pull him up.

Mr Ferguson - Biggest bully in the House.

Mr SPEAKER - He has not at all. 'For at least five minutes' is a stretch of the imagination. I keep an eye on the time and I will allow the minister to continue. Please do not interrupt with a point of order.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. You have pulled up this minister before for calling me a bully. I ask you to ask him to withdraw it immediately.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Speaker, before you ask me to withdraw, I withdraw.

Mr Speaker, another great Tasmanian business is Norfolk Blinds. I think Mr Ellis and Braddon members might have great support there for the north-west. Tasmanian Independent Beverage Systems, Handmark Gallery, Challis Waters Systems and Vanquard Vending. This is good news for our economy. We are really pleased with it. We want to see more of it. We will continue to prosecute our case. We are so pleased that we are delivering those ships much sooner than required by the current lifecycle of the *Spirits of Tasmania*.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - Despite the negativity of members opposite, which is frankly hard to believe, we are delivering in a way that is boosting our way of life, our businesses, and our Tasmanian working families.

Renewable Energy Dividend

Dr BROAD question to TREASURER, Mr FERGUSON

[10.47 a.m.]

Another centrepiece of the Premier's state of the state speech was the so-called renewable energy dividend. The Premier said he had tasked Treasury - your department - with developing the dividend. When do you anticipate the Premier will receive advice from your department on this so-called dividend? Can you outline a time line for implementation? Perhaps more importantly, when will Tasmanian households and businesses begin receiving the dividend?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the shadow treasurer for what I think may be my first question of the year. I thank the member for his interest in the matter.

We are working on this. It is our initiative. The Tasmanian Liberal Government is very proud of our renewable energy program - massive investment coming to Tasmania. Not only will it drought-proof our state - and we have seen our state suffer through drought with energy

security - but also the job opportunities. It would be a jobs bonanza if we can see those very exciting renewable energy assets being built in Tasmania.

As the minister responsible and the Premier have already described, if we can land those huge projects it will put downward pressure on Tasmanian wholesale energy prices, and that would be very good news for Tasmanians.

On that basis in the Premier's Address, we have commissioned the work through Treasury - I am glad you picked it up from the speech - so that we can capture that improvement and pass it on to our customers.

My question, then, I will revert to the Labor Party, is why will you not support us in our energy program? Why have you got so much to say, but you will not support us?

Dr Broad - Will you support Marinus?

Mr FERGUSON - Marinus is a standing question. The federal Labor Party support it. Your bosses in Canberra support it.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - Anthony Albanese supports it. Chris Bowen supports it.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - We do not know where Rebecca White or Mr Winter stand on this. They have a lot to say but there is no substance. They have nothing to offer. While we get on with the job and Treasury will continue their very good work in advising Government on the best way to provide that energy benefit to consumers, we will leave the standing question, which it would appear is unanswered. They do not have a position on Marinus. We do and we are getting on with the job.

Greater Hobart Plan - Urban Growth Boundary

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for PLANNING, Mr FERGUSON

[10.50.a.m.]

This week the Clarence City Council censured you for abusing your powers as minister and subverting their role as a planning authority. You did not like their decision to reject an extension of the Urban Growth Boundary and you stepped in to back the developers and try to overturn it. Yesterday in Question Time you dropped an announcement that you will be easing out the growth boundaries in 12 Hobart areas for development. They are likely to be precious ridgelines and conservation land. Instead of using your golden pen to regulate short-stay accommodation and reduce the renting crisis, partly because you are conflicted as an Airbnb owner, you are fast-tracking public land ad hoc to the developers. You are acting like the planning overlord you clearly think you are. Will you keep your mitts off Clarence City Council and tell Tasmanians where those 12 hand-picked areas are going to be?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for her question. There are so many mistakes in that question but I will start with the last one. They have been publicly provided and I will provide them to the House later today, because she is clearly not across her own brief. I have provided guidance that the Urban Growth Boundary has a number of anomalies in it - 12 according to my advice from the department.

Dr Woodruff - Yes, they get in the way of developers. They are very annoying.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - I am happy to address your, again, false claim, Dr Woodruff. There are 12 locations around southern Tasmania that have been identified through the Greater Hobart Plan, which I have discussed in this place on numerous occasions. That was the work that our Government and the four southern Greater Hobart councils have been working through. Now that the Greater Hobart Plan has been adopted and finalised by collaboration we are now moving on the Urban Growth Boundary in relation to those 12 areas, not just the one in relation to Droughty Point but the 12.

You are wrong about claiming that it is somehow public land; that is private land. I do not know why you say these things, Dr Woodruff. Again, you are wrong but we do not expect a retraction or a correction.

Dr Woodruff - Is it? So there is no Crown land?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - The Droughty Point land is private land and you ought to know that. The Urban Growth Boundary does not, by itself, bring land in for housing. What it does is set the limits for what the Planning Commission can consider for rezoning. Again, I do not understand why the Greens do not get that.

Finally, to the first incorrect point, the claim that somehow Clarence City Council have been usurped. That is not correct. Under the act, only one level of government can change the Urban Growth Boundary. It is not council, it is not the federal government, it is the Tasmanian Government. The Urban Growth Boundary has changed a number of times and the Southern Regional Land Use Strategy has changed a number of times. We are proposing to change it now in a coordinated fashion and in a way that reflects that work that has been done through the Greater Hobart Committee.

Dr Woodruff - Secret work.

Mr FERGUSON - So secret that it is on the Greater Hobart Committee website. So secret that the world can see it.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, order.

Mr FERGUSON - You are just digging your hole deeper, Dr Woodruff, because you have no idea what you are talking about. What we are proposing is something very sensible.

I will agree with Dr Woodruff on one thing. I was very disappointed with Clarence City Council's decision, for a few reasons. First of all, it went against the Greater Hobart Plan which Clarence City Council, with respect, had been a worthy and supportive member of and very constructive along the process. The second reason is because Clarence City councillors, or at least the majority of them, actually went specifically against their own expert planner's advice, which has created all sorts of issues in respect of that.

Dr Woodruff - They are the planning authority and it is their role to do that.

Mr SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, order.

Mr FERGUSON - I am also disappointed for another reason and that is that your party, Dr Woodruff, and your party, Ms White, have backed in a decision that otherwise would have stopped 2500, maybe 3000, homes coming into the market.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The minister is misleading the House. That is not the decision that was taken. The decision was about an extension for 800 houses. He is misleading the House that 1700 houses would have been approved. Will he correct the record, please?

Mr SPEAKER - That is not a point of order.

Mr FERGUSON - The Greens have backed in a decision that if we were not playing a role would have prevented 2500 to 3000 new homes coming into the market.

We need more land supply in appropriate locations, close to services and close to the existing boundary. Skylands represents an exciting and innovative opportunity to deliver all those homes and as the proponents have made the point, it is not just with 5 per cent of public open space, but more than 30 per cent. It could be one of the most contemporary, exciting housing developments the state has ever seen. It is not just about how innovative it is. We need to see more supply. I am sad to see the Greens and the Labor Party once again being anti-development on this.

Mr Speaker, as I conclude, we are currently consulting on the proposed changes to the Urban Growth Boundary. The four councils in the south, together with the Tasmanian Planning Commission, have been written to and been asked for their feedback for a five-week period. We look forward to their feedback, but I think that the Government's intentions are very clear. We intend to move on that, unfortunately without the support of Ms White and Dr Woodruff.

Jobs Hub - Government Commitment

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for SKILLS, TRAINING and WORKFORCE GROWTH, Mr ELLIS

[10.56 a.m.]

Having personally employed two people out of the St Helens Jobs Hub, can you provide an update on how the Government is delivering on its commitment to jobs hubs? How many

jobs have the hubs delivered and what else is the Government doing to build Tasmania's workforce?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, before I get into that question, on indulgence, I want to briefly address Ms O'Connor's earlier question. I really encourage anyone with evidence of violence or criminal activity to report it to the police -

Ms O'Connor - Yes, we will. We thought you would.

Mr Ferguson - How long have you been sitting on it?

Ms O'Connor - It is a public video.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ELLIS - I do not think this is controversial, Mr Speaker, but you can either report it to police or anonymously to Crime Stoppers. Violence has no place in Tasmania and we want to stamp it out wherever it occurs.

I thank my friend and colleague, Mr Tucker, the member for Lyons, first for his work in employing Tasmanians, including those Tasmanians who front up to our jobs hubs. There are so many jobs hubs that are now rolled out right around this state. I say thanks to the active work of business owners like Mr Tucker and also in his capacity as member for Lyons - same with you, Mr Speaker - in advocating for jobs hubs. They are in the south-east, they are up the east coast, they are in the south-central region as well in his electorate and he is doing an outstanding job in this space.

The Rockliff Liberal Government is getting things done and building Tasmania's future. Our Government is a government for jobs. We want more Tasmanians to have a job, more opportunities to build their careers, and more opportunities to build their lives and families in this great state. From day one, our focus has been on doing whatever we can to make it as easy as possible for Tasmanians to get a job.

I am pleased to confirm today that our jobs hubs have now delivered more than 3000 Tasmanian jobs. That is an outstanding result. I have spoken before about how good these jobs hubs are because they link jobseekers to employers. They support employers to find the staff that they need. They provide Tasmanians of any age and stage with a chance to get a start in life, or to change their life.

The Southern Employment and Training Network has its board in place and is now operational with an online portal for jobseekers and businesses to connect. The Southern Employment and Training Network completes our regional jobs hubs network and is servicing the Huon Valley, the Channel, Bruny Island and physical premises which will be coming online in the near future. Importantly, there have been more than 50 000 jobs created in this state since the 2014 election. The Premier has announced a target to create 20 000 more jobs as part of the state-of-the-state address. This is what vision looks like. This is what having a direction and providing the foundations for a strong economy in this state looks like.

It was confirmed once again last week that our plan is working, with ABS labour force data showing that our unemployment rate has hit a record low as at February of 3.7 per cent. That is half of what it was when we came to Government. This is unprecedented. It is phenomenal. It is only because we have a strong plan to deliver a strong economy that we are seeing these remarkable results.

We are not stopping there. We are investing in the skills that Tasmanians will need for the jobs of the future. Through our contestable Skills Fund program we are supporting thousands of Tasmanians to get ahead, to upskill and to reskill. More than 3800 Tasmanian workers will now gain new skills following the outcome of the Building a Skilled Workforce - Existing Worker Fund, which was finalised last month. This program is providing more than \$3.2 million in funding for training and delivery for key demand in areas like the seafood and maritime industry, the disability services sector, transport, manufacturing, agriculture, construction, forestry. These are the sectors with key jobs in our economy, putting food on the table of Tasmanian families all over our state, supporting communities to do what they do best.

Last week, Skills Tasmania also finalised the Building a Skilled Workforce - Jobseeker Fund, providing nearly 1500 more subsidised training places in our training market, focused on healthcare and community services, hospitality and tourism. This is now more than 5000 subsidised training places funded since February.

Other programs are the Developing Industry Trainers program, the Vocational Teacher Preparation program and the Energising Tasmanian Training Market Development Fund, which is open for applications right now and closing soon. The Government is backing local jobs. We are proudly supporting Tasmanians to take their opportunities. Our focus is 100 per cent on getting things done so that we can build Tasmania's future.

Labor has no plans, no policies and is hopelessly divided. It is no wonder Tasmanians have had enough of them and the Greens after they shrunk the number of jobs in this economy by 10 000 people. They devastated communities. They belted the local economy. They shut down industries. Local businesses felt like the Government was actively working against them. Tasmanians have not forgotten. That is why we are getting on with the job and supporting thousands more Tasmanians into work and training.

Hydrogen Industry

Dr BROAD question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr BARNETT

[11.02 a.m.]

The Government promised Tasmania would be producing hydrogen and using it domestically between 2022 - last year - and 2024. You also promised that by 2025, Tasmania would have a hydrogen export industry. After years of promises you still cannot explain where the power will come from. Your promised legislative amendment to provide a water supply is nowhere to be seen.

Will Tasmania be commercially producing and using hydrogen domestically by next year? Will Tasmanians see a hydrogen export industry before the next election, as you promised, or will this be yet another announcement that you failed to deliver?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. It is excellent to get a question on renewable energy and our plans for the future, because they are big and they are bold. Every day we are seeing it in the *Mercury* and people are talking about our bold plans going from 100 per cent to 200 per cent, not just leading in Australia but leading the globe.

We are kicking goals. We have a big, bold and ambitious plan. It includes hydrogen. I did not hear the word 'Marinus', Mr Speaker, and our support for Marinus from state Labor. It has been reverberating through the whole Chamber these last few days - Marinus and the position of state Labor. It is like, hello, hello, hello, state Labor, please decide.

Ms Finlay - You know you cannot deliver.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Mr Speaker. If it was not so serious, we would all be laughing our heads off. We are laughing our heads off because they have not put a position on one of the biggest plans for our renewable energy future to get to 200 per cent. They are linked.

Dr Broad - How about some relevance here, the hydrogen industry.

Mr BARNETT - Let us get the link to hydrogen because that is the interjection from the member - where is the link? Marinus Link is complementary to green hydrogen. It is all part of our plan. It is in our policies, it is in the Renewable Energy Action Plan, and it is in our Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan.

It is all in there. It is linked. Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation plans and green hydrogen. We are on track. We have big, bold plans by 2030 to be exporting globally. By next year, partnering with the Blue Economy CRC, the plan is on track to be producing green hydrogen in Tasmania. We are growing the economy. We are creating more jobs. Our renewable energy plans are strong.

I heard the comment about the cap earlier. Labor, just before the last time they went into government, had a plan for a 5 per cent cap. What happened? They threw it out the door and power prices went up 65 per cent.

Avebury Nickel Mine - Power Contract

Dr BROAD question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr BARNETT

[11.06 a.m.]

The reopening of the Avebury nickel mine after 13 years on care and maintenance is a great thing for Tasmania and the north-west coast. However, the mine has serious concerns about the power contract they were forced to sign up to by Aurora before they could reopen. First, they were forced to sign up to the NEM rates because of your broken promise. Second, they were forced to pay a \$1.8 million bond to Aurora Energy before they could restart the mine, which creates a cashflow problem for this critical project.

Can you confirm that you and your office were told about this by John Lamb from Mallee Resources and did nothing to support the business? Can you also confirm that Mallee Resources asked for your personal support only two weeks ago to remove the bond requirement? Will you commit to resolving this issue for the Avebury Mine?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, Avebury nickel mine is fantastic news for the west coast. It is creating jobs. Why is this happening? Because we are backing our mining industry. We are the strongest supporters of our mining and mineral processing industry, with thousands of jobs. More than 60 per cent of our exports are from that sector.

Avebury nickel mine is part of that. If you had been reading the *Mercury* today on the renewable energy future or yesterday, you would see they are backing our renewable energy plans, being part of our renewable energy future.

We have a very cooperative relationship with the Avebury nickel mine, John Lamb, in terms of Government support to encourage the reopening of that mine. It is as a result of the partnership between the Government and industry to get the job done, to create more jobs and to grow our mining industry. It is happening. We were on the west coast just last week with the Premier and the Cabinet. That is an important part of Tasmania. We are backing them. We are working together to get the job done. I thank John Lamb for his leadership and what he is doing. We have a cooperative ongoing relationship and we will do everything we can to continue to support that mine.

Screen Industry - Government Support

Mr YOUNG question to MINISTER for THE ARTS, Ms ARCHER

[11.09 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Tasmanian Government is supporting our local screen industry?

Ms O'Connor - Just put out a press release.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is good news, even if Ms O'Connor does not want to hear it. I thank the member for his question and his continued interest in the arts. The Government is a strong supporter of our cultural and creative industries. This is why we continue to deliver consistent and targeted support to our screen industry, which in turn provides thousands of jobs directly and indirectly across our state and adds millions to our local economy.

Our significant investment in the screen industry has ensured not only sustainability for the sector throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, but has created a sector that is booming and competing on the world stage.

Members will be aware that our Government's investment in screen production over the last two years has been record-breaking and resulted in some extraordinary opportunities for

our local industry. Our ongoing commitment to Tasmania's screen industry has enabled our growing local industry to build capacity, resulting in the strongest-ever level of back-to-back production activity in the state's history. Further, for attracting training opportunities, it has meant that we have not only created jobs for Tasmanian screen practitioners, but sustained them into the future.

Tasmania is now seen as a world-class filming destination. In 2022, we had national and international blockbusters filmed in Tasmania - including our very own *Alone Australia*, Paramount's *The Bridge*, ABC's *Bay of Fires*, Amazon Prime's *Deadloch*, and episodes of *MasterChef Australia*. These productions not only provide an opportunity to showcase our state to the nation - and indeed, the world - but also provide ongoing and sustained employment for our screen sector.

ABC's new flagship drama *Bay of Fires* - starring our very own Marta Dusseldorp, and filmed in locations from the west coast to Collinsvale - is creating more than 85 local jobs and driving an estimated spend of \$7.5 million in our local goods and services economy. In fact, so good was the investment on the west coast, and particularly in Zeehan - my husband's home town, where he was born - I received a letter from the mayor thanking our Government for investing significant funding in this series. I must add that Zeehan has never seen so much action, nor has it been so fully booked in terms of hospitality and accommodation as well as other goods and services.

A second season of *Bay of Fires* is also in the works, with grant funding to support the series through Screen Tasmania's Project Development program being successful recently.

Three other projects, namely *Dog Island*, *Standing* and *Bruny*, have also received funding.

The increased interest in filming in Tasmania is creating jobs - real jobs supporting work for our local sector, and delivering benefits, particularly in our regional economies.

I will touch on some pretty big news. As an *Alone* fan, I know Mr Young will be pleased to hear that our very own *Alone Australia* will be released next Wednesday, 29 March, on SBS. Filmed right here in Tasmania, *Alone Australia* sees 10 contestants dropped into the remote wilderness of Tasmania with only their survival skills to rely on. Personally, I think they are quite mad, Mr Speaker; I would never do it myself.

Screen Tasmania has worked very closely with SBS, NITV Studios Australia, local councils, the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, landowners and other government agencies to ensure this production was safe, sustainable and sensitive to our unique Tasmanian environment. As a result of our support in this project through our very own Screen Innovation Fund, Tasmania's extraordinary natural and cultural landscapes will now be broadcast to homes across the world.

In closing, Tasmania now joins the likes of Patagonia, British Columbia, northern Mongolia, Canada's Northwest Territories and northern Norway in hosting versions of this show. We will also have another coup for the state with a feature horror film, *Devil Inside*, beginning to film in Tasmania this year.

Mr Speaker, our Government continues to deliver consistent and targeted support for our diverse and vibrant arts sector. I really look forward to seeing further growth and sustained momentum for our screen industry over the coming year as a result of our continued investment.

Members - Hear, hear.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

TasNetworks - Financial Statements - Integrity

[11.14 a.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Speaker, on indulgence, I had a question yesterday from the member for Franklin, Mr O'Byrne, that I undertook to follow up. I would like to update the House.

Ms O'Connor - Are you going to tell the truth?

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - That is outrageous, Mr Speaker. Would you please ask the member to withdraw?

Mr SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, you are fully aware of the standing order. You cannot accuse people of not telling the truth. As we went through yesterday, it is a substantive motion. Please withdraw without qualification.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Mr Speaker. What is the member being asked to withdraw, and under what standing order?

Mr SPEAKER - When a member takes personal offence to what is said, then it is standard practice that the person then immediately withdraws that comment.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Ms O'Connor, you have done it a number of times. The minister has taken offence to your comment. Can you please withdraw.

Ms O'CONNOR - I withdraw it.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you. Mr Speaker, as I was saying, I would like to update the House in response to the member for Franklin's question yesterday regarding TasNetworks.

TasNetworks addressed the allegations by Mr O'Byrne when they were first raised at GBE scrutiny last year. TasNetworks stands behind the integrity of its financial statements,

and can advise that it has not been subject to any, quote, 'surprise audit' by the Tasmanian Audit Office. Any such allegation is false.

Further, TasNetworks is a regulated business operating with a fixed revenue cap. This matter does not impact on regulated network charges or household energy bills. Any statement to the contrary is misleading. TasNetworks is independently audited by the Auditor-General and complies with all relevant state and federal financial reporting requirements. Its audited financial statements are published annually as part of its annual report.

TasNetworks can confirm that an issue was identified during the current financial year regarding purchasing orders and the treatment of goods received, not invoiced. This issue was corrected in September 2022, as soon as the business became aware. The errors are not material to TasNetworks' 2021-22 financial report, and do not require the adjustment of the audited financial statements.

Further actions are currently in progress to prevent recurrence of this issue, and to implement improved controls and process improvements. TasNetworks reiterates that those errors have no material impact on the integrity of its financial statements, and have no impact on Tasmanian energy bills. Any such claim is false.

In conclusion, TasNetworks continues to be focused on what Tasmanians care about: the safety, reliability and affordability of energy.

Time expired.

MESSAGE FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Committee Appointment

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, the following message has been received from the Legislative Council:

Mr Harriss to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation, in accordance with Section 3 of the Subordinate Legislation Committee Act 1969 (No. 44).

C.M. FARRELL
President
21 March 2023

VALIDATION BILL 2023 (No. 3)

First Reading

Bill presented by Ms Archer and read the first time.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Health

[11.20 a.m.]

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

That the House take note of the following matter: health.

I rise to speak on this matter of public importance today, being health. I put on the record that we will continue to talk about health. It is not about being negative about health because the facts speak for themselves. Our health system is the worst it has ever been under this Government and the data tells that story, as do the experiences and the stories we hear from Tasmanians each and every day. There is no denying that.

I draw the attention of the Premier to this document, which I think came out in 2018, which set out a number of key goals, one of which was around emergency presentations in Tasmania. The goal that you set yourselves as a government was that 90 per cent of emergency presentations would be in and out of an emergency department within four hours by 2022. This is not being negative, Premier, this is being factual. The latest dashboard data says that just 51 per cent of Tasmanians had a length of stay less than four hours. You are clearly not meeting that target.

That goes further when we look at the percentage of patients in each triage category, whose medical assessment and treatment commence within the clinically recommended time frames. If we look at category 2, which is imminently life-threatening, important time-critical treatment, or very severe pain, just 46 per cent of people are seen within those clinically-recommended time frames. That is what I mean when I say the data speaks for itself.

For the Premier to come in here today and talk about a question that we put to this House on behalf of a Tasmanian family a couple of weeks ago, and to criticise the Leader of the Opposition for correcting the record - something which those on his side of the House fail to do on a regular basis - is deplorable. We represented that family in good faith. They entrusted that information to us and that was the experience they shared with us. I believe they would be shocked by the Premier's actions today in saying that -

Mr Rockliff - Are you blaming the family now?

Ms DOW - I am not blaming the family. That is the way it was presented in your statements today, Premier. They had a terrible time and nothing dismisses the fact that they waited seven hours for an ambulance. That is the critical point in this. It is a sad day in Tasmania if it is the norm to wait seven hours for an ambulance.

I subsequently met with the paramedics from ProMED who were providing the service at that event. I know they would like to speak with the Premier about a number of other concerns they have. We were simply setting the facts straight and further correcting what was presented to the House. However, that does not detract from the experience of that Tasmanian family and the fact that they waited seven hours, which is shocking.

It is a fact that under this Government ambulance response times have increased by 25 per cent. There is no denying those facts. Just two Fridays ago at the Launceston General Hospital, in the emergency department, there was a large number of ambulances ramped. There was a large number of patients in the emergency department waiting to be seen. There was a large number of patients waiting to be admitted to a respective ward. The staff there thought that a code yellow had been called. They were under incredible pressure. It was a cry for help from those staff. They are seeing increasing demand day after day with little addition to resources. I hear from nurses working on the ground at the LGH who say the pressure is increasing on every shift. There are significant staff shortages. There are not the resources to do the job. They are working overtime and double shifts. There is also a large number of agency nurses working across the LGH.

All these things contribute poorer patient outcomes and lower morale amongst our workforce, Premier. I want to know what your Government is doing about that. Yes, you have announced incentives to get more allied health professionals working across Tasmania, but what are you doing to further support the nursing workforce across Tasmania? What are you doing right now in the emergency department at the LGH to reduce that pressure? You know staff were shocked to find that that code yellow, which is an internal emergency at that hospital, had not been called. I know that because I have spoken to the union about it. Premier, have you spoken to the union about it and about their concerns?

I have spoken about the importance of patients' experiences. I will share an email that was sent to me from a family I have subsequently met with around access to emergency care in the north-west, Premier, where we are both from. This family has written to me and they say:

We want to detail our family's recent experience at the Burnie Hospital. Firstly, we would like to state we do understand the constraints of the hospital staff and do not hold them to blame for our experience, but the current Government needs to answer.

Our mother, who lives alone, was admitted to Accident & Emergency by ambulance yesterday morning -

This was in January:

with acute neck pain for a number of hours. She has a pre-diagnosis of other issues with her upper discs in her back. She was not offered at any stage a scan to further examine the degeneration of her discs, even with the acute abnormal pain that she was experiencing, and she was sent home with medication and told to see her GP.

She was again admitted the next night to the emergency department by ambulance again with the same abnormal pain, and once again offered no scans. As a family, we are somewhat dismayed at what has gone on.

After I met with family again a week later they reported to me that she had again presented in that period of time to the emergency department, only to be returned home. The letter continues:

As I stated, we understand the current healthcare crisis, but even whilst we were at the hospital the staff were concerned about what was happening with pain control considering that our mum had been admitted twice in two days.

Time expired.

[11.27 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Health) - Mr Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on this matter of public importance today. Our Government understands the importance of a strong economy so we can, in turn, invest in essential services such as health. We are doing that with record amounts of funding into Health, some \$11.2 billion across the forward Estimates. That is assisting us to also deliver health infrastructure upgrades in every region of the state of Tasmania to build a better health system for all Tasmanians, a far cry from when those opposite were last in government where we saw 100 hospital beds closed, entire wards and operating theatres closed. We have reopened them. They sacked a nurse a day for nine months, slashed elective surgery, and the 2011-12 budget showed a half a billion-dollar cut from Health, if my memory serves me correctly.

We have rebuilt and continue to rebuild a health system that was decimated between 2010 and 2014. I am the first to say, as Premier and Health minister, that we will continue to build. We are aware of all the challenges in Health, as there are in every single state of Australia. The delayed care as a result of the disruption of the pandemic is putting enormous strain on the health system but our health system, under all the circumstances, is performing to the best of its ability and will continue to do so with the continued investment we are making.

In January this year I was pleased to officially open the first stage of our Royal Hobart Hospital emergency department expansion to supersize and modernise the ED which will support current and projected future demand. The delivery of a new \$10 million purpose-built short-stay unit has added another 28 beds to the Royal Hobart Hospital emergency department, taking capacity to 82 beds and providing operational efficiency, infection control and patient privacy. The second stage of the expansion is expected to be completed by 2026.

In coming weeks, the cardiology and cardiothoracic services will relocate to a new \$10.7 million, 38-bed ward in J Block, doubling the capacity of the critical care unit. The ward will also host our new three-bed overnight sleep centre, which will offer investigation, management and care for patients with sleep disorders or chronic ventilation in southern Tasmania.

I also recently visited our new state-of-the-art endoscopy facilities at the Royal Hobart Hospital, with the completion of the first stage of refurbishing the endoscopy unit with a new endoscopy procedure room, a reprocessing room, patient recovery area and support spaces. The unit has been boosted by state-of-the-art equipment including new digital theatre technology. I was able to visit that centre before its opening and see the old version. There is a stark contrast. The health professionals working within that room and suite were very excited about having state-of-the-art technology. We should all be very proud of that. Further changes to upgrade the unit are under way. Once completed later this year, capacity will be boosted by up to 25 per cent at the Royal.

Having invested in infrastructure, we also need to invest in resources to support reducing the endoscopy elective surgery waiting list. That is why we announced in the state of the state

Address \$38 million to deliver an additional 22 000 endoscopies over the next four years. This four-year endoscopy plan is supporting our four-year elective surgery plan, which is having a true effect and positive influence on reducing the elective surgery waiting list.

Yesterday, I was very pleased to meet a number of people involved in the expanded statewide trauma service at the Royal Hobart Hospital. As the state's major trauma centre, the Royal provides care and treatment for those with the most serious and complex injuries and sees hundreds of major trauma cases every year. Commencing operations last month, the enhanced statewide trauma service is delivering benefits right across the state, allowing consistent management of patients with complex injuries regardless of where they are located.

I was pleased to meet a patient with lived experience yesterday who was extolling the virtues of the wonderful service and the health professionals who he was involved with from injury right through to recovery and what will be rehabilitation. Major trauma can strike anyone - those involved in a car crash or a bad fall. We ensure they will have the best coordinated care possible during treatment and recovery.

We are committed to improving Tasmania's access to safe and effective care while also cutting red tape. We have commissioned a Pharmacy Scope of Practice Review, looking at ways we can support our general practitioners via changes to services that pharmacies offer. We will wait for the recommendations of that review. We have acted already to cut red tape and expand pharmacy services. I mentioned this morning that on 6 March 2023 we implemented changes that enabled pharmacists in the state to supply individuals with medicine that they need if they have been unable to see their usual prescriber -

Dr Woodruff - Why did you not wait until the end of that review for that to happen?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - to renew their long-term prescription. I am advised that the rollout has been highly successful -

Dr Woodruff - The RACGP knew nothing.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr ROCKLIFF - with continued dispensing benefiting Tasmanians over 300 times a day across our state's community pharmacies since this initiative commenced.

It will ease pressure on GPs, providing greater capacity in the system for other medical appointments. Tasmanians have consistently said that health is their number one priority. We are investing in infrastructure, we are investing in health professionals, and we are cutting red tape. I am proud of our health professionals who work so hard every day.

[11.34 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, questions are being asked about why, with the Pharmacy Scope of Practice Review which is looking to extend the scope of practice not yet completed, the Government just announced a change to the scope of practice of pharmacists?

Mr Rockliff - Getting things done.

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes, right, but you said you have a review process and consultation. The RACGP only heard about that with a phone call the day before, just before it was announced: a massive change and no consultation on that. They did not know that was coming. You can talk about consultation.

I thank the Labor Party for having this MPI on health today because I want to call out the Premier for his continual gaslighting about the true state of Tasmania's health system. Not just that, his outright dishonesty.

In Question Time yesterday he said to the Leader of the Opposition, 'the commitments we made in 2021 on elective surgery, in actual fact we have exceeded those commitments'. That is not true. In 2021 the Government set five targets under the state-wide action plan for elective surgeries. With one year of the plan to complete, the Government has not only not exceeded any of those targets, they have failed on all of them. It was completely untrue for the Premier to claim yesterday that they have exceeded those commitments.

On admission volumes, the Premier set a target of 22 800 surgeries for the year. They missed that target by 2500. Not exactly a close run, especially for all those people suffering and waiting for likely life-saving treatment. That is what category one is about. On the percentage of people seen on time, the Government set a target of 74 per cent. The result was an appalling 57 per cent. On the average overdue wait time, the target was 60 days. Your result, minister, was more than four times that - 253 days.

On the number of patients waiting over the boundary time, your target, minister, was 1941 people. Instead the number, as you would know, is more than 4500. On the number of patients who have been waiting for surgery since prior to 2019 you set a target of zero. We have actually seen 116 Tasmanians still waiting for surgery; people who have been on the waiting list for three-and-a-half years.

It is one thing to have bad performance but it is another thing to cover it up. These results are so bad for the Government that they have taken the Orwellian decision to remove those details from the progress report for the elective surgery plan. If that is not an obvious admission through absence of their hypocrisy in this matter I do not know what is. Are you gaslighting Tasmanians about the true state of health? You are now actively covering up the truth.

Somehow the Premier pretends to us, and to Tasmanians, that they have exceeded their commitments. He has drunk his own Kool-Aid and it is making us all sick. It is making us sick to have a Minister for Health who is utterly dishonest to Tasmanians about the true state. The Tasmanian Health Services failed to meet its target on 42 of its 62 KPIs. That is a 68 per cent fail rate. That is bad enough, but to have the pretence, the falsehood that they have met every election commitment on elective surgeries is going far too far.

It is bad enough that Tasmanians are suffering from your denialism that the COVID-19 pandemic still exists. You said it again this morning, 'during the pandemic', as though it was finished, as though we do not have a virus circulating through the planet changing to new variants. You know during this winter there is every prospect that there will be new variants in Tasmania and you have no plan for safe filtration in our hospitals, in our public facilities, in our schools, where children are wholly unvaccinated under the age of five. You have no public

campaign to encourage people to get their latest booster. We have enormous numbers of Tasmanians who have only had two vaccines.

Only 38 per cent of patients attending the Royal Hobart Hospital emergency department last year were seen within clinically recommend time. That is down from 50 per cent last year. That is a massive drop in one year.

More than half the patients who were admitted to the LGH emergency department had to wait more than eight hours and the department's previous annual reports documented the percentage of patients with an ED stay longer than 24 hours. That statistic used to be there, but again the minister has overseen the removal of that information so Tasmanians do not know the true horror that is happening in the Launceston General Hospital ED. It is appalling to have a Minister for Health covering up information through overseeing its removal. Ramping in Tasmania is the worst it has ever been.

We are calling out your falsehoods. We are calling out your misinformation and we are calling out your gaslighting and asking for honesty about the true state of the health system.

Time expired.

[11.42 a.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I rise to speak on this matter of public importance and back the words of our Deputy Leader, Anita Dow, on how much of a crisis our health system is in. I note with interest this morning that the contributions of members has focused around Hobart and around facts and statistics, but I want to bring this contribution back to the people of Tasmania.

I am a proud member of the northern Tasmanian community and a proud shadow for primary industries and small business. That means I get out of the bubble of Hobart and travel around Tasmania to meet with people in regional communities. I meet with the fishers and farmers and the small businesses of regional communities and hear their stories, not only about their businesses but also their personal stories, often heart-breaking, about their concern for care in their regional communities.

We have recently heard a lot about the concerns of the midwifery services on the north-west coast and the trauma that is causing to families, mums and dads, expectant mums and dads, about the uncertainty of the deliveries. This Government has been in government for 10 years and has had a significant chance to show leadership on this, but recently the Australian Medical Association called the services on the north-west coast 'unsafe.' Regional Tasmanians, mums and dads and families on the north-west coast, feeling concerned about that moment that is so special at the beginning of life, is not acceptable. There has been long enough to do this. Tasmanian Labor would commit and prioritise bringing those services back into the Tasmanian health system within the next six months.

Looking more broadly across northern Tasmania it has been again recently highlighted that for over a year there have been 30 empty beds in the Scottsdale district area. Tasmanian Labor would immediately invest in not only our district hospitals, but also our regional health services, because we know that when you support people in the regions where they live, not only does it provide them with that personal opportunity to support people who need help in regional Tasmania, but it takes the pressure off the health services in Launceston and Hobart.

There is much said about the pressure on the Launceston emergency services and on the Royal Hobart emergency services, but if you take the pressure off people having to make urgent decisions to get their care out of their home area and support them where they need it in regional Tasmania, it will take pressure off the overall health system.

By not acting fast enough in over a year of addressing a move of these 30 beds in Scottsdale, it is physically putting a barrier on the local GP service to grow. They want to grow, they have the capacity to grow, but there is an impediment at the moment because the Tasmanian Government is not acting fast enough. People in that region want to have people who have lived there for generations, the older members of their families, supported with aged care services. I know the auxiliary in Scottsdale is seeking palliative care services in that region. It is not good enough and it is traumatic for those families.

Today and last week in St Helens I have had families reaching out to me. The Premier talked about investment, focused on Hobart, but there is no point having investment in our services across Tasmania if they are not funded to operate. Often in regional Tasmania families have been around for generations, families form and grow around themselves in their communities and they are extended. We have a family in St Helens at the moment who, as I understand it, was told that their family member needed palliative care but an empty facility was not available to them, so they have an older member of their family in Launceston receiving palliative care.

The other night members of the St Helens community had to travel to Launceston. There were between 10 and 12 of them who came up immediately because of the urgency of the matter, and then could not find somewhere to stay. They have been moving nightly around accommodation to be there to support the older member of their family. For them to be in that situation takes them away from their support networks. We have children up here missing school to be able to say goodbye to their grandparent. We have people unable to work, unable to deliver the normal things they would do in their home community because they are having to come out of their community for that care. It is not good enough. A young person from the St Helens community messaged me asking what could be done in this area. This young 16-year-old said to me, 'Just because we're a small community doesn't mean that we don't matter'.

What Tasmanian Labor know is that if this Government - having had 10 years of an opportunity to work harder to improve the health services in Tasmania - had focused on regional and rural communities and district hospitals and our regional health facilities, that would take some pressure out of the system and ensure that Tasmanians in regional communities were not traumatised further by the experiences they are having, either at the beginning of life - for example on the north-west coast with maternity services - or at the end of their life - for example in St Helens with the family that is going through that right now.

We know that Tasmania, a state we are so proud of, often leads the world in so many areas and leads the country, but unfortunately we now know that in Tasmania we have the worst health outcomes in some areas. We have the worst ambulance ramping, the worst bed blocks, we have people waiting much longer than the acceptable standard time to see specialists and get their surgeries. Although it is recognised that there are pressures not only in the Tasmanian Health Service but in health services across the country, it does not mean things cannot be done in a creative way. It does not always need a greater investment to support Tasmanians to get the healthcare they need when and where they need it.

Tasmanian Labor works with members of the health services, unions and workers who have over recent years been so affected by challenges in the health service and we know that there are people on the ground who have solutions they want to share, or they do share and are not heard, about how things could be changed in a structural and systematic way. Tasmanian Labor urges this Government to take action and listen to the communities that are giving you solutions. Where you have empty beds, make sure they are utilised. Recent surveys showed that only 45 per cent of beds in regional Tasmania are actually occupied. The Tasmanian Government needs to do better for the families not only in Hobart, but the families in regional Tasmania.

[11.49 p.m.]

Mr YOUNG (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, the Tasmanian Liberal Government continues to prioritise health and our 2022-23 State Budget includes record health funding of \$11.2 billion over four years. This will see an average health spend of \$7.25 million per day, representing one-third of the budget's total operating expenditure. We continue to increase our capacity in our health system by opening around 188 new public beds and 43 new public-private partnership beds; a total of 231 new beds since July 2018, showing strong progress towards our commitment of 250 new beds by the end of 2024.

We have also recruited more than 1600 additional full-time equivalent health staff since July 2020, with the majority of these positions in frontline service delivery, including nurses, doctors, paramedics and allied health professionals, and we are continuing to recruit.

We understand the value of innovation to secure our health services into the future, and to attract and retain a highly skilled health workforce. This includes our \$150 million commitment over the next four years to upgrade our digital health infrastructure, with a projected investment of \$475 million over the next 10 years to transform patient experience wherever people live in Tasmania. This investment will see the launch of a new statewide fully integrated care platform that will enable our hospitals, GPs, community health, allied health and other specialist providers to seamlessly communicate and share information with each other.

We have also invested \$4.7 million to support the Bedside Medication Management initiative, which increases patient safety, frees up nurses and midwives to focus on patient care, and is strongly supported by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF). Under this initiative, each ward is allocated a pharmacy technician who will take on these medication management responsibilities. This reduces the need for nurses and midwives to undertake administrative tasks associated with medications, and allows our highly qualified nurses and midwives to spend more time with patients and less time looking for medications.

Alongside this, we are also innovating with services that care for people in their own home and keep them out of hospital. We have established the Community Rapid Response Service across the state. This service has been proven to reduce hospital presentations, delivering quality care outside the hospital setting. It works particularly well for patients with chronic or complex illnesses who are frequently in hospital or presenting to the emergency department.

Ambulance Tasmania has also implemented a Police, Ambulance and Clinician Early Response (PACER) team - the first of its kind in Tasmania - which is made up of mental health clinicians, police officers and paramedics. PACER aims to improve access to timely,

appropriate and evidence-based mental healthcare, and to significantly reduce the demand on police and ambulance services. In its first year, PACER responded to call-outs to nearly 1700 people with a number of conditions ranging to suicidal ideation, psychosis, depression, anxiety and confusion or incoherence. The majority - 75 per cent of these people - were supported to remain in the community, as opposed to having to attend the emergency department at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

Community paramedics have also been deployed to all regions of our state, and are attending non-emergency 000 call-outs in a new plan to treat more patients in the community and keep Tasmanians out of hospital.

We also acknowledge the important work that our primary healthcare system plays in keeping Tasmanians healthy. While this primarily is the responsibility of federal Labor government, due to the increasing difficulties of accessing care, such as GPs, our Government has been stepping in and providing support where we can. We launched our GP After Hours Support Initiative to provide financial support to service providers and offer after-hours and extended service to their local communities.

Through multiple grant rounds conducted by the Department of Health, we have granted funding to a number of providers across the state. In my own electorate, we are supporting the Cygnet Family Practice and Ochre Health on Bruny Island to extend their service offering, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact this will have on those local communities.

We know there are challenges in our health system. Our Government is committed to implementing innovative solutions to address health services for all Tasmanians. The Tasmanian Liberal Government continues to prioritise health in our 2022-23 state budget including record health funding of \$11.2 billion over four years, which will see an average health spend of \$7.25 million per day, representing one-third of the budget's total operating expenditure.

I look forward to finding out in the alternative budget in May what Labor's percentage on health spending will be.

Matter noted.

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

Motion to Note

Continued from 21 March 2023 (page 118).

[11.55 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Greens have not actually delivered a state of the state reply yet. My understanding was that we would be given the opportunity this morning. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

On behalf of the Greens and every Tasmanian who recognises we meet on stolen land, I acknowledge and pay my deepest respects to Tasmania's Aboriginal people, the palawa pakana, to their elders past and present, to those still finding their wisdom, to the warriors who

fought to defend this island when the English arrived, and to the warriors who fight for justice for First Nations people today. I pay humble respects.

I express deep regret, and I lament how far we still are, as a society, from justice for the palawa pakana. The Greens recognise your blazing anger and the intergenerational trauma your people suffer to this day. I say this directly to Tasmanian Aboriginal people: we recognise that you suffer as a result of the murder of your ancestors and theft of your land. Although we may differ on the Voice to Parliament and constitutional recognition, the Greens will never pay you lip service and, until there is Aboriginal representation in this place, we will remain your unwavering, consistent and fierce voice in the Tasmanian parliament. Until there is treaty, we will fight for and alongside you. Until there is truth-telling, we will be your voice telling the truth in this place.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it was disheartening, to say the least, to hear so little from a Premier - and so late in his Address - on the path to truth-telling and treaty. That brief mention was in the next breath after the Premier again revived the spectre of a cable car on kunanyi, sacred land to the palawa, who have made oxygen-clear their rejection of the cable car. So, too, the lip service Tasmanian Aboriginal people heard from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in response to the destruction and desecration of priceless Aboriginal heritage in takayna. The lip service given to Aboriginal people in the Premier's state of the state Address was insulting and disrespectful.

It was also downright depressing to hear nothing from the Leader of the Opposition about justice for Tasmanian Aboriginal people - not one word. We heard more about Ms White than we did about the people who have been here for 60 000 years or more. Ms White, who is not in the Chamber today, if you want to be the Premier of lutruwita/Tasmania, you need to do better.

Premier, just get on with it. Make your legacy the foundation for truth-telling and treaty, not a billion-dollar stadium on the very site Aboriginal Tasmanians were promised a truth and reconciliation art park - or a cable car on sacred land, a sacred mountain, kunanyi. Have some respect, both of you.

It was a dispiriting Premier's Address but I completely agreed with him when he said, 'Tasmania, today, is very different from the Tasmania when we first came to government in 2014'. Yes, it sure is - on every social and environmental metric. On health, between 2014-15 and 2021-22, ambulance response times in the 19th percentile have increased by 64 per cent in Hobart and 34 per cent statewide; and in the 50th percentile, by 28 per cent in Hobart and 16 per cent statewide. People are waiting up to seven hours for an ambulance to arrive. Some have died waiting in their homes or on ramps outside our public hospitals. In that same time, the proportion of emergency patients seen on time has declined from 83 per cent to 49 per cent.

On children and young people: while we commend the Premier and the Government for their commitment to the commission of inquiry in implementing its recommendations, there sure is a long way to go to make this island the safest place in the country for children and young people - as it can and should be. Between 2014-15 and 2021-22 the proportion of child safety investigations that take more than 29 days to commence has increased from 24 per cent to 55 per cent. The proportion of child safety investigations that take more than 90 days to complete have increased from 15 per cent to 64 per cent. Something is very wrong with the child safety system and it is letting children down and placing them at risk.

On housing: perhaps successive Liberal premiers over the last nine years most manifest failure of the Tasmanian people. Between 2014-15 and 2021-22 weighted median rents for the state have increased from \$262 to \$440. We weekly have people ringing our office in tears because their rent is going up \$50, \$80, \$100 a week, because they are being shut out of the market by short-stay accommodation and a government that refuses to act because its own ministers own short-stay accommodation properties. Residential vacancy rates in Hobart have declined from 1.8 per cent to 0.6 per cent and in Launceston to 0.8 per cent. We have the tightest, most savage rental market in the country, and this after nine years of Liberal government.

In the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's latest report on housing affordability: 'The greater Hobart area was the only region in Australia ranked as having "unaffordable rents".'

In justice and corrections, breaking the cycle has been utterly abandoned and it has made this island a less safe place. The accrued prison rate between 2014-15 and 2021-22 since the Liberals came to office the imprisonment rate, per 100 000 adults, has increased from 117 to 149. Our prisons are jammed full because this Government is failing on corrections and is failing to break the cycle. Adults released from prison who return to corrective service within two years, that is recidivism, has increased from 45 per cent, almost 5 per cent below the national average, to 51 per cent, almost 10 per cent above the national average. The proportion of offenders proceeded against with non-court action has declined from 42 per cent to 25 per cent. Police use diversions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have declined from 41 per cent to 22.5 per cent. Unsented prisoners on remand have increased from 98 to 207. Over the past five years the percentage of unsented prisoners on remand for longer than a year has been between 7 per cent and 10 per cent. In four of the five years prior to the Liberals coming to office, that is under a Greens minister in a Labor-Greens government, it was zero per cent. These are people the Liberals are locking up for over a year who have not been convicted of a crime; not unlike the young people who are locked in their cells at Ashley Youth Detention Centre on remand.

We are living the tale of two Tasmanias. Perhaps it has ever been thus - an island ruled by elites and the big end of town and another island where disadvantage is not only a cruel-lived reality, it is entrenched. Recently, on a Thursday, the top end of town and a few other invited guests gathered at PW1 to hear AFL chief, Gillon McLachlan, and our Premier cheer on a billion-dollar stadium to the clinking of champagne glasses over seared, antibiotic-laced Brazilian butchered salmon no doubt and other tasty treats. We were told by the guy, who is effectively blackmailing us over our unquestionable right to join the national league, that there will be a footy in every hand and a footy in every home. There are nearly 5000 Tasmanians on the housing waitlist, people are sleeping in tents and cars, there are rents up 50 per cent in five years and the Premier and his new mate, Gillon McLachlan, give us the Aussie version of Marie Antoinette, 'let them eat football.'

Mr Speaker, a Premier with backbone would stand up to Gillon McLachlan and the AFL elite and tell them we have earned a team, we deserve a team, but my people cannot afford a new stadium and they do not want one. A Premier with a backbone would say, 'We already have two we can refurbish. What my people, the battlers need, is homes they can afford and a health system that meets their needs'.

In privileged, wealthy Tasmania, we have land tax cuts for property investors and short-stay accommodation unregulated and out of control, with ministers - at least two of whom own short-stay accommodation properties - refusing to take any action. Then we have my constituent who lives in a bus in a paddock, and the single mums who ring our office in tears because they cannot pay the rent or they face eviction or they cannot find a home.

In one Tasmania, that governed by the wealthy and the privileged, we have \$4000 tickets to a dinner with the Premier and other Liberal ministers and global corporates like Cooke, who bought Tassal, and JBS, who bought Huon Aquaculture, where the Premier tells those big-money interests his Government is absolutely committed to massive expansion of industrial fish farms in public marine waters, despite strong community opposition.

There is fierce community opposition around this island to the expansion of industrial fish farming in our public coastal waters. That opposition is being absolutely ignored by this Government, which is captured by global fish farming corporations, which is deaf to coastal communities, which does not invite members of those communities to their \$4000 corporate donor dinners. This is a government that bends over backwards to corporates at the expense of our communities and our once-pristine coastal marine waters.

We have emergency departments under enormous stress. They have gone backwards in the last nine years and no amount of spin from government will take away that truth. We have a lethal virus rampant in our community. More than half the Tasmanian people have been infected and, increasingly, people are being reinfected and reinfected. This Premier, who is part of the National Cabinet, led the charge to remove the five-day isolation period for people who are COVID-positive. He did not lead the national charge to have children under five vaccinated. He did not advocate for people under the age of 30 to be eligible for a booster shot, and a number I know are now on their third infection.

This is a virus which hammers the immune system. It is a biosafety hazard level 3 virus. In laboratories they wear full-body PPE when they are dealing with a pathogen of this nature, but not in Tasmania, not in this parliament, not in our hospitals where people are being infected, not in our schools, and not in our public buildings or public places. This Government, captured by corporations and moneyed interests, has unleashed a deadly pathogen on the people of Tasmania, a community which has the highest chronic disease burden in the country and the oldest and fastest-ageing population in the country, with the highest self-identified level of disability.

If you want to ask why our health system is under so much pressure, why things have changed so dramatically in our health system over the last 18 months, look no further than this Premier and Health minister. He has absolutely betrayed the Tasmanian people. All protections have been removed. The Tasmanian people have been left defenceless. There is no public education campaign on the fact that this virus is an airborne pathogen. There is no education or advertising campaign to encourage people to get their booster. There is no warning or advising people to wear a mask to protect themselves. People cannot get a PCR test. The data is being fudged. There is no focus on clean air and now Australia and Tasmania have one of the highest COVID death rates in the world. It is the normalisation of deviance.

We need a clean air revolution. It is a human right to breathe clean air. Twenty-three years ago the World Health Organization issued a statement titled 'The right to healthy indoor air'. It

came out of a meeting of the World Health Organization in Bilthoven in the Netherlands, and it says this:

Principle 1 - Under the principle of the human right to health, everyone has the right to breathe healthy indoor air.

Principle two - Under the principle of respectful autonomy ... everyone has the right to adequate information about potentially harmful exposures and to be provided with effective means for controlling at least part of their indoor exposures.

Principle 3 -

Boy, are we being failed on this one -

Under the principle of non-maleficence, ('doing no harm'), no agent at a concentration that exposes any occupant to an unnecessary health risk should be introduced into indoor air.

Mr Speaker, not only is it introduced into indoor air, this virus is being allowed, facilitated, permitted into all our indoor spaces, including this one which has walked away from its COVID safety plan. I advise the House that we have written to WorkSafe Tasmania and asked them to undertake an inspection of this place. We have sought legal advice to protect people who work in this building, including our colleagues in this place, from the 'let it rip' approach to this deadly virus, which is weakening and sickening the Tasmanian people.

We need a clean air revolution. We need to focus on ventilation and filtration. We need to recognise that children are being denied the right to good health. They have been given no say in being exposed to this pathogen, and perhaps the Minister for Education, Children and Youth could explain why the COVID-safe schools plan has been removed from the Department of Education website? I am sure that is information Tasmanian parents would be interested in. We need safe workplaces and a government that is serious about the health of the Tasmanian people would invest in a clean air revolution. That is how you look after the health of your people and you create jobs. Breathing clean air is a human right, just as drinking clean water is a human right, and it is about time our Government caught up.

We live in two Tasmanias, where we have the privileged and handsomely funded private schools where the students want for absolutely nothing, and we have children in public schools, in classrooms, where teachers are leaving in droves. What does this Government do when the Australian Education Union on behalf of teachers asks for more in school support? It unleashes the adolescents they have working in the social media unit on the 11th floor or the 10th floor, or wherever they are, to insult teachers and school support staff. We had the Australian Education Union say on 1 March this year, in desperation:

Dear Premier and Minister,

Every day Tasmanian students are missing out due to a lack of in-class support. Record numbers of teachers are leaving the profession due to excessive workloads and lack of support. Every public school student in Tasmania is funded at \$2000 a year below the minimum student resource

funding requirement. For 18 months, teachers have negotiated and pleaded for the in-class support our students need. Enough is enough. Teachers should not have to beg for the support students need and the support we need to keep teachers in the profession. Teachers should not have to take stop work action to win the in-class support our students need, but we will, and the deadline is today.

Sincerely

David Genford

President of the Australian Education Union - Tasmania Branch

What did they get? They got insulting, puerile, childish twaddle out of the Government media unit attacking the education union. This one, which got a massive 11 shares, says:

The education union is forcing schools to close on Friday. Tasmanians deserve better.

What Tasmanians deserves is a government that recognises our public schools need more resources. That is what Tasmanians deserve, that is what teachers deserve, and that is what our children deserve.

Then we get:

The education union has come to their senses and cancelled Friday's school strike. Commonsense prevails.

Jeremy Rockliff liked that post. He liked that childish post.

Dr Woodruff - Yes, that was sickening.

Ms O'CONNOR - It was sickening wasn't it, Dr Woodruff? There are children in our classrooms showing more maturity than the Government's social media unit.

Another one here from the Tasmanian Liberals attacks essential workers again. They wonder why we have huge workforce challenges in the public service. It says:

When they pull stunts, schools close, nurses get sacked and Tasmanians get sent to the dole queue by the thousands. Tasmanians deserve better than this mob.

We never got an apology from the Premier to teachers and everyone who works tirelessly every day trying to give our children the quality education that they deserve.

In our two Tasmanias, we have ministers being taken to work in luxury cars with leather seats and air conditioning, and we have children, old people, poor people, people with disability, people wanting to get to work left waiting for buses that never come. This Government has made a choice not to prioritise the economic and social wellbeing of every Tasmanian.

This Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the minister for self-love, is an abject failure as minister. Never before have we had a situation where 100 bus services are being cancelled in a single day. It is still happening. We have a Government that has removed protections; masks from public transport. They wonder why we have a shortage of bus drivers. We know security is an issue on buses. Interestingly, when they made Metro transport free for a month the incidents of antisocial behaviour declined dramatically.

What is the solution? It is not heavy handed, expensive security. It is free public transport. Mr Speaker, it would cost this state \$11 million a year to provide free public transport. It would unlock enormous social and economic opportunity for Tasmanians. It would help to lift people out of poverty. It is a fraction of the billion dollars that would be spent on a stadium. It is a solution that would work.

Make public transport free and you will see antisocial behaviour on buses decline dramatically - because that is what happened when it was trialled. However, this puritanical minister does not want to think about a solution like that because he does not think government should provide free stuff for people. It is mean-spiritedness and a lack of imagination. Make public transport free. This Government has made a political choice to foster poverty in our community.

We have Liberal members who can tap public funds for pet and family projects, and who would not know a conflict of interest if it punched them in the face. We have communities without the benefits of these connections missing out.

Here is the tale of two regional communities, and two Louisa Streets at the opposite ends of the state. In Louisa Street in Bracknell, the public funds that have gone into that town in that street: \$400 000 for a hall rebuild; \$80 000 for a hall refurbishment; \$45 000 for goal nets; \$30 000 for an electronic scoreboard; and \$25 000 for lighting. The town of Bracknell - home to the Shelton family - will have a kitted-out field, two halls, a brand-new gym, new toilets, footy club rooms and footy change rooms.

In Louisa Street in Cygnet, home of the Cygnet Sea Dragons Junior Soccer Club - which has teams from under-six all the way up to under-18 - their ground only has a small storage area that they have to share with the school. Nothing else. The ground does not have toilets. Kids have to cross the road and walk 100 metres or so to get to a toilet, if those toilets are even open. The Louisa Street Cygnet ground does not have change rooms. David Neil from the club says, 'This is particularly an issue on a wet day'. They have not been able to secure government funds, despite needing help for years. They do not have a Shelton on their committee, Mr Speaker. It is a bit like the Sandy Bay Rowing Club where Ms Ogilvie's daughter attends: the Sandy Bay Rowing Club, which received \$150 000 of public funds during the last state election campaign, Mr Speaker.

The Cygnet Junior Soccer Club says it feels like they have got the short end of the stick, because they have. They have got the short end of the stick because they are not connected enough with the Liberal political elite, and that is a fact.

The Premier's state of the state Address was all about money and privilege. It was all about the economy. I thought the journalist who summed it up best was David Killick, in the *Mercury* on 4 March, in his article 'Tasmania politics - Liberals serve up more of the same'. He starts:

As Jeremy Rockliff extolled his latest health initiative at the Royal Hobart Hospital on Monday, nurses two floors above were searching in vain for clean sheets to put on beds.

When Mr Rockliff read to the children at Lenah Valley Primary School on Thursday, ... ramp officers were settling in for another wasted afternoon shift in immobile ambulances, and a mother was waiting for straight answers about why her daughter waited seven sorry hours for transport to hospital.

She is still waiting. Like a Metro patron at a bus stop for a service that will never arrive, or anyone who has lodged a right to information request in the past decade.

He writes:

Speaker Mark Shelton could not detect a conflict of interest in voting to shut down a committee referral, a chance to answer questions in a no-confidence motion about his own alleged conflict of interest; Racing minister Madeleine Ogilvie kinda sorta admitted leaving out the important bit about why the TasRacing CEO left suddenly; and the Integrity Commission stumbled upon some sort of misconduct in a Tasmanian council - but refuses to tell anyone who or where it was.

He says nine years after the Liberals took power, nobody seems to have tweaked about the link between a chronic lack of accountability and the chronic poor outcomes the citizen of this state shrugs off as par for the course.

Time expired.

Ms O'Connor - Are you going to tell us a bit more about your Flinders Island holiday and your Killiecrankie diamond?

Mr Ferguson - So much bile from one person.

Ms O'Connor - I am just disgusted in your Government.

[12.25 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Small Business) - Ms O'Connor, there is nobody in this place who would ever attack your family or your children, and you regularly do it to me in this place.

Ms O'Connor - I did not attack your family.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms OGILVIE - You are. You talk about my daughter regularly. I thought we had some standards in this place. I am raising that for you to have a think about it. There is no conflict of interest that has not been disclosed or handled properly by me, thank you very much.

Ms O'Connor - Tell us about your Killiecrankie diamond.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms OGILVIE - They are topaz, and they are beautiful. The second thing I would like to say is that I was wanting to be very gracious, with good manners, which I always do have, allowing the Leader of the Greens to have the jump - but then the tone and tenor of the contribution, the whingeing, the whining just started and goes on and on. It is very difficult for people out there who are watching this to stomach it, to be honest. I get a lot of that feedback, because what people want to hear is what we are doing - and we are doing some good things.

Mr Speaker, I congratulate the Premier on his outstanding state of the state Address. Very good issues and initiatives were highlighted in it and he covered many portfolio areas. What was clear to me was the focus on jobs and the economy. It is a continuing focus of this Government and it is something I am particularly interested in.

In my electorate of Clark we have many great small businesses. We have the maritime sector as well, which is developing and delivering major projects and connecting to industry in the tech sector and engineering sector in a way we have not been able to do for a long time. In part, that is to do with the pandemic, but also to do with the effort and energy we are putting into that.

I notice all the women in the Chamber have turned around and looked the other way, but something you are really interested in here is that the number of women in employment in Tasmania is now 139 200. I heard the Treasurer speak of this in his state of state reply, and I congratulate him for his focus on that. In January there were more than 289 000 Tasmanians in work, which is an all-time record.

I was a child here in the 1980s, graduating from Hobart College, grades 11 and 12. I recall those days. I recall how hard it was for my friends, particularly the ones who were not keen on university, to find a job, and many of them left. Many went to Western Australia and started working in the mines. I was recounting one of these stories the other day, of a girlfriend of mine, Jo, who I love still. Jo was a fantastic girl. We went through Hobart College together and she took off to the mines. She ended up working in the far north of Western Australia driving one of those enormous trucks with the wheels that are bigger than your car. She worked there and in the fishing villages in the Top End. She comes home regularly; she is from an old Tassie family.

I remember those our days. We lost our friends. We got disconnected. We all went in different places, and not everybody had the chance to return. Luckily, I did get the chance to return after 20 years away in a global career in infrastructure, IT tech and the law.

For me, political life is about community service. It is about connecting with your local community and knowing what is going on around you. I am really fortunate to be assisted in this, because I have three school-aged children living at home; one has just started university so I have the pulse of my electorate and I have, happily, a few more staying over at the moment. These kids want a proper go. They are getting through school, they are getting through matric, they need help, they need our support, and now as a more senior person in this town - both in age and perhaps knowledge - I feel that that is something I can help them with.

These scenarios are playing out right across my electorate. We see the effort we need to go to to help the next generation come up and through, particularly around housing and getting

people into homes or apartments and looking after them. I have been doing a lot of work with Tassie Mums - a great organisation: I have been with them since their beginning - and they do an incredible amount of work with families who need a bit of extra help. Tassie Mums raises money and organises packages and gifts for families with little babies. This ranges from taking them into the prison system through to statewide distribution through social services. I will always back them in and I will work hard to do that.

I have also been working hard in my electorate making sure that our infrastructure is up to speed. Once, apparently, someone was criticising me because I was suggesting we upgrade roads that I travel on. This stuff that we hear from the Greens about extensive issues with connections is really quite ridiculous. I am really proud of the work we have done to make our towns and homes a better place, and this is the work of a local member.

The member who has now just left the Chamber - she does not want to hear the rebuttal, obviously - wants to make a lot of noise about local community organisations that need funding. This is something that we do in this parliament and Labor has done it since time immemorial. It is about listening to your community and putting forward ideas for improvement. There are very many people who use facilities at Marieville Esplanade, and I think there is even someone sitting in this Chamber whose husband uses those facilities, so I think it is important that we recognise we all have connections.

There is no denying that we are going from strength to strength in our economy and that we are focusing on the cost of living in our state and investing in areas like health and education. That is what the Premier and I, along with the rest of the team, are focused on. The Rockliff Liberal Government is indeed getting things done and building our future. We are doing that collaboratively, we are partnering, and we are working with people. We are building a strong economy, we are delivering jobs, growth, providing cost-of-living relief, and we are doing this in an intelligent and measured way.

On small business, our Government has a proven record when it comes to supporting Tasmanian small businesses. The latest statistics show there are about 35 515 small businesses across the state. As people would see from my social media work, I am out and about with them all the time on a statewide basis, and I went to the most marvellous Flinders Island and am very taken with what they are doing with that small community there. I am very impressed with the artisans, the artists -

Quorum formed.

Ms OGILVIE - During the pandemic our small businesses received more than \$165 million in support programs. I am really excited that we recently took another important step by releasing Tasmania's blueprint for business growth and, importantly, it is backed in with funding for a new grant program to kick things off, so we have up to \$1 million and that will soon be available to support Tasmania's thriving small business sector to continue to grow, flourish, connect, export and expand, and this is great news.

As Minister for Small Business I am focused on strengthening our small business sector and building a strong economy. We believe that the most important voices on the future of business come from businesses themselves, which is why we have worked in partnership with the Tasmanian Small Business Council and the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry to develop the Tasmanian Small Business Growth Strategy 2026. We have set aside

up to \$1 million in funding so that this program can provide grants of between \$10 000 and \$50 000 to directly fund projects that support small businesses to scale up, to increase workplace capacity or for research projects. That is really important because sometimes in industry sectors or when starting a new business you need to know what your market looks like. You might need to do market research or you might need to understand more about your legal rights or your branding obligations or what you can do with your digital and online presence, so that category will be very fruitful and very important for small businesses.

The guidelines for the grant program are available on the Business Tasmania website and applications opened on 7 March 2023, so please get in touch if you would like to know more. Just for the benefit for those who might be watching, the Small Business Growth Strategy 2026 is also available on the Business Tasmania website, so it is easily accessible. There is no doubt that the business landscape will continue to evolve and change but by working together we can ensure Tasmania's small business community will be in the strongest position possible to respond to whatever challenges may come our way.

Mr Speaker, as I mentioned, the January 2023 NAB Monthly Business Survey showed that the Rockliff Liberal Government's plan for Tasmania is working, as our state records the highest business confidence in the country. I have said this loudly and I will say it again - we have the highest business confidence in the country. Who would have thought, looking back on the 1980s, growing up here, looking back on those dark days of economic difficulty under the Labor-Greens regime, that we would now be able to stand here and say we have the highest business confidence in the country. This does not happen by magic; this happens because we have the most incredibly strong, gutsy and resilient business community which is driving this, and we are working with them. We are working closely with our business community, with our business leaders and with organisations that represent them, with the Chamber of Commerce and others and we are listening and responding. We are listening to what they are saying and we are putting that into action.

The NAB report also echoes the CommSec State of the State report that ranked Tasmania as the second-best performing economy in the nation, having improved on all eight performance indicators. It is remarkable, and this is only possible with sound economic management that encourages business growth and investment in our state. Over the last three years Tasmanian small businesses have demonstrated that resilience, flexibility and perseverance and it is people who own the businesses who are doing this and their staff and their teams and their families, so this is all about people. This is about family-owned businesses. This is about the conversation that happens at the dinner table after you have knocked off for the day with mum and the dad and the business and the kids, and making sure that they are looking after that family budget. That is what these businesses do, and that is why we will always support them. We are committed to supporting the sector and the tens of thousands of Tasmanians it employs and those Tasmanian families. It is deep within Tasmania, it is deep within our business culture and it is deep within our community culture to look after small business.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is getting things done. In contrast, as we have heard today, all we get from the other side of the Chamber, I include everybody in that, is complaining, whingeing, negativity, and worst of all, personal attacks.

We are building Tasmania's future on this side. We are building a strong economy and we are building and preserving our caring community. Tasmania's digital connectivity is

dependent on sub-sea fibre cable infrastructure. High quality, reliable digital infrastructure is essential for providing the key services the Tasmanian Government delivers and underpins future economic growth in the state.

It underpins what we are already doing as a Government, delivering services to our constituents, and it enables growth and economic development. We are always interested in both of those aspects. Our Government is committed to ensuring our digital connectivity makes the state, our beautiful Tasmania, attractive to live and do business in, to secure future industries, and provide global careers for our young people from here in Tasmania.

We have had a Flinders Island theme, so we will talk a bit more about that. There are wonderful people on Flinders Island -

Mr Rockliff - They truly are.

Ms OGILVIE - I did not want to come back. It was fantastic.

Mr Rockliff - Yes, kind, gentle, and generous. Focused on each other.

Ms OGILVIE - Community-based, kids kicking the footie in the street, just some beautiful old-school Tasmania living right there. What we also have on Flinders Island is a prime example of this, where you get your digital connectivity right - I note the Treasurer is here - we have seen some great telecommunications upgrades happen.

Mr Rockliff - Transformational.

Ms OGILVIE - Absolutely transformational, always work to do, but great work. We have people who are working from Flinders in that digital economy. This is already happening. What a great place to work from. You can sit on the jetty and work even over to Silicon Valley from your laptop.

We know that we need to get our cable network right to ensure that we are on an equal footing with other states and territories. This is about the infrastructure layer. This is about making sure that our digital divide on infrastructure is addressed. The minister for Energy and I share a love of the Marinus Project. It is a piece of the network. Together, with fibre optic cabling and the jigsaw puzzle of the infrastructure layer, it will come together beautifully.

To ensure long-term resilience, performance and competitiveness of Tasmania's digital connectivity, the Premier announced in his state of the state address that we are investing \$1.5 million to identify additional subsea digital cabling opportunities into the state. I am absolutely delighted to show that we are serious about doing this work. That \$1.5 million has been well received.

Tasmania's internet connectivity is dependent on three sub-sea cables that connect our beautiful state to the mainland and then, in turn, to the rest of the world. The Tasmanian Government, through the Department of State Growth, continues engaging with industry participants with an interest in additional submarine cables connecting Tasmania to the mainland and international markets. This work is ongoing.

In view of contemporary regional and global geopolitics and Tasmania's reliance on major trading partners, it is also prudent to consider future infrastructure to secure the state's economic future beyond local demand and national context. We are looking at the big picture too, as you do as a state government.

The Government is committed to growing future industries and creating the environment for those new industries to flourish. We have so many incredible innovators in our state, particularly Launceston, so we want to create the best environment we can, economically speaking. All of this is underpinned by the incredible leadership shown by the University of Tasmania. Its work alongside our Government and with an industry partner, has been in establishing a space industry in Tasmania. I am pleased to see this getting traction.

The university and its astrophysics department owns an array of radio telescopes on a national basis. They are already engaged in this sector in a deep way. The state Government is happy to be partnering with it and working more on that. We have seen two successful rounds of our Space Technology Seed Fund with some incredibly exciting projects. This shows we do not need to leave Tasmania to reach for the stars. In one more Flinders Island reference, Tasmania has some of the best dark skies for astrophysics stargazing and general enjoyment of the Milky Way. Oatlands is a great place for that, but Flinders Island is an incredible place for that as well.

I will share some projects in relation to the successful rounds of our Space Technology Seed Fund. Handbuilt Creative, based in Cambridge, is developing a photo-realistic digital twin of the Moon and Mars. If you can imagine being able to electronically set foot on the moon from here in Tasmania and look back at the Earth, you can work out how to do a lot of things. This is good for research. This is good for innovation. It will allow us to contribute to mission planning simulations and training. We have deep expertise in simulations, the simulation-side of work for us is proving to be very fruitful. It is a niche market that we do exceptionally well in.

Firmus Supercloud, in collaboration with UTAS, is developing a high-performance computing platform that supports real-time tracking of debris and other objects in space. This is a space situation awareness piece. I love talking to the school kids about what we are doing in space situation awareness. They are big words for knowing where the things are in space so you can do things like clean up space junk. It is a net positive for everyone. With a growing space industry globally we are hearing a lot about that and more launches are happening every day. It is vital that objects orbiting the Earth are tracked so that we have clear line of sights and we know where things are. This helps with telecommunications purposes as well. Some members of our community have moved on to Starlink, satellite-based broadband. It is probably going to be more important in the future, particularly for areas with regional, rural or topographical issues with telecommunication towers. We are watching that closely.

Pivot Maritime and Fortifiedge are developing a space flight simulation system which measures and monitors crew responses to the stresses of space. Fortifiedge has a collaboration coming out of Stanford University. We are so proud of these companies: good local Tasmanian companies that are partnering and acting globally. This is the kind of future industry and future business that we can do from here. It is clean and green and smart. It is high tech and it is engineering driven. We can do more of this.

What Pivot Maritime does in the defence sector and with simulation for bridge systems for ships is incredible. I have had a go in the simulator. It was interesting to see how the tracking of the stressors and that biorhythm side of things can help you to learn how to do the process in a better way.

Geoneon, the successful recipient of the most recent funding round, whose work will help our governments plan and respond to climate emergencies. Science is the most incredible antidote to the challenges we have on our planet. To have these kinds of projects and programs coming out with the really innovative, cutting edge thinking about how to address these serious issues right here in Tasmania, is something we ought to be incredibly proud of.

We also have a partnership I am really proud of, one of the first we established with the University of Tasmania's commercialisation arm, and that is HENSOLDT. HENSOLDT and the university astrophysics department, with our support, launched a new antenna at Bisdee Tier, which adds to the national array that the university owns - and that array adds to Australia's sovereign capability.

This group of people has driven this for 10 years, and I have been on that journey with them. I remember going to the university and sitting with the professors in the early days and saying to them, 'tell me what you are doing in communications, tell me what you are doing with this research, tell me what you are doing in space'. They were able to articulate the work they were already doing. Their dish at Mount Pleasant was a gift from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), so they have been involved with NASA and SpaceX over many years.

Those collaborations that have happened in telecommunications land are global. That is why you need to take a global perspective and make sure we are dealing with looking outwards as well as the companies that are based in Tasmania.

HENSOLDT, again, working on space situational awareness. What a superb partner and friend they have been to Tasmania and Tasmania's science and engineering sector, even funding PhD scholarships. These are the sort of collaborations that we want to build upon more deeply - innovators like this who can inspire young Tasmanians to participate in a global industry from right here in Tasmania.

Mr Speaker, I have a lot to get through, but I will quickly turn to heritage.

Heritage: what a great portfolio; I just adore it. I could not be happier to be the Heritage minister. Going right back to the old days when I was studying history at Melbourne University, I cannot believe how fortunate I am now to be playing a part in helping the conversation build around heritage. Our iconic heritage assets are going to be supported, with \$4.5 million extra in a move to further recognise their important contribution to our state. We are looking at story-telling, cultural heritage, shipwrecks, the convict experience.

We know, as the single largest owner and caretaker of listed heritage assets in the state, the Tasmanian Government has a responsibility to take a leadership position in initiating discussions to leverage the sector's full potential.

I am delighted that we were able to pull together an innovation - a break-through moment - to hold our first Historic Heritage Summit at Callington Mill Distillery in Oatlands.

It was a sell-out. People were asking us to get on the list. We will obviously need to expand it in future, but it was such a good opportunity for individuals to come together and work out how we can work together across this important sector. The feedback has been brilliant and I expect more to come from that.

What a great time to be the Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries. These generate \$7 billion turnover over a year and employ some 18 000 people. We have such a great story to tell: \$50 million in defence investments paid off, and our companies have been awarded over \$129 million in defence-related contracts.

We are out and about promoting our advanced manufacturing sector nationally, globally, and it is paying off. In 2021-22 alone, our companies were awarded over 50 defence contracts with a value of over more than \$74.5 million. AUKUS, AUKUS AUKUS will deliver for us. We are engaged in those conversations across defence industries, commercialisation and research channels.

Pleasingly, the funding that we have given to companies with our Advanced Manufacturing Accelerating Growth Program grants has delivered results as well. Under the first three rounds of the program, 27 projects received a share of \$2.19 million, supporting a total investment of \$9.2 million in innovative projects.

Pivot Maritime is one of those; I have spoken of them. CBG Systems is another incredible business, and what an opportunity they have. I had the pleasure recently of visiting Javier and his team. They received a grant of \$100 000 for their panelised fire protection system, and in 2022 they won the INDO PACIFIC 2022 National Innovation Award for developing their fire protection system.

Mr Speaker, in relation to racing, what a season it has been. Racing has never been in better shape. It is so good to see everybody coming out again to the track. All the leaders in the racing sector have stepped up. They have gone above and beyond to rebuild after pandemic times.

We have increased the code stakes allocation from \$24.698 million to \$31.159 million, and you have seen how that has driven activity. The racing industry contributes \$185 million per annum to our economy and we are strong supporters of it. We will be drafting a bill for the Racing Regulation Act, and I am looking forward to consulting on that.

Time expired.

[12.55 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in strong support of the Premier's state of the state Address. Four years ago, I was elected to this House. In the first year, I witnessed 12 months of the most successful economic growth that Tasmania has enjoyed for generations. We went from being in a recession under Labor and the Greens to rebuilding the Tasmanian economy from a country in severe financial and economic difficulties - especially one that was unable to pay its debts - to the most successful and confident jurisdiction in Australia.

In the last four years, I have driven kilometre after kilometre around the massive Lyons electorate, consisting of over 35 000 square kilometres and 11 municipalities. I have spoken

to thousands of regional Tasmanians, businesses, mayors, volunteers and community groups. Jeremy Rockliff has become Tasmania's 47th Premier and is the right man to take on the enormous challenge of ensuring Tasmania never returns to the dark old days.

We heard it all from the Premier in his state of the state Address, covering Tasmania now and into the future.

This Liberal Government set an ambitious goal of growing the value of Tasmania's agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050. This sector has grown to \$3.52 billion, putting us well on target to achieving this goal. I see schools and child and family learning centres being built, more police officers, and improved stations, along with special operations groups, and in the housing sector, Homes Tasmania has been established.

The Premier has said he is focused on getting things done by growing our economy, supporting 20 000 more jobs over five years, taking action on cost-of-living pressures, delivering a world-class health system, delivering further education improvements, building the homes that Tasmanians need, keeping our community safe - especially our children - and protecting and promoting what makes Tasmania special.

Some key initiatives announced are:

- hardship payments of up to \$20 000 for power price relief for larger commercial and industrial businesses;
- developing a renewable energy dividend payment for all Tasmanians, to ensure all Tasmanians reap the benefits of our significant renewable energy projects;
- making the additional 97 temporary Ambulance Tasmania positions deployed in response to COVID-19 permanent;
- implementing synthetic phonics in our schools to give our students the best possible framework to improve literacy from the early years to adulthood;
- investing in the George Town community, with \$2.5 million towards the George Town Aquatic, Health & Wellbeing Centre;
- tasking Homes Tasmania to identify and address delivery challenges, together with the sector and local government, to ensure homes can be built sooner; and
- committing \$10 million over two years for a Tasmanian Active Infrastructure Grants Program to fund community sporting facility upgrades across the state, and \$2 million for immediate upgrades at the Moonah and Clarence sports centres.

Mr Speaker, we have a great story to tell our children and grandchildren: you live in a state that is the envy of the world. The Government's plan is working as we continue to go

from strength to strength. A record \$11.2 billion into health, \$8.5 billion into education, and \$1.5 billion into housing, and more than \$330 million -

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

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

Motion to Note

Resumed from above.

[2.30 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, we are back again and we have a great story to tell our children and grandchildren. In the future they will live in a state that is the envy of the world. The Government's plan is working as we continue to go from strength to strength, with a record \$11.2 billion into Health, \$8.5 billion into Education, \$1.5 billion into Housing and more than \$330 million this year in across the forward Estimates to help Tasmanians with cost-of-living pressures, including substantial energy relief.

People seem to realise what a great state we have in Tasmania. It is fantastic to see former Tasmanians and their families returning to the state after they were forced out by the Labor-Greens recession. Our state is growing like never before. Tasmania has captured the attention of the world, our population is growing and we look like soon reaching our target of 650 000 by 2032-33. More people want to visit and the world also wants more of our produce and services as our exports grow. Tasmania is shining and with strong growth comes challenges. This Government will take hold of the challenges, embrace the opportunities and continue to plan for strategic growth, enabling every Tasmanian to share in our state's richness.

Without the strength of our economy, we simply would not be able to invest more into health, education, and the essential services Tasmanians need. We would not be able to take action to keep cost-of-living pressures down and build on infrastructure. As we know, it is a strong economy that will ensure our businesses remain confident and will advance in return giving Tasmanians the opportunity of a job. For Tasmanians to enjoy a better life, a strong economy is the key.

In the fourth quarter of 2022, Tasmania was reported as Australia's best-performing economy. This is the result of a strong foundation and good governance. In the rule of law, open markets have contributed significantly. A strong economy is not just about good luck. This Government opened the state for business, creating a more workable business environment and conditions.

We still need to break down barriers to keep our regions strong and our regional communities growing. This Government has taken action to reduce business costs and we lowered payroll tax. We continue to back our tourism industry to ensure that our visitors stay longer, see more of our state and spend more while they are here, supporting our local businesses with their local jobs across our state.

We have stimulated our building and construction sector with a layer of incentives for people to buy or build a home, creating many new jobs in this sector and adding much-needed

supply in our housing market. This Government acknowledges it is important to have a home, access to a great education, world-class healthcare, and skills and training along with career pathways.

I thoroughly endorse the launch of our Small Business Growth Strategy 2026, delivering grants to help small businesses grow. We all know we need more social and affordable housing. By establishing Homes Tasmania and committing \$1.5 billion to assist on delivering 10 000 social and affordable homes by 2032, it is welcoming and an achievement by this Government to be on track to achieve this.

Keeping our community safe has always been a focus. We have more police on the beat, improved working conditions, new and improved police stations and a Tasmanian Special Operations Group. The Liberal Government has invested in state operations centres and emergency service hubs, just like the Sorell Emergency Service Hub - I was at the opening the other day with the Police minister.

We are providing better coordinated services. Lyons consists of many regional communities where our forestry and mining industries lie. Forestry exports have risen and the mining sector accounts for over 60 per cent of our mercantile exports by value, supports more than 5000 jobs and provides tens of millions in royalties and other fees to Tasmanian taxpayers. I noticed the other day that minister Ellis said that we have increased our exports of timber by 45 per cent since 2014.

The Premier's Address sets the blueprint for the upcoming years. It is Tasmania's road map to a decade-long pipeline of infrastructure. The Government's infrastructure projects are helping connect communities, creating jobs, providing communities with facilities they need, with a record-breaking \$5.6 billion infrastructure program starting with the Bridgewater Bridge.

As the Premier mentioned, we have invested a record \$11.2 billion into Health, \$8.5 billion into Education, \$1.5 billion into Housing, and more than \$330 million this year and across the forward Estimates to help Tasmanians with cost-of-living pressures, including substantial energy relief. This Liberal Government is unstoppable and is focused on what is important for Tasmania and Tasmanians, unlike Labor and the Greens, who seem only to be focused on rehashing irrelevant topics that are unimportant to Tasmania and its people.

We continue to keep our kids at school longer and give them better skills and training so they will be better placed to grasp jobs and Tasmanian opportunities in the future. The Government has also listened to Tasmanians concerned about cost-of-living pressures, therefore we are providing \$33 million towards the national Energy Bill Relief program. When finalised, this package will provide more support to households and small businesses who are doing it tough.

The Tasmanian commercial fishing industry constitutes one-third of Tasmania's agricultural products and supplies around 26 per cent of Australian seafood. For many coastal communities in Tasmania, commercial fishing is a source of food and income and is an important part of our history, especially along the east coast in Lyons. This is why we are growing our blue economy through the responsible management of our marine estate, including via our Tasmanian Salmon Industry Plan, informed by world-leading practice, science and consultation.

We are also improving access and facilities to support recreational fishers. Our Shellfish Market Access Program, or ShellMAP, which operates under a partnership agreement between the Tasmanian Government, Oysters Tasmania and the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council, is supporting the oyster industry along with building our fisheries policy, backing our commercial fisheries sector. We are extending the Abalone Industry Reinvestment Fund and support the Rock Lobster Translocation Program. The Abalone Industry Reinvestment Fund will provide ongoing assistance with controlling the invasive urchin and support researchers and activities to support abalone fisheries. The Rock Lobster Translocation Program will help rebuild stocks of our iconic rock lobster on the east coast, a very important program for our fishing industry. It is this Liberal Government that is also delivering facility upgrades to improve trout angler access to our world-class inland waterways.

Our health is fundamental and, as the Premier said yesterday, he wants to see Tasmanians being able to access the healthcare they need when they need it. We are committed to an extra \$38 million over four years to fund an additional 22 000 endoscopies and purchase new equipment. We have a \$196.4 million statewide elective surgery plan and will commit an extra \$38 million over four years.

The Liberal Government acknowledges how difficult it is getting in to see a GP and it is having a real impact on Tasmanians, ambulance services and emergency departments. Sometimes the smallest of changes can make a big impact. As of 6 March, Tasmanian pharmacists will be able to supply a month of medicines after a patient's prescription runs out when a GP is unavailable. I personally know this will make a big difference and will be of some relief.

Our children are our future and sport is an important part of our life in Australia for all ages and backgrounds. Not only does it improve physical and mental health but it also benefits the economy and builds relationships. It would be good to see more Tasmanians participating in sport at a community level.

We have seen that providing support, facilities and pathways and by investing in a team, their facilities and infrastructure, such as the JackJumpers, the team has success and Tasmania has success. It is why we are the strongest supporters for a Tasmanian AFL and the infrastructure to support the team across the state.

Sport and Recreation with the Department of State Growth will become Active Tasmania, ensuring all Tasmanians will have an opportunity to get active and have somewhere to play. Active Tasmania will conduct a whole-of-state facilities audit to determine what new or upgraded community sporting facilities are needed to keep up with demand. An Active 2030 Strategy will be developed to ensure no Tasmanian misses out on the social and physical benefits of getting active, playing sport and participating in recreational activities.

This Tasmanian Liberal Government is delivering a package of initiatives, including committing \$10 million over two years for a Tasmanian active infrastructure grants program to fund community sporting facility upgrades across the state and \$2 million for immediate upgrades at the Moonah and Clarence sports centres.

We are also delivering the largest state investment in education infrastructure in decades. Currently, there are major redevelopments under way at the Sorell School, Hobart City High School, Cambridge Primary School, Lauderdale Primary School, Exeter High School,

Montello Primary School, and Cosgrove High School and new builds at Legana and Brighton, North West Support School and the six family and child learning centres across the state. Giving parents and children the option to stay in their local area eliminates the worrying decision of leaving their community and an education system they are comfortable with. This is why extending high school years to 11 and 12 has been important for this Government.

The Premier's state of the state speech is a steady approach providing more support for essential services. Yesterday, the Premier announced an expanded statewide trauma service at the Royal Hobart Hospital. The trauma service commenced operation last month, providing benefits across the state of Tasmania. The clinic is on call 24/7, providing guidance to staff in the north and north-west caring for seriously injured patients. The extended statewide trauma service has the capacity to support community-based injury prevention programs, engaging in research, helping to identify and remove barriers to optimal trauma care throughout Tasmania.

This month, new automatic traffic enforcement cameras will be installed for testing, with the ability to detect illegal mobile phone use and seat belt offences. The delivery of these cameras around the state is a major action in our ongoing efforts to save lives and reduce road trauma. Following the testing period, enforcement is expected to commence mid-year.

Housing, especially affordable housing, is a major priority for this Government. With increasing demand and more people moving to Tasmania, the Liberal Government is committed to providing more homes faster. We need to increase the supply of land for residential housing and accommodation options. Yesterday, it was announced that Homes Tasmania has acquired the site of the former Springvale Hostel in New Town. The 3700-square-metre site is perfectly located for housing, being close to services, education and work opportunities. The development will provide a great opportunity for mixed tenure and density infill to meet the growing demand for housing diversity and providing housing for our vulnerable. We are also working closely with local government to identify ways to increase land supply for housing and improve housing outcomes and access for Tasmanians. The Liberal Government has set a state history for largest housing investment with a \$1.5 billion housing package over 10 years.

By 2032, our plan is to deliver 10 000 new social and affordable housing units. This will meet the diverse housing needs of Tasmanians, including youth, the elderly, those living with a disability, men, women, and families. We have already delivered over 800 social and affordable homes, meaning we are well on our way to meet the target of 1500 by June 2023.

This Liberal Government has delivered more than 170 graduate nurses who recently commenced work across Tasmania. This has delivered a much-needed increase to our health system across the state in our major hospitals, district hospitals and community and mental health services. This is the first of two intakes for 2023 marking our promise in the Government's commitment to boost the nursing workforce.

Aggressive and offensive behaviour will not be tolerated on our watch, so this Government is taking additional action to protect our bus drivers and public transport passengers. Transit officers will be equipped with body-worn cameras and will be capable of responding to incidents, deterring offenders, fare evasion, to direct possible offenders off public transport as required and issue infringement notices. The initiatives will be trialled in the south to target anti-social behaviour on public transport and bring relief to passengers and drivers.

Electricity prices have an impact on households and TasNetworks continues to look for safety and transmission network savings while protecting the security of Tasmania's electricity supply. As Mr Barnett said, 'Maintaining Tasmania's transmission network is a significant contributor to electricity prices, so any savings that will help households and businesses during a time of market volatility is welcome'. Overhead inspections are routinely undertaken to check for faults and defects, minimising outages and preventing bushfires from sparks. These inspections are undertaken by helicopter, which are noisy and disruptive to residents and create many complaints. In 2022, a trial of drones was successfully saving more than \$500 000 per year. Congratulations to Fulcrum Robotics, a Tasmanian business which is the contractor operating the drones on TasNetworks' behalf.

Large Tasmanian businesses will soon be able to access up to \$20 000 to help with the cost of electricity - all due to this Government - and a grant program to assist eligible businesses affected by the unexpected increases in unregulated contract power prices. Applications open today, Wednesday 22 March at 2 p.m., and close at 2 p.m. on Monday 31 July 2023. It was announced in the Premier's state of the state speech that there are large commercial and industrial businesses that were forced to reconnect at high prices during last year's unpredictability in the wholesale energy market. Unfortunately, these businesses were not covered within the proposed national energy bill relief program. The minister stated:

Tasmanian businesses that have an annual contracted consumption greater than 150 megawatt hours who entered, or enter into a new fixed price electricity agreement with a Tasmanian retailer between 1 April 2022 and now extended to 30 June 2023, could be eligible for these one-off grants.

The grants are designed to help those who have experienced financial strain due to contracting at a higher weighted average electricity price than their previous agreement.

Soon, these larger businesses will be able to access a \$50 million energy efficient loan scheme. The Liberal Government will support loans of up to \$10 000 interest free, with a further \$50 000 available at low interest rates. From 1 July 2023 small businesses and Tasmanian households in need will also be eligible for assistance from the national energy relief bill.

Climate change, words we hear frequently because flooding damages our infrastructure, affects lives and can cause the spread of diseases. It has a huge impact on our health and wellbeing, food chain and productivity. Drought affects our food productivity and health. Fires are just as devastating. Climate change costs.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government has a 2030 net zero emissions target and a plan to achieve it. Currently we have responsible travel to natural areas, conserving the environment and improving the welfare of local people. What we do well is tourism based on the natural attractions within Tasmania.

Mr Speaker, I acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal palawa people, first arriving in Tasmania over 40 000 years ago. We are committed to our pathway to treaty and truth-telling. We are listening and learning. We want to work with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Earlier this year, the Aboriginal Advisory Group held their first meeting, and is being supported to undertake any work the group feels is needed to determine how we, as a Government, should

approach this important conversation, including investigating work underway in other jurisdictions - undertaking research, seeking specialist advice and, most importantly, consulting with Aboriginal people right across the state.

Importantly, Australians will have their say in a referendum later this year, whether or not to update the constitution to include an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice to parliament.

The Premier last month co-signed a statement of intent, alongside all other first ministers, that committed all governments to working collaboratively to support the constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament and ensure the integrity of the referendum process. This Government will make a priority to deliver better outcomes for the palawa people and their families by introducing new stronger Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation to parliament, legislating amendments to the Aboriginal Lands Act 1995 to facilitate the return of more land, and working with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community controlled organisations to build their capacity to deliver services in and for their own communities.

Mr Speaker, Premier Jeremy Rockliff has delivered his 2023 state of the state Address and proven with his words and his deeds that being a compassionate government and a compassionate leader and a good economic manager are not mutually exclusive concepts. He is a Premier that leads a Government committed to supporting all Tasmanians. He deserves our loyalty and respect.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I officially welcome to the gallery students from grade 9 at Scotch Oakburn College - another group I did not get to welcome earlier. I talked to them outside. I wish them all the very best.

Members - Hear, hear.

[2.53 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Mr Speaker, I also welcome the Scotch Oakburn students and hope you enjoyed your visit to parliament.

Mr Speaker, I am glad to rise this afternoon to add my contribution to the Government's state of the state Address, and to share some of the experiences I hear from the community across a range of areas and across each of my portfolios.

I begin by reflecting on the state of the state response delivered by our Labor leader, and the positive plan that Rebecca White and the Labor team has put forward for a future Labor government - a future Labor government that would truly focus on the priorities of Tasmanian people and the things that concern them: the things we are hearing through our communities that are the biggest concerns for people trying to get by each day.

Things like health - being able to access primary care, a GP, or to get into one of our emergency rooms, where staff are working under incredible pressure every day.

Housing, which is at the worst crisis point that has ever been seen in Tasmania's history, with over 4500 families still stuck on the Government's social and housing waiting list - and that number grows, month on month, while this Government continues to fail Tasmanians in delivering on their own housing promises. They have made big promises on housing, and we have welcomed the promises they have made, because we know those promises must be delivered. Tasmanians need them to be delivered. However, even their own promises are not being kept. They are failing to deliver on the targets they have set when it comes to housing delivery.

A future Labor Government would focus on education, and the education of our young people and the workforces across Tasmania's schools and early childhood sector: workers this Government has simply ignored and failed to treat with the respect they deserve - particularly teachers and support staff in schools who, among other frontline workers, did the heavy lifting during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were at the frontline. They were not at home in lockdown as many of us were. They were at the frontline working with young people, continuing to deliver education, just like those frontline health workers and frontline community services were.

These workers were at the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic. They deserve respect. This Government failed to show them respect in the recent wage negotiations, not just as a result of the work they put in during the pandemic, but the work they put in every day to keep this state going. They are the engine room of our future, and the engine room of the Tasmanian economy. This Government continues to fail to appreciate that and fails to treat them seriously.

A future Labor Government would focus on the cost-of-living crisis that is gripping every demographic. Perhaps sparing the frontbenches of those opposite, the cost-of-living crisis is the number one issue affecting Tasmanians.

I went to a forum earlier this week held by the Hobart Women's Shelter, hosted at Government House. It was their second annual working meeting. With a range of stakeholders, the Hobart Women's Shelter is doing some amazing sector-led work, bringing to the forefront the reality of what is being faced in the homelessness and housing sector. The stark reality is that the Hobart Women's Shelter is turning away eight out of every 10 women who seek shelter. That is a shocking figure that everyone in this place and in the Tasmanian community should be completely abhorred by. Eight out of 10 women, mostly with children, who are seeking emergency shelter, are turned away because there is not enough room. Why is there not enough room, Mr Speaker? It is because this Government has failed to plan for the known demand, and the likely increase in demand, of homelessness and housing services.

The people working in that sector are doing it really tough - but doing it even tougher are those families who are in desperate need of that support. At that forum I learnt that the number one reason women are reporting that they are coming to housing and homelessness services right now is the cost-of-living crisis, followed very closely by family violence.

Historically, family violence has been the number one reason why people have sought emergency shelter at the Hobart Women's Shelter, but they have also sought assistance across the homelessness and housing sector and the community services sector. Family violence has recently been overtaken, at least in the Hobart Women's Shelter's experience, by a cost-of-living crisis.

Cost of living and family violence are inextricably linked when it comes to the safety of women and children. It is shocking to know that so many people who are in desperate need are being let down by this Government. The number one reason people return to violent relationships is lack of housing. When the Women's Shelter surveyed the women who were coming through their doors and asked them that question, they said the number one reason that women did not leave or returned was lack of housing and the cost-of-living crisis. That is something that should make everybody who serves in this Rockliff Liberal Government very ashamed of the way that they have mismanaged the housing and homelessness sector and failed to plan for those in the most desperate need.

People in the most desperate need, as well as those in every other demographic, people who are being locked out of being able to afford a private rental because the short-stay market has had such a devastating impact on the private rental market across our state, those people are also our priority in the Tasmanian Labor Party and for a future Tasmanian government.

This Government has failed to provide statewide leadership when it comes to short-stay market regulation; in fact, they deregulated it and left it up to councils to do what they saw fit in their communities.

The Hobart City Council for one tried to act on that advice and found that was not the case. The Hobart City Council was not able to limit short-stay permits in the way they wanted to represent the needs of their community, or in the way that the Government advised them that they were able to do. There has been a vacuum left in that space since then and the Government has failed to step in and provide any form of statewide leadership. That pressure used to be felt in the private rental market more in our urban centres of Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie, but now it has been felt well and truly across our entire state in regional as well as urban areas.

One of the effects it is having in regional areas is an effect on business, on the small business sector and on larger industries that are trying to attract workers to come and work in our tourism-rich areas as well as in our industries across the regions. The reason they are struggling to recruit those workers who are there and ready to take up those jobs is that they have been unable to find somewhere to rent and live. That is a failure of this Government to provide any statewide leadership when it comes to the housing system across the board.

It is these priorities that would motivate a Rebecca White-led future Labor government. They are vastly different priorities from those of the Liberal Government. The Rockliff Liberal Government seems completely obsessed with putting close to \$1 billion of taxpayer money into building a football stadium on Hobart's waterfront that does not have community licence because they are basically being held to ransom by the AFL. No other state has had that demand put on it other than Tasmania. It does not make any sense because there is no question that we deserve a team in the men's league and in the women's league of the AFL, and that is across the board. Every political party supports that, but no other state had that demand put on them that they would have to put billions of dollars of taxpayer money into building a new stadium, when we have two AFL quality stadiums already right now in this state. The Government's own business case already tells us that the project does not stack up. It is going to lose Tasmanian taxpayers' money in the short term and in the long term.

What they have also failed to answer is what it means for those existing venues. They have made some tacit promises to the north that York Park would still see matches, but who

knows really what the motivations are of this Government. They are old, they are tired, they are out of touch with the things that are affecting Tasmanian families and Tasmanian households, and they are out of ideas.

I listened with great interest to the Premier's state of the state speech. I wanted to hear Jeremy Rockliff's vision for Tasmania but, honestly, it felt to me like more of an apology speech. It felt like a plea to the Tasmanian people, 'Please keep liking us, please keep liking the things that we're doing'. It did not feel like a manifesto or an idea of how to take Tasmania forward. Indeed, under this Liberal Government, nearly a decade of Liberal lack of leadership in this state, we have gone backwards as a state.

We used to be an affordable place to live, but we are not now. We used to be a great place to get a job, but now salaries are languishing way behind mainland salaries in Tasmania. We used to be a state where it was affordable to rent and/or buy a house, but that is not even the case anymore in Tasmania. We used to be a state where if you needed the support of the service system, things like housing, healthcare, community services or family violence support, you knew there was that support out there. We are a small, close-knit community and people knew that the support would be there when they needed it. That is simply not the case anymore.

When they came to government in 2014, this Liberal Government inherited a housing waitlist of around 2300 families. That is still way too many people to be waiting, let us be clear about that, but that has absolutely blown out to over 4500 families, parents with kids, single parents, and couples. There are 4500 applications on the register.

When they came to government in 2014, the average wait time to be housed was 21 weeks. That is still a long time to be couch surfing or staying in a shelter, no doubt about that, but now it is close to 18 months. People are sleeping in cars, in caravan parks, they are couch surfing for a few days here and there with family, not wanting to outstay their welcome for too long. These are real stories of real people who are suffering because of this Government's lack of planning.

When they came to office in 2014 and inherited that waitlist of 2300 families waiting 21 weeks, if they had just kept pace with the rate of delivery of social and government housing that the former Labor government had been delivering, there would be 3000 fewer families on that waitlist today. That is a shocking reality. When they came to office, housing clearly was simply not their priority. They are willing to talk the talk on it now, but they are playing catch-up after 10 years of unforgivable neglect.

I want to share a few of the personal stories of people who are really feeling that neglect. This House has heard me speak about Shane and Wendy Reed before. I want to start with some good news that about 10 days ago they were housed by Centacare Evolve. That is very good news indeed, but they went through so much stress and pressure that it has had a long, possibly lifetime effect, particularly on Wendy's health. Wendy lives with MS and relies on her husband, Shane, who is her primary carer, to care for her needs. She gets support from the NDIS, including physio equipment that she needs to use daily, but she mostly has to get around in a wheelchair. They rented privately for seven years and, like so many Tasmanians, they could get by in the private rental market, but that is simply out of reach for so many people now, including Shane and Wendy.

We advocated for Shane and Wendy. They advocated for themselves. Their NDIS workers advocated for them and their doctors advocated for them, but they heard nothing from government for 18 months, during which time their stress grew and Wendy's symptoms worsened. It is unforgivable that people are put under the kind of stress and pressure that they were.

With permission from Wendy, I am going to share a letter her physiotherapist wrote as part of their housing application. Her physio said that her patient - that is Wendy - is under severe stress:

She has been given notice to vacate their private rental property.

The reason for that was that the landlord was moving back in. She said that:

With an increase in stress, Wendy's symptoms and the symptoms of anyone living with MS, can worsen. I have seen a decline in Wendy's ability to move around and get up and down a single step, things that she was comfortably doing just a few weeks ago. She is using her wheelchair more and relies on her husband to assist with activities of daily living.

The reality for Shane and Wendy is that they were about to move into a small campervan that they own and a tent. The idea of assisting someone in and out of bed and in and out of the bathroom from a tent was completely unacceptable. It is a good thing that they have finally been housed, unlike so many others who are still waiting.

As I said to Wendy, the system should not work that way. It should not need letters from politicians. It should not need going to the news cameras to tell your story for action to be taken by this Government. It is how the system seems to work now, but what a broken system. They are grateful now that they are housed, but the system should not work that way.

I also want to share the story of Samantha, a pseudonym she used when she made the choice to speak to the *Mercury* a little while ago. We used that pseudonym for her safety and the safety of her children. She was renting privately - another person who was in the private rental market who now cannot afford that. She was renting with her partner and children. The relationship turned violent and she left.

She did what we are all encouraged to do: leave a violent relationship, under the assumption that there would be support on the other side. She called services. She had never needed to call them before. She thought, like all of us have the right to think, that there would be support at the other end of the phone and there was not. It was over the Christmas period. They said, 'There is no emergency accommodation for you. We wish you well. Goodbye'. She was so shocked. She could not return to her violent partner and she ended up sleeping on a friend's lounge room with three children, one of whom is critically ill and she is now living in a garage. She feels completely let down. With her permission I am going to read into *Hansard* a comment that she made to me. She is an inspiration. She is starting a movement. She wrote to me and said:

I am just wondering about the Government's campaign against family violence. It is advertised across numerous platforms. It is in public toilets, tampon packets, even on Centrelink's phone service and state government

support services that are available for families leaving domestic violence situations, but the Government does not have adequate services available.

How is it that the Government is allowed to continue to advertise false and misleading information to the public without being held accountable for that false information. If this were a consumer affairs issue that business would be at fault and be held accountable for misleading information. Yet the Government is able to continue to campaign around something that they are unwilling to invest in and fleeing families are in unsafe situations because of it.

Mr Speaker, Samantha is a powerhouse. She is now so enraged by the situation that she encountered when she tried to seek that support that she is reaching out to organisations. She is going to do what she can to contribute to that sector. She wants to start an organisation to put together support packs for people who are fleeing family violence. She has already started on that journey with meetings with a number of community service organisations. She is recognising, like all of us do, the pressure that family violence workers are under, working in a very under-resourced and stretched sector where there are more and more people needing support, partly because of, as Samantha said, encouragement from government to do the right thing and leave a family violence relationship. That is putting added pressure on that sector, but the Government is failing to continue to adequately fund organisations that support people leaving family violence relationships.

As is always the case, I prepare a lot more than there is time to go through when I think about what I am going to say. I have much more to say about the housing portfolio. I had several more stories that I wanted to share with the Chamber, but I might have to wait for another time to do that because I also want to speak about my other portfolios of justice and corrections, and shadow attorney-general.

There continues to be a crisis in the prison system. As we saw today in the bill that was tabled by the Treasurer, I think it is \$15 million in extra funding that has been commissioned for the Tasmanian Prison Service. We hear every day from workers in the corrections system, as well as from Tasmanians who are in contact with the justice system, that conditions - both for workers and for prisoners - continue to deteriorate in the corrections system. It is not untrue to say that on any given day, Risdon Prison is a pressure cooker, almost ready to go off. We are hearing reports from workers in the prison that some people are working, on average, 50- to 60-hour weeks, that shifts are routinely understaffed which leads to lockdowns because it is not safe for either the workers or the prisoners for units to be unlocked without a full shift of workers available to unlock those units. They are consistently understaffed because of the pressure those workers are under that lockdowns are almost inevitable.

One worker said to me that six years ago lockdowns were a rarity, whereas now unlocks are a rarity. Those workers also feel like those out-of-cell hours figures that the Government reports on as they are required to do nationally and internationally are not being adequately and accurately portrayed to the public. People like us who are not in the corrections system might assume that means time out in the prison yard doing a rehabilitation program, working in one of the employment opportunities in the prison, or having time in a green space, having some personal time, or interacting with other prisoners. Workers tell me that often this is not the case. Out-of-cell time might just be a small cage still on your own, or in a very small group.

That is not complying with state expectations, national expectations, or international law expectations when it comes to the incarceration of people. It leads to enormous stress among that prison population and the workers who are on the frontline working in the Tasmanian corrections system. There are more than 100 workers on workers compensation. Recruit schools get held, people stay for a short period of time and then leave. That is because of the pressure. It is a really hard job, there is no doubt. No one pretends that working in the corrections system is an easy job. Many people who go in to the corrections system at any level do so because they actually have a commitment and a vision to helping people rehabilitate, to start addressing Tasmania's increasing recidivism rates that under this Government have also skyrocketed. Recidivism means returning to prison. If you look at people's return to prison over a one, two or 10-year period they are alarmingly high.

There is no question that people need to be held accountable for offending behaviour. I am not going to argue against that, but we are working in a criminal justice system that is completely broken, where there is not adequate opportunity for rehabilitation. I have talked to prisoners who have a genuine desire to rehabilitate; people who said words to me like: 'It is the least the Tasmanian public would expect, that I would do everything I can while I am locked up in here to make sure I do not come back'. People cannot get access to those rehabilitation courses - the few that still exist - or the other support programs, because of lockdowns, because of staff shortages, and because of underfunding in a very stretched system.

It is no surprise that as a result of that we see recidivism rates continue to climb. We see incarceration rates continue to climb. Part of me thinks, maybe a conservative Government like this one does not mind those figures going up because it is all about locking people away. Locking up baddies means votes. I want to live in a state that is safe for everyone. I know many people who want that as well. We all want to live in a community that is safer. That means a community with less crime. If we are not investing in the programs that actually lead to somebody stopping their offending behaviour, we are not going to achieve that community where we see less crime: safer communities where we can all know we are less likely to have our car stolen or our house broken into, or the kind of day-to-day crimes that happen that affect so many Tasmanians every day. One of the main reasons that people end up committing often what people would broadly say is petty crime - theft, things like that - is the cost-of-living crisis. It is the fact that it is so expensive to get by these days that people end up shoplifting food to feed their families.

What a depressing state of affairs it is that we are living in a modern country like Australia where people have to resort to behaviour like that. I am not excusing it, but it is not a reason to lock someone up in jail. If we need any evidence to the contrary, we can see that when the jobseeker payments were doubled during the COVID-19 pandemic, crime rates went down, because people had the money they needed to do things like pay for food, pay for electricity and pay off debts that they might have been accruing because the cost of living is biting so hard in their household that they cannot afford to get by.

Mr Speaker, it is terrible that we live in a state where the justice system is in such disarray. This Government does not seem to have what it takes to really address that and start looking at the root causes of crime, what causes people to engage in offending behaviour in the first place, and to do what is required structurally to start having an effect on reducing the crime rate, because we all want to live in a safer community; everybody deserves that in Tasmania. Nobody wants to see an increase in crime happen across our state. We all want to live in a state that is safer, but for that to happen we need to see a government that invests in

rehabilitation programs and through-care so that people are not released from prison into homelessness.

Labor Leader Rebecca White and I recently visited a couple who are currently living on the Hobart Rivulet. Both had been recently released from prison. One of them said to us that she did not bother applying for parole, even though she was most likely eligible for it, because she knew she had nowhere to go and at least in prison she had a bed. Her partner said to us, 'It's easier in there'. He really does not want to go back in there and neither does she, but they are sleeping in a tent on the side of the Hobart Rivulet and it is only going to get colder there, so they said it would be easier in some ways to return to prison. They do not want to do that, let me be very clear about that, but they are living in a state that has been mismanaged by this Liberal Government for near to a decade now, a government that does not have the right priorities at heart, which wants to invest in things like a football stadium instead of housing, rehabilitation, education or health. It is those things that need investment and focus from this Government that we are failing to see.

[3.23 p.m.]

Mr YOUNG (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Premier's Address. Although I have only been in this place for six months, I am proud to be here as a member of the Rockliff Liberal Government. I have been welcomed as a friend and part of a united team and encouraged to bring my skills and experience to bear. Again, for this I am especially thankful to the Premier and the Deputy Premier but also the entire team, whose hard work and dedication to Tasmania is an inspiration for me to continue to do better and work harder.

Tasmania is the best place in the world to live and its people are amazing in striving for excellence. I commend the Premier on his vision for the future and an ambitious plan. I remember working in the bad old days in Tasmania where doing anything was too hard or too costly. I am glad this is no longer the case. Working in partnership with the people of Tasmania, we are getting things done to keep Tasmania moving.

Under the leadership of the majority Liberal Government, Tasmania's economy has gone from being a laggard to a leader. The state's population is currently at an all-time high, with a bold target set in 2014. The Government's goal is to provide opportunities to both Tasmanians and those who migrate here, including access to quality education, healthcare, training and career pathways.

I will now talk about the importance of small business, especially in the electorate of Franklin and indeed Tasmania. Small business is the backbone of our economy and plays a vital role in creating jobs, stimulating economic growth and contributing to our local communities. Tasmania is establishing itself as a global hub for innovation and commerce and business leaders are taking notice. For example, the agri-food sector has expanded, putting the state on track to reach its \$10 billion target by 2050.

The majority Liberal Government is committed to supporting business and industries in their pursuit of innovation, acceleration and prosperity. Small businesses are critical for the success of our local economy. They provide employment opportunities to the community and keep money circulating within our local economy. When you support a small business in Franklin you are not just supporting that business owner, you are supporting their employees, their suppliers and their local community.

Small businesses also help to stimulate economic growth. When a small business is successful they can reinvest their profits back into their business, which helps them to grow and create more jobs. This in turn helps boost economic growth in the area, which benefits everyone. Small businesses contribute to the unique character and charm of our local communities. They are often run by people who live and work in our area and they bring a personal touch to the products and services they offer. They create a sense of community pride and identity that is hard to replicate in larger corporations.

Small businesses are the lifeblood of our communities. They provide employment opportunities and it our responsibility to support and invest in small business ensuring the continued success of our communities. I was in a pharmacy the other day and it always amazes me how, when you go into a local business, they know the name of everyone coming in; it is always great to see. The Government is proud to support small businesses and will always have their back.

I will take a minute to talk about the recently released Small Business Growth Strategy. The initial draft of the Small Business Growth Strategy 2026 was crafted and made available for public consultation. The strategy aims to outline the priorities and action areas for both the Government and the private sector in order to foster business growth in Tasmania. During June and July 2022, a preliminary public consultation process took place which involved 280 engagements with businesses, representative organisations and key stakeholders. These engagements took the form of face-to-face and online roundtable discussions, one-on-one interviews, an online survey and email submissions. The feedback gathered from the consultation process was organised into four primary themes with related subthemes.

The first was people and connections, which involved networking collaboration, local purchasing, staff skills and training, population, housing and public transport. The second was place, which is the Tasmanian brand, location, size, lifestyle, environment, climate and renewable energy. The third was enabling businesses around business advice and support, new business, the operating environment, scaling up, red tape reduction, and the fourth was technology, which is digital connectivity, global markets and digital capability.

A set of objectives addressing each theme in the business growth strategy will direct the creation of several implementation plans, each lasting 12 to 18 months. These implementation plans will be adaptable and responsive, allowing this Government to remain agile and adjust to the changes in the operating environment. Furthermore, these plans will offer businesses a clear understanding of what to expect from the Tasmanian Government, representative organisations and the wider business community in the short term.

Under this Government's leadership Tasmania has made significant progress. Our economy is currently a leader among the states, with highly confident businesses and an unemployment rate that has dropped from 7.4 per cent to a record low of below 4 per cent, resulting in more Tasmanians being employed than ever before. The creation of over 54 000 jobs since we took office has contributed to the country's highest wage growth over the past year, benefiting Tasmanians.

Moreover, we have set records in total exports, retail spending has increased and our efforts to promote Tasmania as a premium destination has proven successful, with visitor spending at a record high. We have maintained elevated levels of building approvals and our

infrastructure program has been groundbreaking, stimulating the economy, creating jobs, improving roads, bridges, schools and hospitals and other essential community facilities.

Our blue economy is being developed responsibly through the sustainable use and management of our marine estate. The Tasmanian Salmon Industry Plan, informed by world-leading practices, science and consultation, is helping to grow our blue economy. Our shellfish market access program is supporting our oyster industry while building our fisheries policy in backing our commercial fisheries sector. We are also improving access and facilities for recreational fishers. To support our abalone industry, we are extending the Abalone Industry Reinvestment Fund to provide ongoing and dedicated invasive urchin control, as well as supporting research and activities.

Moreover, upgrades are being made to enhance trout angler access to our world-class inland waterways.

Mr Speaker, salmon farming has been a significant industry in Tasmania for many years and plays a vital role in the state's economy, providing jobs and income to many Tasmanians, indeed many regional Tasmanians. The Tasmanian Government has implemented regulations and standards to ensure that the industry operates sustainably. These regulations include strict biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of disease and parasites. The Tasmanian Government and industry have demonstrated a commitment to ensuring the industry operates in a sustainable and responsible manner. We are backing the good people of the industry, many of whom are located in regional Tasmania.

The forestry and mining industries are also the backbone of many regional communities, and our Government is committed to supporting their growth and development. We have strengthened workplace protection laws to ensure Tasmanians who work in our forests can do so without fear of intimidation from radical protesters. Forestry exports are on the rise, and we are helping the industry to innovate and diversify. Our Government is again committed to supporting these vital industries, creating jobs in regional communities.

Priority is given to Tasmanians to get the best chance of securing employment. We are modernising our skills and training systems to be more efficient. We have established new training facilities throughout the state, including TasTAFE's Water and Energy Trade Centres of Excellence in Franklin, and TasTAFE's first-ever cybersecurity operations centre - something I think in future years will be more and more vital.

Our Jobs Tasmania program is delivering positive outcomes for jobseekers, businesses and local communities. The Regional Jobs Hub Network has helped almost 3000 Tasmanians find work, and connected more than 1200 individuals with training opportunities to enhance their skills for future employment. The jobs hub model success stems from its personalised support for those who have been neglected by other service providers, or who are ineligible for assistance.

There are many benefits to having a job. Having a job is not just about earning a wage. It has several other advantages that contribute to our personal growth and development. First, having a job helps provide financial security. When we have a steady income we can pay our bills, plan for the future and invest in our education and personal growth. Second, having a job gives us a sense of purpose and self-worth. We feel accomplished when we complete tasks, solve problems and contribute to the success of business. This sense of purpose can boost our

self-esteem and lead to a greater sense of satisfaction and fulfilment in our lives. Third, having a job provides opportunities for personal and professional growth. We can learn new skills, take on new responsibilities and develop our abilities as we progress in our careers. These experiences can help us become more confident, adaptable and well-rounded individuals. Last, having a job can provide us with a social network. We spend a significant proportion of our day at work - and love every minute of it, of course - and as a result we can build relationships with our colleagues. This social network can provide us with support, encouragement and a sense of belonging, which can help improve our mental health and wellbeing.

These many benefits are why we must do all we can do to support our young Tasmanians, particularly when it comes to their transition from school to work. That is why the Rockliff Liberal Government is creating a youth jobs strategy. In the next 12 months, Jobs Tasmania will collaborate with the Department for Education, Children and Young People, the Youth Network of Tasmania, jobs hubs and other service providers to explore ways of assisting young people in transitioning to work or further education and training. We want to ensure young Tasmanians have a smooth path to employment.

Mr Speaker, education is a key priority for the Tasmanian Liberal Government. We recognise its importance in personal and social development. Our retention rates are well above those of the previous Labor-Greens government's failed Tasmania Tomorrow reforms when they tried to close 20 schools. We have a proven track record of ambitious transformations in education, but we do acknowledge more needs to be done.

State funding for government schools, skills and training is now at a record \$8.5 billion. We are delivering the largest investment in education infrastructure in decades, including new builds and major redevelopments across Tasmania - including at Cambridge Primary School and Lauderdale Primary School.

I am pleased to say other infrastructure and education capital projects exist in Franklin, including:

- \$15.1 million for the Cambridge Primary School major redevelopment and extension as part of the 2020-21 election, which commenced this year;
- Lauderdale Primary School: \$6.5 million major redevelopment and extension as part of the 2020-21 election, commencing in 2023;
- Kingborough Child and Family Learning Centre: \$4.5 million brand-new build, to commence in 2023;
- Clarence High School, Dover High School, Kingston High School, Woodbridge School toilet refurbishment as part of the \$6.3 million election commitment in anti-bullying measures in secondary schools by making student bathrooms safer;
- Woodbridge School: \$40 000 to upgrade the oval, as part of the 2020-21 election;

- Risdon Vale Primary School: renew and upgrade outdated classrooms as part of the 2020-21 election commitment; this is part of the classroom blitz due for completion in January 2025;
- Tasmanian Archives: \$3 million for redevelopment of a vacant area in the former Geilston Bay High School and relocation of the Tasmanian Archives from its current location at Berriedale; that was completed late last year, which I had the pleasure of visiting with minister Jaensch;
- Southern Support School: \$4.3 million for a major redevelopment of construction works, completed in June 2022; again, I was lucky enough to visit the school with minister Jaensch, and it was great to see the students engaged and making great use of the new facilities; and
- funding of \$5 million allocated to deliver a new Renewable Energy Schools Program that will roll out solar panels in government schools.

Education is the backbone of a strong economy and a caring community. It is the most powerful driver for improving economic and social outcomes in Tasmania, such as health, life expectancy, happiness and productivity. We have fulfilled our 2014 election commitment to extend all high schools to years 11 and 12, despite opposition. This means our students no longer face the difficult choice of leaving their community, or dropping out of the education system.

Improving access to early education has been a priority of ours, regardless of where families live or their circumstances. Early learning gives children the best possible start in life. Therefore, we aspire to provide access to early learning for every three-year-old in the year before kindergarten. We will embark on an extensive information engagement and co-design process to expand early learning access during this year.

Every child in Tasmania should have the chance to learn, to read, to write and spell; this is very important for their future learning success in life. In the second half of 2023, we will announce pilot sites to test different approaches to expanding early learning access, co-designed with the early childhood education and care sector, and informed by needs of local communities. This announcement complements our targeted expansion of the Working Together program, which has already been delivered across Tasmania.

A robust economy allows for increased investment in healthcare - and that is exactly what we are achieving. Under this Liberal Government, Tasmania's health system has seen its highest level of funding and staff ever recorded. The Tasmanian Liberal Government is putting health first, and our 2022-23 state budget has the highest ever funding of \$11.2 billion over four years. This means we are spending an average of \$7.25 million per day on health. We are adding more beds to our health system, with 188 new public beds and 43 new public-private beds since July 2018. This brings us closer to our goal of 250 beds by the end of 2024.

We have also hired 1600 full-time health workers since July 2020, mostly in frontline roles like nurses, doctors, paramedics and other health professionals. We are still recruiting.

We are investing in technology to improve our health services and attract skilled workers. This includes \$150 million over the next four years to upgrade our digital health infrastructure,

with a total of \$475 million over the next 10 years to transform patient experiences across Tasmania. This investment will help create a new integrated care platform that allows hospitals, GPs, community health, allied health, and specialists to share information easily.

We are also spending \$4.7 million to support the Bedside Medication Management initiative which makes patient care safer and allows nurses and midwives to focus on their patients. Pharmacy technicians will handle medication management, reducing administrative tasks for nurses and midwives.

We are also providing services that help people stay at home, reducing hospital visits. The Community Rapid Response Service is now available statewide and has been successful in reducing hospital presentations.

Ambulance Tasmania has started a PACER team - the first in the state - consisting of mental health clinicians, police officers and paramedics. This team helps people with mental health issues get timely care in the community, reducing the burden on police and ambulance services. Community paramedics are now available in all regions, attending non-emergency calls to treat patients and communities and keep them out of hospital. We have granted funding to various providers across the state, including Cygnet Family Practice and Ochre Health on Bruny Island in my own electorate. We know there are challenges in our health system but our Government is committed to finding innovative solutions to improve health services for all Tasmanians. I welcome the Premier's announcement that the additional 97 temporary positions in Ambulance Tasmania, which were created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, will now become permanent positions. This demonstrates our commitment to providing quality healthcare services to all Tasmanians.

Last month we announced a \$13 million partnership with the federal government to trial a single employer model for GPs and rural generalists in training. This initiative is designed to bring more GPs to the communities where they are needed, increase retention rates and provide more Tasmanians with access to quality care. We understand the importance of having accessible healthcare services and our Government is committed to addressing the challenges and delivering new ways of getting things done. This includes boosting access to after-hours healthcare with the GP After Hours Support Initiative, which has granted funds to seven primary health providers totalling \$8 million. This initiative is designed to enhance the community based services and allow GPs and pharmacies to provide urgent care during evenings and weekends to more Tasmanians by expanding access to primary health providers and treating people in the community where safe and appropriate. The initiative can not only help reduce pressure on hospitals but provide patients with comfortable and accessible care closer to home.

Five primary health providers across the state, including my electorate in Cygnet, have grants through the Government's Hospital Avoidance Co-Investment Fund which allows primary health providers to apply for a grant up to \$200 000 to expand their facilities and offer after hours care. This investment, in boosting access to primary healthcare, is part of the Government's long-term plan to create a sustainable and integrated health system, ensuring that Tasmanians receive the appropriate care at the right time and place while reducing the pressure on emergency departments and hospitals.

We understand that bushfires can cause a lot of harm so we want to be ready for them. This is especially poignant for me as I recently attended the Snug 1967 bushfires memorial on

behalf of Mr Ellis. My colleagues, David O'Byrne and Dean Winter, were there as well. This goes beyond politics. On that fateful day on 7 February `1967, now known as 'Black Tuesday', southern Tasmania was besieged by 110 individual fires. The conditions were optimal for spreading flames with the combination of forest debris, northerly winds reaching 110 kilometres per hour and sweltering heat. Tragically, 62 people perished, including 11 from the Snug region, while 900 people suffered injuries and 7000 people were left without homes. The fires came dangerously close to the Hobart central business district, just two kilometres away. In just five hours, the fires destroyed 1293 homes and consumed 264 000 hectares of land in the southern part of the state.

As the years have gone by, the memory of the 1967 bushfires remained etched in our minds. The devastation it brought to communities, families and collective lives was immense. We must ensure that such a catastrophe never recurs.

Our community has taken significant measures over the decades to protect Tasmania from fires and emergencies. Today, over 230 volunteer fire brigades are spread across Tasmania, supported by more than 5000 volunteers who work with the Tasmanian Fire Service and the State Emergency Service to keep our state safe. In Snug, the volunteer brigade station, which first opened in 1974, now has 20 dedicated volunteers providing support and reassurance to the local community.

We have implemented programs and initiatives to minimise the risk of bushfires. The Tasmanian Fire Service operates an extensive fuel reduction program, backed by \$9 million in annual government funding. This program helps mitigate bushfire risks by conducting strategic burns near our communities. We have also opened new stations and invested in modern equipment and technology to ensure our firefighters are well equipped for their duties. While there is always room for improvement, we remain committed to taking the necessary steps to enhance our preparedness and response capabilities. That is one of the reasons we put money into making sure our emergency services are set up properly.

We have improved the way we work by making changes to the state Fire Service Act. This means we can coordinate our work better when there is an emergency. Preparation is always key, but so is ensuring we have good communication during emergencies. New alert systems like TasALERT, the Australian Warning System and the Australia Fire Danger Rating System are in place to keep communities informed of potential risks. We are doing things to help us be ready for floods and other natural disasters too.

Tourism and hospitality are major drivers of our economy and synonymous with our culture and lifestyle. What we love about this place visitors love too. Our strategy for tourism is based on renewal and cementing ourselves as a premium destination with unique experiences. That plan is working.

It is vital that our future is managed strategically without compromising our brand proposition or negatively impacting our protected areas and natural environment. Our plan for tourism focuses on providing high quality experiences to visitors and ensuring we maintain our reputation as a top destination. Our approach is working and we have seen record tourism revenue.

If you have ever been to the magnificent Hasting Caves, or managed to visit one of our many spectacular wineries or distilleries, that is something that is easy to understand. It is

crucial that we manage our future tourism development in a way that does not harm our natural environment or cultural heritage. The Government takes the responsibility for managing Tasmania's protected areas seriously and aims to support job-creating tourism projects that respect our values.

Our tourism EOI process invites proposals for projects that offer economic opportunities and world-class visitor experiences while preserving our natural areas. This approach has already produced ventures that we are proud of.

Anyone who knows me knows my love of sports - pretty much any sport. Much to my wife's disgust, I will watch any sport on television or live. Sporting clubs play a great part of Tasmanian life and are often much more than a place to play. They are a community of people and often have generations of players playing for the same club. I was especially reminded of this when visiting the Blackmans Bay club recently. It is a small community club with one of the best views from the oval in Tasmania that I have seen. The president was especially proud that he had managed to play some games with his sons.

We want more Tasmanians to be able to play sports and be active, no matter their age or background. First, we are going to see where new or improved facilities are needed to meet demand. Sport and Recreation within the Department of State Growth will become Active Tasmania. They will create a plan called Active 2030 Strategy to make sure everyone in Tasmania has the chance to be active and enjoy the benefits of playing sports or doing other recreational activities.

To help with this progress we are doing a few things. We are giving \$10 million over two years to a program called Tasmanian Active Infrastructure Grants. This program will provide money for community sports facilities to be upgraded all around the state. We are also putting \$2 million towards immediate upgrades for the Moonah and Clarence sports centres. I am pleased to today to talk about the Rockliff Government's achievements of the past as well as our plans for the future. We are indeed getting things done.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I welcome the other group of grade 9 students from Scotch Oakburn College.

I do not want to get into a family dispute but the Speaker is often called to make very difficult decisions.

[3.50 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - To explain to our students, the Speaker normally does not have to choose between siblings as to who gets to go first, so it is a difficult position for him.

Mr Speaker, the history of the state of the state speeches is significant, as is the reason that we have them and what they are supposed to do. They are introduced to ensure that the significant issues facing our state and setting out the way the Government will respond to those issues is put before the House. They replaced the opening of parliament when we had the Governor's speech each year, so they are supposed to have great import and are supposed to

espouse the vision the government of the day would enact. They are often visionary, they are often exciting, and come with significant investment and funding that is delivered immediately.

This one was a bit different but I guess it is no wonder because this current government iteration is quite different from the one that went to the election. It is not the one that reflects the election outcome but rather perhaps the way the count-back system works under the Hare Clark system. One member, a former minister, could not take his seat. The Government probably knew that that was unlikely when they ran him as a candidate, but that is a matter for them. Former premier Peter Gutwein and ministers Sarah Courtney and Jacquie Petrusma have all left the parliament, and Ms Jane Howlett has gone from Cabinet. Nearly half of the Cabinet has gone, so perhaps it is not surprising that the Government is struggling or floundering a bit.

What is also missing is that vision and that hope and desire to see a better Tasmania and being able to put that into any language. As to any drive from this Government or a belief in the community that this Government can deliver on its commitments or has the capacity to weather any of the storms that come our way, we seem directionless. That really frightens me. You would think an Opposition would be pleased but as a Tasmanian I find that concerning.

Even though previous Liberal governments have arguably continued with what the state of the state speech would normally do - they have been about the future, they have been about investment - I did not see that in this one. To be honest, I think premier Hodgman was somewhat fortunate in that he traded on a GST windfall and the investments that have been made by previous Labor governments that came to fruition during his time. The irrigation investment is a significant example of that.

What we normally see in governments of all political colours is that in their term they do something that sets up the state for the future. We do not necessarily see that with this Government. Even under those days with premier Hodgman we still felt good about where we were heading and we felt positive about where our future might be. We might have disagreed on some of the ways to get there but there was a feeling we were going somewhere.

Former premier Peter Gutwein led us through the pandemic and clearly Tasmanians thought he did an excellent job in that because his election result shows that. However, even he started to struggle with the day-to-day leadership of the Government, the difference between building an economy and managing a budget.

I like our new Premier on a personal level, I really do, but I am not seeing that he is leading the Cabinet or a government with passion or capacity. As I said, that is not just disheartening, it is quite scary. Nothing in the state of the state, a time when leaders can imagine our future and plot a pathway forward, gave me the sense that Premier Rockliff's Liberals still had the energy or the competence we need in Tasmania. The state of the state did not give us visions, it did not give us solutions to the significant challenges facing us, and it did not give us a pathway. It did not give us the hope we need to face the difficult times that Tasmanians are experiencing.

Let us talk about the state of the state of Tasmania at the moment. I will start with some positive things. As a former arts and tourism minister I am delighted to see how our creative industries are achieving so much on the national and international stage, how well they are performing, and the resilience they have shown through some of the most difficult impacts of

the pandemic for their industry. I know they appreciate that federal Labor is investing in the future of their industries and reshaping arts careers.

As a former tourism minister, I am proud of the wonderful tourism experiences that are being developed. I am delighted we are still such a sought-after destination. I congratulate our Australian Tourism Awards winners - gold awards to Wukalina Walk, Bangor Vineyard and Coal River Farm; silver to the Big 4 St Helens Holiday Park, Tas Walking Company and the Ship Inn at Stanley; and bronze to Air Adventure Golf, Villa Talia, Peppers Silo Hotel and Mures Tasmania. These are world-class experiences and world-class standards. They are appropriately recognised in the national awards system.

However, day-to-day life in Tasmania is not faring as well under this Government and I genuinely cannot see their plan to correct it. Access to health, housing and education, and the cost of living are all getting steadily worse.

Mr Speaker, you would be aware in your own community from the engagements that you would have with constituents that power prices are soaring. They are up 12 per cent this year with more hikes due, costing the average household an additional \$500 and the average business thousands. That is money that people do not necessarily have lying around. Some businesses are having hundreds of thousands of dollars in increased demand and pressures. I have spoken to many people who are struggling to pay their bills. Yes, they can do the pay-by-pay processes and there are mechanisms for that, but it fundamentally means not having enough money to pay for their power. I have spoken to people who have disconnected their power because they have tried every other mechanism to reduce the cost and it is simply not working. Our winters are harsh and many of these people I know spend their days in community facilities and Neighbourhood Houses trying to keep warm during the day and then return home to shiver through the night because they cannot afford to put their power back on. That is the state of the cost of living and energy for Tasmanians.

Tasmanians who cannot afford to heat their homes are spiralling into debt to pay their power bills as they juggle those costs with trying to choose what food they can afford to purchase. Not everyone is even managing to pay their rent because they are not even in a home. Rents have gone up on average \$200 per week since 2014, and \$280 for a 3-bedroom home. Over the course of a year that is an extra \$10 400. The constant stress that many people are experiencing is that they are worried whether their lease is going to be revoked, because as properties come up as leases end, we are still seeing many properties moving from the long-term rental market transitioning into short-stay, and nothing seems to be changing for those people. Nothing seems to be getting any better. We keep hearing the promises of a cheaper, faster, fairer, simpler planning system, but it is still on the never-never. We are not seeing that being resolved.

There are 15 561 residential lots across the state that we could be building houses on, but they are still vacant. New building approvals are at a six-year low. There is no single statewide planning scheme, just delays and frustration. The 24-hour turnaround time for development applications has not been delivered. Remember, we fast-tracked the eight subdivisions of the development of affordable housing. I have seen pictures of all those bits of land still to deliver a house for anyone: 900 empty lots that are not helping anyone on the Public Housing Register, and they are desperate for a home.

This blatant neglect of the social housing sector has forced thousands more families to compete for private rentals while they wait for help. After nearly a decade in government there are more than 4500 families waiting on average more than a year for public housing. Mr Speaker, you have been around here as long as I have - experience, not age, perhaps - and I have never felt so hopeless and helpless as when I am sending people away from my office without a resolution of somewhere to sleep safe that night, and that has not historically been the response I have been able to provide. It may have taken a while to find them a house but we could normally find some kind of brokered accommodation, somewhere safe for them to go. Now I send them home to sleep on the couches of their friends or families, they are in cars, and they are in tents.

At the current rate of construction, for the Government to deliver on its 10 000 new homes, it is going to take them some 83 years to deliver their promise. That is the state of Tasmanian housing. As we continue, quite rightly, to encourage and support women and tell them that they do not need to remain in violent relationships in places that are unsafe and we encourage them to leave, we are still turning droves of women and their children away from our shelters. Our crisis accommodation is simply not meeting the need. Whilst we have had some additional rooms, particularly the ones in Launceston which are very much appreciated, it is barely scraping the surface of the demand of people who are turned away every single day from our shelters. I have said it before and I will continue to say it: if the most dangerous time in a violent relationship is leaving. Imagine how much more dangerous it is to go back.

When the Liberals were elected in 2014 health was in a slightly different position. There were 25 000 Tasmanians on the waiting list to see a specialist. That is a lot, not a great figure, but today there are more than 57 000 people waiting, more than twice as many. This Government has failed to prioritise health. I hear member after member stand up and say, 'We are spending more on health than we ever have before'. Every government of every year is able to say that. That is not the measure. The measure is how many people are being helped by your health system, how many people can access your health system. Even during the global financial crisis when those difficult decisions were made, we still spent more on health than we had the year before, because that is how health works.

When we talk about those numbers, it is hard to look at 57 000. You may think it is just a number, but these are all people with individual stories, difficult stories. Our Leader, Rebecca White, spoke about Sandra Hodge, who I know very well. She is a volunteer at the Beaconsfield Neighbourhood House. She is a tireless community worker. She does a host of community engagement. She works for different small health groups. She is a wonderful human being. Sandra needed an urgent colonoscopy after bowel cancer screening showed irregularities. She was supposed to be seen in 30 days. It took seven months. Sandra now has stage four cancer. That is heartbreaking - and it is also a sign of absolute neglect.

On a positive note, I want to congratulate her on receiving life membership of the Beaconsfield Neighbourhood House, a well-deserved recognition for years of service and commitment to that service.

Mr Speaker, in 2014, 60 per cent of patients at the LGH emergency department were seen within four hours, and we were working to increase those numbers. Now, fewer than 40 per cent are seen within that time. That is nearly 10 000 people a year waiting longer at the LGH because we have not prioritised their health outcomes. It is the same story at the Royal. In 2014, 64 per cent of patients at the emergency department were seen within clinically

recommended time frames. Today, fewer than 40 per cent - nearly two in three are not seen. The problem is nearly twice as bad because we for nearly a decade we have talked about the money we have put in, and not talked about the outcomes we are getting from health.

In the past year, 6000 patients walked out of Tasmania's emergency department without being seen at all. We have ambulance patients left stuck on the ramp - therefore an ambulance that cannot respond to other emergencies during that time. They are not able to do the community response work they need to do.

Ambulances in the north-west are routinely diverted to the LGH and ramped there for hours. In 2014, the median ambulance response time was 11.5 minutes. Today it is more like 14.5 minutes. If you think that is not a lot, three minutes on average is a lifetime in an emergency. That three minutes makes a difference in our ability to respond to that lifesaving issue and get people safely and appropriately triaged and treated.

Our hard-working health professionals are under increased pressure. Quite frankly, they deserve better than platitudes. They deserve better than offers of a cup of coffee and a chocolate. They deserve better than a badge. Patients in need of healthcare do not need announcements and claims that we are spending more money on health. They need appointments. They need treatment.

They are not the only public servants under significant stress. Our teachers are at breaking point as they desperately try to stem the damage being done to our students by this Government's neglect of the education sector. The previous member reeled off a heap of infrastructure bills. That is great, but our student outcomes are declining. Our student wellbeing is declining. We have kids who are falling out of the system. This is not acceptable.

The education we provide is compromised and our outcomes reflect that. Our teachers and support staff know that more needs to be done. The pressure of not being able to deliver the learning environments they know they should and could is seeing so many of them - more than ever before - leaving the profession entirely. I am a proud product and supporter of our public education system, and it is quite clear that this Government is not.

Look at our police service - one of my shadow portfolio areas. Tasmania Police's own data shows one-quarter of police shifts are not meeting the bare-minimum safe staffing levels in one of our largest police stations. The figures released late last year show police officers in Hobart are frequently working below safe levels, with the station often left critically understaffed and under-resourced. More than 25 per cent of shifts at the Hobart station have consistently failed to meet their bare minimum safe staffing levels since the introduction of the mandatory safe levels last July. During this period, 47 of the 168 shift snapshots failed to comply with agreed safe staffing levels. The other six 24-hour police stations are battling to maintain their staffing levels.

Across all police districts there are 42 vacancies; 8 per cent of the positions at the seven-hour police stations are vacant. That is 37 officers - and that does not include officers who are incapacitated. As well as the immediate risk to police officers of failing to meet their safe staffing levels, there is the undeniable effect on our workers compensation figures. More than 12.1 per cent of the police service - 162 officers - are on a current workers compensation claim. Last year, 87 police left the service altogether - the highest number of separations ever. We

are still losing nine a month - and of those for last year, 66 resigned to take on other roles. I am assuming it is because they had better pay and conditions and hopefully a lot less stress.

The most recent Police Association survey shows morale among police officers is at an appallingly low level: 68 per cent describe morale as bad, with another 25 per cent saying it is merely okay. With morale this low, it is not surprising people are leaving in such large numbers, both at a senior and junior level - and with that comes the loss of so many years of combined experience, along with the loss of so much potential for the future.

While the Government has announced news of a fast-tracked police force to increase the numbers - a 14-week course that does not have the university application applied to it - that sounds fine, but it is also saying to these police officers, 'We are going to bring you in and you are going to stay at this lower level forever. That is your pathway'. I cannot see that resolving our long-term workforce planning needs. I can see it as a quick fix, but it is not a strategic fix. It is not a fair thing to do for those officers.

For the first time, Tasmania Police has stopped reporting on victimisation rates based on the police divisions. Despite trying to hide the figures, we know that year after year Launceston, where I live, has recorded the highest victimised crime rates - higher than anywhere else in the state - and yet we continue to be under-resourced. There is no strategy for dealing with that. Recruitment is not keeping pace with Government commitments. We need to recruit 140 officers this year just to implement the commitments made by the current Government during the last election, and to replace those lost to service.

About 80 have been brought in, and it is a significant shortfall. It is not just overall numbers, either. We are still the only state without a full-time special operations group. We are still waiting for that 2020 budget commitment from the current Government to employ 20 full-time sovviess - special operations by 2024.

We still need to act on some of the recommendations made by the Winter review into worker compensation and wellbeing from 2021, as well as the Wise Lord and Ferguson review into health and safety from 2020, to ensure not only that they are implemented, but they are assessed to understand whether they are making the difference that people hope they would make on wellbeing for our police officers.

We need to undertake research to better understand the workload in urban areas, to make sure commitments are delivered, that effective recruitment and retention policies are devised and followed, and that there are clear outcomes, time lines for delivery and accountability. They should not have to fight for up-to-date effective advice to help them do their job more safely. We want our police officers to be safe. We rely on them, so we need them to be safe.

The Country Police Station Relief policy is another area where Government claims do not match reality. Stations are closed. Officers are left with unmanageable work areas because scheduled relief is not provided in line with the agreed commitment.

Despite promising at the 2021 election to provide three general-purpose police dogs, we have not actually seen the follow-through on that. We are the only state without general-purpose police dogs.

That is the state of our police service in Tasmania. I know that would cause you in particular, Mr Speaker, some pause to reflect, given your historic support of our police service.

Our north-west coast fire and emergency services are still waiting for that promised second crew in Devonport. Firefighters believe more is needed to respond to recent growths in risk. There has been no progress on that risk-to-resource analysis that actually says this is what our risk is, and this is the resource we need. It is really important work, and we have seen no progress on that at all.

The Government is not keeping pace with recruitment required to manage workforce planning and retirements. There have been scarce new intakes, not because of a lack of interest, but because of a lack of funding. There have been notifications to WorkSafe because we have failed to maintain a safe working environment - and then the Government has withheld the requested information on health and safety from WorkSafe Tasmania. That is simply not acceptable.

The proposed fire services review looks like it will backflip on the promise of Peter Gutwein to maintain its independent statutory status, and our firefighters had to take unprecedented action to get the Government to even negotiate their last agreement. Unsurprisingly, they feel disrespected. After all we ask them to do, it is offensive to treat them with this contempt. That is the state of our fire service in Tasmania.

Mr Speaker, this Government might pin its hat on what it has always said it is best at - its strong economic management - but the evidence belies this. When they came to office nearly a decade ago, they did not inherit a debt. In fact, despite the global financial crisis, there was more than \$200 million sitting waiting for them. It was an extraordinary turnaround from when premier Jim Bacon was first elected in 1998 and the state was struggling under the legacy of the Liberals' previous budget mismanagement. After nearly a decade of Liberal government, we are right back where we were in the late 1990s - only this time it is actually worse, because this year the Government is on track to record the biggest budget deficit in the state's history, and what do we have to show for it?

If we could have that debt and have amazingly good education systems, fantastic responsive health systems, houses for everybody to live in and affordable cost of living, you might say okay, I see where we went wrong, but that is not what we have. We have a health crisis, a housing crisis and a cost-of-living crisis. This year, Tasmania's debt will have grown by \$1.1 billion to more than \$2.5 billion. This is not a Government that is good at managing the economy. This is a Government that does not know how to drive an economy. It is the sharpest deterioration in the state's financial position in our history, and is the most debt we would have ever have carried.

The most insidious thing is that this Government has cast these issues as wicked, unfixable problems. It is something that we see conservative governments around the world do - when something is hard, when it is about the delivery of core services to communities, when it is about public housing and public health and public education, this Government has acted, as many conservative governments have acted and created an unfixable mantra: 'It is not our fault, this is a wicked problem. It is not our fault, this is an unfixable problem. This is too big, too hard, too complex'.

That is not what I want to hear. I do not want to hear from my Government that these things are hard to do so they are going to find ways to take away scrutiny on their performance. What I want to hear from my Government is not, 'Okay, I can fix it tomorrow', because obviously that it going to be challenging. What I want to hear from my Government is, 'We have ways that we can work and over time we will fix this, we will invest, we will prioritise those things to ensure that Tasmanians have the highest quality of life'.

It is unconscionable to continue to tell people that these things are unfixable simply to avoid the scrutiny of the community on how well you have done your job. We should work every day on making the services provided to Tasmanians the best quality. Washing our hands of it and saying it is all too hard is lazy, incompetent and unconscionable.

There is no doubt we have some serious challenges. There is no doubt we have serious economic headwinds. The Budget is in the red. We have significant debt. Households are being smashed by the rising cost of living and businesses are struggling with soaring costs. We are in the grip of a horrific housing crisis. The fact that we cannot house so many Tasmanians should cause all members in this House to hang their heads in shame.

I have been health minister: it is not easy, it has always been a challenge, but the health system has never been this bad. There is no magic wand to solve these problems overnight but there are things we should and we must do. The fact that the Government wipes its hands and says it cannot is beyond redemption.

Labor has talked about some of the things that we can do. We can cap power prices at 2.5 per cent for the next three years, taking some of the pressure off people. We can freeze expenditure on consultants and government advertising and get rid of the significant waste that seems to be going on. We employ highly competent public servants, and we should use them. We can put a pause on new whole homes being placed on the short-stay market to provide relief to the significant housing shortage so that people are not terrified that their next end of lease is going to be totally their end of lease and they will be homeless. We should be fast-tracking the repair work needed to ensure that public houses are habitable and inhabited. We have all been in our communities and seen public housing properties that need to be fixed and are not fixed. I stood outside one not that long ago which was empty and they were going to leave it empty until the next two were empty so they could knock them all down and build units. In a housing crisis, empty houses is simply not acceptable.

We have to ensure that the planning system reforms are implemented properly. I cannot believe that the Government is still claiming that as some kind of success because I have heard the same line from them year after year.

We have talked about one of the simple solutions to the pressure on our paramedics by employing paramedic interns. I have spoken to the families of the paramedic interns who have done their training here and who really want to work here but have managed to pick up work anywhere else but in Tasmania.

The underutilisation of regional hospitals and the fact that so many of those beds are not used is inexplicable. I do not understand how the Government does that. It is a way to take pressure off emergency departments because emergency department blockages are about your exit strategy. If your exit strategy is to safely transition people to a country hospital and get the appropriate amount of care then you can provide more cost-effective health care. It will

save the Government money. It will provide appropriate treatment and, in many cases, gets people closer to home.

I cannot believe that you can wander up to the James Scott wing at Scottsdale, look through the window and see the beds gathering dust. The Government does not staff the beds. The beds might be sitting there but the staff are not there to provide the care for the patients under an appropriate staffing management model. We think there are a lot of ways we could use those rural and regional beds for patients, in particular for some of that transitional care for people who might be waiting for their NDIS package, who might be waiting for their aged care package to come through. That would help to reduce bed block.

I remember being asked as minister about the previous model for the North West Private Hospital maternity services from a party that implemented a rolled-gold contract that did not have an end date. I am pleased the Government has made moves to end that, but I cannot believe they have managed to botch it so badly. How did you not know when it is ending and make sure that you have appropriate services in place? We need public sector beds for maternity beds that are safe, accessible and reliable. It is 2023 and we cannot provide that on the north-west coast.

This is not the back of beyond in a country that is struggling with roads and development and structures. This is a place where we should be able to make sure that mums giving birth to their babies are safe. It is not a lot to ask. I cannot believe the Government has mismanaged that. It goes to my comment before when the Government keeps saying it is putting more money into health. That is not the problem. The problem is the way you are spending it and the mismanagement of the way you are spending it and the way you are conducting the services.

They are some of the things the Government could adopt right now. We urge them to do so. We will support them if they do because they are there for the good of our state. If they do not do them then we will commit to do them when we come to government. The way this Government is performing it seems it has given up on winning the next election because it has given up on Tasmania and Tasmanians. It has run out of passion.

We cannot afford that in our state. Our island state has so much potential. I love living here. I love having brought up my children here. I want this to be a place where everyone's future can be fulfilled, where we can have access to the best of services, the best of conditions. There is no reason we cannot do that. This Government is not committed to that. We need a government that is committed to the growth of Tasmania and not just managing it in the simplest way, which seems to be what they have done.

At this point it is customary to commend the state of the state speech by the Premier to the House. I find there is very little to commend.

[4.17 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I take great pleasure in rising to talk on the state of the state debate. I know that from time to time people critique the role of the state of the state in parliamentary proceedings. I believe it is a crucially important debate. It is an opportunity for the Premier and the Government to present a report card on their previous 12 months and craft a vision for the future of Tasmania and the direction of this Government.

It is also an opportunity for other members of this place to critique that, to provide constructive feedback, and to talk about the grey in public debate. Too easily we fall into a black or white proposition of where a government or state sits. Debates such as these provide the rare opportunity for members to get up and speak not during question time or during matters of public importance or on the adjournment or through bills, but to have the opportunity to cast a broader paintbrush over the landscape of Tasmania and to provide some insights into where the state is genuinely at.

This was the Premier's first one. I am not critiquing the Premier as a person. I am critiquing the Premier as leader of the state. The Premier is universally well-liked around the state. This is not about him as an individual. It is about his role as Premier and the vision he presents to Tasmania and whether that passes muster. The Premier has been referred to as the accidental Premier, the reluctant Premier, but at the end of the day he is the Premier and he represents the Government's policy agenda. He has to articulate, he has to defend and he has to argue the case on why the Government makes various decisions and why it accepts certain circumstances.

What I took from the Premier's state of the state Address was that it seemed to be an Address presented by committee, but a committee whose members did not really talk to each other. I am not sure if that is a reflection on the Cabinet or if that is a reflection on the departments, but it seemed to be -

Mr Jaensch - Not like Labor, all joined up and working together.

Mr O'BYRNE - I am critiquing the state of the state. That is my contribution here. You had your opportunity and good on you.

In my view, based on reading and listening to the speech of the Premier, there are elements that jarred because it did not accurately reflect the current state of Tasmania and the fundamental responsibility of the Government to deliver services in key areas. It also spent an inordinate amount of time looking in the rear-view mirror, not just from 12 months ago or 18 months or three or four years or since the last election, but over a decade ago. We know there is context to every government's journey, but to justify your vision or the state of play in Tasmania - the state of the state so to speak - with a critique of a government that is long gone, you can make references to it, but if it forms one of the only key points of your argument, then what it says about the Premier and this Government is that they lack a vision, an overarching narrative for the future of the state. Relying on one-liners and clichés does not necessarily cut it when you open up and critique the performance of Tasmania.

If you are spending an inordinate amount of time doing that, it speaks volumes about where you go, and there were some really jarring moments, for example, where all of a sudden, like Lazarus with a quadruple bypass, the cable car just appeared out of nowhere. We know that because even the proponent, who had gone through such an extensive process, did not expect that development to be even mentioned in a speech and they were clearly taken by surprise. I know in Tasmania there are fault lines and certain issues you push if you want to create a bit of a diversion or to look strong on one thing or caring on another, it is on the desk and then, 'Oh, what will we do? We will just press the cable car button and that will trigger a conversation and get a bit of noise', and it was a distraction from what should have been, and what has traditionally been, a moment for the premier of the day to say, 'This is what we stand

for, these are the things that we will pursue for the future of the state, this is what we will be measured by by the people of Tasmania'.

It seemed to me that that was lacking. It was a critique of a government from a long time ago and a series of announcements or policy buttons pushed to give the veneer that there is a vision. Again I make the point that this is not a personal critique of the Premier because he is representing his Government and his speech was, by inference, a critique on his own Government because of the lack of that coherent narrative, in my view, in that speech.

He was making commitments in an area where they have abjectly failed to deliver in that area and it is small in the scheme of things, but the announcement for the upgrade of the basketball courts in the northern suburbs across Hobart was a good announcement, but you announced four community courts to be developed out near the Derwent Entertainment Centre in 2018 and they have not even been started yet, so when you announce you are going to make a development and upgrade for a sport in a code to try and have that as a virtue when you abjectly failed to deliver on something you promised five years ago, it undermines the point somewhat. That is an illustration of where this Government is at.

I also want to make the point, and the premier obliquely referred to this in different matters in his speech, but we have just come off the back of 12 to 18 months of the most intensive industrial action by public sector workers we have seen in 20 years, where you have nurses, teachers, firefighters, school cleaners, Parks staff - across the board - staff that are constantly thanked for the work they did during the pandemic and the work they do every day to keep this state moving and they are patted on the back in words. However, with this eruption of industrial action and anger against their employer, the State of Tasmania, the common thread through all of that industrial action was, 'You don't respect us. You don't value the work that we do. We've been trying to talk to you about key fundamental issues, and wage parity is but one, as are the resources to do the job that keeps Tasmania going'. That was the constant thread through all of those public sector departments, those public sector workers who got us through the pandemic, who get us through the crises that we face - fires, floods, all of the biblical proportions, Mr Speaker - and I have not seen such a constant anger against an employer for a very long time.

With the greatest respect to the resolution of those negotiations, people in some elements have basically said they will just take what is on the table because they have been undertaking industrial action for 18 months to two years. It was not a happy resolution. With my background in industrial negotiations, the parties start, there is a bit of ambit, you have a crack, you work through and get to a point where both parties can walk away with a bit of respect and say, 'Okay, we did our best and we're comfortable with where we've landed and we think that resolves most of the issues we have with the Government'. I have not heard one teacher, one nurse, one firefighter, one Parks staff - and we have seen reports of the major turnover in staff and people leaving Parks on the media recently - not one public sector worker who thought, 'Oh well, we're quite happy with that, that's a good outcome'.

There is an underlying fragility about the nature of our public service and the heart of it goes to a government's lack of awareness of that; lack of ability to see what is needed to work through those issues. No-one is expecting them to be resolved overnight. They just want some heart and some hope that the Government understands the nature. The fact that we have hundreds of teacher vacancies in schools today is an indication that it is a bit crook, that things

are not good. To say that we have had this negotiation - and I will not provide gratuitous advice to the Education minister, who is here, about some -

Mr Jaensch - Check your data too - hundreds of teaching vacancies right now, is that true? Are there hundreds of teaching vacancies, or do you want to correct that? You can come back and correct that.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr O'BYRNE - I have spoken to a number of principals. He is a bit sensitive, isn't he? I have spoken to a number of principals who have said, 'We can't fill the roles, we're collapsing classes, we are in crisis'.

Mr Jaensch - Have we got hundreds of teaching vacancies?

Mr O'BYRNE - If you want to run the technical argument on what a vacancy is and is not -

Mr Jaensch - No, but do you want to say on the record again that we have hundreds of teaching vacancies?

Mr O'BYRNE - What you have is absences: that is the point I am making. You will have teachers not turning up to school because they are not able to.

Mr Jaensch - Do you have hundreds of vacancies?

Mr O'BYRNE - He is a bit sensitive because there is so much anger -

Mr Jaensch - We've spent a fair bit of time this week talking about checking facts and correcting the record.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, minister, order.

Mr O'BYRNE - Mr Speaker, I can understand why he is sensitive. A number of school principals and teachers and others have told me that there are gaps, there are holes, there are teachers not turning up, they are not able to do the job - hundreds across the state. If he wants to critique me on the adjournment he can go for his life, because he knows that is the reality. He has major staffing issues in schools because of the nature of the problems that they are facing.

The advice I was providing to the minister was that the nature of his public comments around those industrial relations negotiations, around the teachers' agreement and around the schools' agreement has inflamed and has confirmed in many education staff's minds that this Government does not fully appreciate and understand the nature of their problems. You are more than welcome to critique that if you want, minister. That is the fundamental problem with the industrial action we have seen over the last 12 to 18 months. People are unhappy. The resolution of the technical industrial agreements and the nature of them is one thing.

There is a morale issue in our public sector and it showed. You heard the union officials talk about the confused state of the negotiations from the Government in terms of the positions

or propositions they put up. There is a disconnect between the staff that deliver the service and the state Government as an employer that relies on those people to educate our kids, keep people safe and, when people get sick, look after them in functioning health systems, and when they go to our parks that they enjoy them in the best possible way.

The Premier's state of the state Address was a missed opportunity to put on the record, not just the thanks because everyone does that all the time, but to say that we have resolved these negotiations and that resolves the issues. That is a tin ear, that is a massive misread and miscalculation on behalf of the Government.

I will now refer to a number of issues that my constituents in the seat of Franklin consistently raise with me - housing, traffic congestion, health and education.

Housing is a foundational issue, probably the biggest issue we are facing in Tasmania because without a home how can they continue to function as a family, as an individual? How can they make key decisions around their education, health and employment if they cannot get a roof over their head? It has been a crisis now for five years. The Government has relied on the market or market kind of initiatives to resolve it but it has just become worse, year in, year out. Over 4500 families and individuals are on the housing priority register - not just the people who are in housing stress, these are people on the priority list. It takes an average of over 17 months for priority applicants to be housed. That is a human catastrophe in our state. We know that we cannot necessarily house everyone overnight. That has been a challenge for governments for decades.

It takes an average of 17 months for priority applicants to be housed. That is sleeping rough, couchsurfing, or sleeping in cars or tents. Walk in the shoes of people who are making those decisions just to exist, just to get to the next day, and the profound impact that has on individuals and families. We know that there has not been a single new homeless accommodation unit completed since August last year, not one, given that was a major priority of the Government.

New stories are emerging almost every week about the dire lack of maintenance that social housing tenants receive. Time and time again, people are living in substandard housing. There is an obligation on the Government to provide maintenance. They have allocated funding to do it, the housing providers are obliged to do it under their model but more than one fifth of all public housing properties in Tasmania have more than two major structural issues or less than four working facilities. That means over 200 social housing properties are empty and uninhabitable due to poor maintenance alone.

We hear all these big statements and the Premier's \$1.5 billion housing commitment for 10 000 new homes. It sounds good but, of course, there is no detail about how and where they are going to put these homes up, or the funding or management structure of it. How are you going to build homes for less than \$150 000 each? These are some of the fundamental questions.

We saw some ABS figures out today around homelessness:

Tasmania's current rate of homelessness has increased by 35 per cent from 31 people per 10 000 in 2011 to 42 per 10 000 people in 2021 - a 35 per cent

jump in that time. There were 2350 people homeless in Tasmania in 2021, up from 1537 people in 2011 - an increase of 813 people.

That is a figure for the state of the state. We also have the second-highest proportion of people experiencing homelessness living in tents, sleeping rough, at 10 per cent, compared to the national average of 6 per cent. Just under double the national average. That is a statistic for the state of the state. There were 569 kids under 18 homeless in Tasmania in 2021. These are horrific figures. That is a true state of the state. Housing is a key issue.

The other issue people raise with me on a daily basis is traffic. It seems a lesser priority than homelessness but it is equally important. Thousands of Metro services have been cancelled in the last few months. Traffic has a major impact on people's lives, getting to and from where they work and play. It also has a massive impact on the productivity of the economy. Traffic congestion has been worsening. If there is one accident at the ABC roundabout in Hobart or near the bridge, or on Davey or Macquarie Street, basically the whole city clogs up and no one moves - and if you do move, it is a snail crawl.

The then-infrastructure minister, Rene Hidding, called a crisis meeting in 2017 to deal with traffic congestion in the capital city. What has happened since then? They took over ownership of Macquarie and Davey Streets from the Hobart City Council in 2018 under the pretence of better managing and reducing the traffic congestion of these roads. All they have done, apart from a couple of clearways, is resurface a small section of Davey Street after nearly five years.

Ms Ogilvie - I had that fixed. I am very pleased about that actually.

Mr O'BYRNE - With respect, minister, you announced it as part of a COVID-19 initiative and it took over two-and-a-half years to get done. It was about 12 or 18 months after COVID-19 was done -

Ms Ogilvie - The boys were working hard on it. I do not think you are going to complain about the workers.

Mr O'BYRNE - I am not complaining about the workers. I am talking about your Government's inability to deliver.

We have the Derwent ferry trial which is an obvious success. It took years to get there but it is a success. Again, it is still in trial mode; there is no guarantee for the current providers as to how long it is going to go. We assume it will. There are no extra routes, no terminals, no plans or certainty about the service of the future. The only thing you can say is that there is a \$25 million commitment from the federal Labor government to assist, and crickets and frogs about how that is going and who is going to be able to deliver on that.

Some of the missing commitments that could deal with infrastructure and assist: where is the common ticketing system that was first announced in 2018 or the mythical underground bus mall? We know they have crabwalked away from that since it was announced in 2018. Before that it was, well, they moved to the Hobart bus transit centre and we are not sure what will happen to the City Hall. That was announced in 2019. We had the Domain Highways Planning Study. That is, effectively, the Brooker, a little bit of the Domain Highway on the other side of the Botanic Gardens, and you have from the bridge across to the ABC roundabout.

This was first announced in 2015. It is barely four or five kilometres. We have still not heard anything. Goodness me, this is just embarrassing.

You also have the arm wrestle about the Northern Suburbs Transit Corridor with no visible progress on this for two years. You have not even picked a mode of transport for it yet. It has been going on way too long. It is indicative. I challenge anyone to say what investment has been made into the capital city in the term of this Government that has improved or relieved traffic congestion in any physical or any real way. I challenge anyone.

In the remaining time I have, the two other crucially important issues are health and education. The fundamental role of the state government is to deliver these services: a roof over people's heads and good educational functioning. Your kids will get to school, we will educate you and get you through. If you get sick we will look after you and we will provide those services.

However, only 58 per cent of elective surgery patients were seen within clinically recommended time frames, with category 3 patients now waiting almost a year longer than is recommended. Almost two-thirds of emergency department presentations at the Royal Hobart Hospital are not seen within clinically recommended time frames.

The time it takes for an ambulance to turn up to a patient in need has increased by over 25 per cent since this Government came to office. Back in July, a 13-year-old boy suffering an asthma attack on Hobart's eastern shore was told to take a taxi to hospital because no ambulances were available. The closest available ambulances were in Huonville or Oatlands.

A former work colleague contacted me from the Derwent Valley, where they had an urgent medical incident. They rang and said, 'Well, the closest we have is someone in Triabunna. I reckon if you could just get in a car and get them here, that is the best way we can look after you. Are they safe to get into a car?'. That is not a reflection on the ambulance service. That is a reflection on the decisions of government that resource that. When a previous speaker talked about making those ambulance positions permanent as a virtue - well, you basically had to be dragged kicking and screaming to that decision because of the pressure you were under.

Time and time again we hear the numbers: 'Oh, we have employed X amount of people, we have done this' - but they are not net numbers. The turnover and the total numbers and the real numbers - the net numbers - would look significantly different.

Now, again, for whatever reason, we have another CEO of Ambulance Tasmania leave the state. Ramping in our hospitals is now systemic because they are rostering people and ambulance paramedics to the ramp. It is systemic now. For many years it was the exception that occasionally this would happen and we would respond but now it happens virtually every day; they are actually rostering people. It is an initiative that they have to do but does it not say that the system and the management of the system is crook?

We move to the education system. Across all age groups, Tasmania has the lowest proportion of students meeting the minimum standard of reading and numeracy compared to any other state or territory apart from the Northern Territory. Attainment rates for grade 12 students in the state is a mere 58 per cent, which is about 20 per cent lower than the national

average. NAPLAN results are going backwards. There has been little to no progress on numeracy and literacy since this Government came to office, based on those figures.

I reiterate the recent stop-work action across public schools, teaching and support staff rallying on Parliament Lawns. It is a clear sign that the Government has failed to listen to their concerns, and failed to address staff being burnt out and overworked. When you talk to teachers, yes, it is partly about the money - but it is about the job they do and the time they have to do it, the expectations that are being placed on them, and the lack of understanding by the Government of the challenges they face.

We know TAFE - the corporatisation, the pushing away from direct control of government into the entity that it is now - is a mess. You talk to anyone in industry. It is not a reflection on TAFE as an institution. I still think people believe in TAFE. Sadly, the decisions taken over a number of years have undermined its ability to deliver what is needed by industry and those apprentices. Last year, we had the minister saying how great training was. Today, the prime example was what happened in the electrical trades - the year-two courses cancelled, because one teacher left. If you are on the north-west coast and you have year-two sparky apprentices - bang, training gone. How is that acceptable? For the minister to get up and say that everything is tickety-boo - which is essentially what he said, and it has never been better - well, goodness me, he is going to be mugged by reality as soon as he walks onto a work site.

Again, the debate around the cost of living, and fundamental issues around energy and power bills: this Government's ham-fisted approach to fully understand the nature of the problem, to respond in a manner that is coherent, and to announce initiatives that can make a tangible difference.

The mismanagement of the National Energy Market by the previous LNP government has shown there needs a fundamental rethink of how we price energy and how we deliver it to communities. It is an essential service, not only for people in homes but for industry and for the economy. A fundamental rethink of how we manage it and how we organise that pricing is needed. Hiding behind this faux market that has apparently established in Tassie, which we know is not working for business. We know it is not working for people in their homes. The fumbling around this policy by this Government is, again, another demonstration of a government that has a tin ear to the real needs of Tasmanians.

In closing, this state of the state Address by the Premier was a missed opportunity. It was not a vision that built any confidence that this is a Government that can take us through what are, no doubt, difficult waters. No one is pretending it is easy, but on the fundamentals of housing, health, education and the key issue that people raise with me - traffic congestion, particularly in the capital - this Government is failing.

[4.47 p.m.]

Mrs ALEXANDER (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I am proud to have the opportunity to bring to the south my perspective on the achievements, community interaction and significant projects and initiatives benefiting my electorate of Bass. Having only two weeks ago celebrated 12 months of being part of the political system in Tasmania, I am proud that I am in a position where I can reflect and look at the impacts around the electorate of Bass.

There is no doubt that there are significant issues to be addressed. The problems and immense pressure that have come from COVID-19, but also from international pressures, looking at overall responses of governments around the world in response to COVID-19 but also to the current issues we are facing internationally, have been extremely challenging.

That is not being said as an excuse by the Tasmanian Government, but it is a very hard challenge. I believe that even at a federal level the government is grappling with addressing some of these significant issues that we are facing.

I will predominantly focus on housing, the community engagement and the role that collaboration between the state Government and community organisations play in achieving our social objectives. I have always advocated for policy development to take into account stakeholders' input and their views. It is absolutely counterproductive to drive policies from top down. If we want positive community response, if we want buy-in from the stakeholders, we need to take the time to inform ourselves about what our community wants and what our community needs in engaging effective consultation.

For me, reflecting over the last 12 months, one of the most important initiatives is responding to the feedback from community service organisations. I remember in my previous life providing some of that feedback in frustration around consultation.

One of the important initiatives I have been very happy to be involved with is the Tasmanian Housing Strategy. This strategy has an approach that is being taken in formulating and developing the future strategy that includes a very important item, which is community consultation. The Tasmanian Housing Strategy is an important project, developed in collaboration with key stakeholders and the Tasmanian community. I am very happy to be part of this process, especially due to its great importance for the future of housing in our state but more importantly, because it is developed with input from community organisations, businesses and local government, bringing together experts in government, experts in research, community, business, construction to provide advice on all the housing market levers.

The Housing Reference Group was formed last year and has contributed to the development of the Tasmanian Housing Strategy. The membership of the Housing Reference Group includes significant organisations and businesses such as TasCOSS, Shelter Tasmania, the Local Government Association of Tasmania, Colony 47, Anglicare, CatholiCare, Centacare Evolve Housing, Community Housing Limited, Housing Choices Tasmania, Mission Australia, St Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army, Hobart City Mission, Launceston City Mission, Housing Industry Association, Master Builders Association of Tasmania, the Property Council of Tasmania, and the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania. There is a significant desire from the Government to reach out to significant players who have the capacity to inform and bring to the table the issues that are facing housing development in Tasmania.

These are significant entities that understand the issues in our community in the area of housing, housing affordability and homelessness. They have direct experience in identifying the roadblocks in the delivery of affordable housing and supported accommodation. Their voices matter and are important around the table. For too long, significant policies in key areas have not been delivered with effective collaboration or consultation. This process is now doing just that, hearing solutions from the bottom up, rather than solutions that are put together by people in offices who are removed from the direct interaction with those who are ultimately beneficiaries of these services.

In the past 12 months I was proud to be part of the Government process that saw the launch of Homes Tasmania and to be involved in that debate. I appreciate it is a change that some will watch with suspicion. In an interesting way, that suspicion is good because it means scrutiny. It means the corporate governance and decision-making of Homes Tasmania will be closely observed. This is a good thing because with such significant changes, transparency is required, scrutiny is required so we can ensure an important part of our delivery of services - housing - is properly achieved. It has to be attended to.

Homes Tasmania was established under the Homes Tasmania Act 2022 and commenced on 1 December 2022. Homes Tasmania is Tasmania's housing and homelessness system manager. The role of Homes Tasmania is to deliver affordable housing solutions across the entire housing continuum giving priority to Tasmanians who are most in need. This includes helping Tasmanians into short-term homeless accommodation and support, social housing including supported accommodation, public and community housing, and specialist accommodation for vulnerable people, affordable housing including affordable land, affordable private rentals and affordable home ownership.

One of the main arms of the organisational structure of Homes Tasmania is community infrastructure. The community infrastructure program delivers strategic and operational asset management functions including asset planning, procurement, maintenance, capital upgrading and construction for properties owned in full by Homes Tasmania, or on behalf of Tasmanian Government agencies.

We have heard a few times, and from here in the Chamber, reports about the condition of some rental properties. It is acknowledged that quite often some of the accommodation requires attention in a timely manner. Having a dedicated focus, as part of Homes Tasmania, on this important part of the social housing services is paramount. It is very important in ensuring living conditions are adequate and issues, as reported, are addressed in time and according to the needs of the residents.

The community infrastructure program is also responsible for an important program, which is the home ownership assistance called MyHome shared equity program. I was excited to be part of the launch of that program last year. I had numerous discussions and met with those looking after the program at the Bank of Us. They were very excited as well. The executive management at Bank of Us, referring to this program, said it can be one of the best programs in Australia. Watching it develop and tidying up any details and anything that needs to happen in the scheme is very important. Talking to them a few months down the track, they are excited about how this program is unfolding.

It is a good program that will assist some young people and single young families to get into homes. Under this program, many people who have been stretched paying high rents and trying to save for a deposit to buy or build a home, can be assisted. Under the MyHome program, Homes Tasmania shares the upfront costs of buying a home, which reduces the deposit needed, and the mortgage repayments that are necessary. A deposit of only 2 percent of the purchase price is required. Homes Tasmania has established a great partnership with our Tasmanian financial institution, Bank of Us, to assist in the delivery of this great initiative.

Another program that has been introduced is the Ancillary Dwelling Grants Program. It was in place, but the funding increased in the 2022-23 Budget. It has increased to \$5 million

to enable the building of 500 dwellings through grants of up to \$10 000. Over 200 grants have already been distributed and people are encouraged to continue applying to this scheme.

In relation to supported accommodation, it has been a great privilege to work with housing providers that service the north, such as Community Housing Ltd, Housing Choices Tasmania, Centrecare Evolve Housing and Anglicare. These organisations and their staff work with passion and dedication to assist people find shelter, transitional or permanent housing, building affordable homes while attracting and retaining young tradies, offering them good career opportunities. Centrecare Evolve Housing is extremely proud of the program it has, attracting these young people, nurturing them and ensuring that they are well-received and well supported while they are building their career in the various trades.

I have met some of these young boys and girls who are extremely happy to work on these projects with such significant benefits to our community. Meeting them after a project has been completed, such as the one at Magnolia Place, was fantastic, seeing the joy in being part of such important building and construction, creating places for people in crisis to live.

The capacity of Magnolia Place, in Launceston, has been doubled. The Tasmanian Government has provided \$4 million to fund the expansion of the Launceston women's shelter, which is also known as Magnolia Place. I had the privilege to attend the opening of the expansion. It was attended by many people in our community services and it was really emotional.

Another organisation I had the privilege to meet and to talk to about their issues and find out how I can assist and support is Karinya women's shelter in Launceston. This organisation's services have registered a significant increase in demand. Young girls in need of emotional, material and mental health support are presenting in increased numbers at the Karinya Women's Shelter. Discussions to assist and support them in the delivery of critically important services are currently happening. I am very happy to be able to say that it has been really good to see that I can reach out and bridge that gap of communication between local organisations and Homes Tasmania in trying to identify ways in which we can help organisations that reach out to us.

Homes Tasmania is also building more supported accommodation opportunities for young people at risk of homelessness with a Youth2Independence program. There are three youth to independence pathways for young people based on their assessed need. There are facilities, and there are cluster homes or share homes. Youth2Independence is based on the international Education First Youth Foyer program which supports young people to develop and succeed in education and employment and transition to independent young adults.

This program, Youth2Independence, provides accommodation and support for young people to become independent by participating in education and training. The rent is set at 25 per cent of the young person's income. A young person accepted into the Youth2Independence program will be from 16 to 24 years of age, experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and willing to participate in education and training. This could take the form of high school or college, training with or without a certificate, an apprenticeship, traineeship or employment.

To be eligible, a person also agrees to what they call, 'The Deal'. This is an agreement between the young person and Youth2Independence and includes the completion of a

Certificate I in Developing Independence. The Developing Independence Certificate recognises the unique skills and talents of each young person and supports their participation in six areas to achieve independence. In return, the young person enjoys safe, secure, supported and affordable accommodation. I had the privilege to meet some of these young people who are benefiting from these services in Launceston. There are three Youth2Independence facilities currently operating statewide and managed by Anglicare Tasmania. Thyne House in Launceston, with its new 20-bed extension which I had the opportunity to visit twice: at the beginning of the construction process and recently, seeing this great facility and the bedrooms completed, the lovely courtyard and landscape and all the shared spaces.

There was a lot of pride and joy from the builders who were there at the end, the architects and Anglicare representatives when the minister and I toured the building. They were so delighted and happy, you could see how fantastic they thought and how emotionally their hearts were into this facility. There is another Youth2Independence facility which is Evelyn House in Devonport and Trinity in Hobart.

Construction has started on a new 25-bed facility Youth2Independence in Burnie and a second 26-bed facility in Hobart. Youth and Family Community Connections has been selected as the provider for the Burnie facility and Anglicare for the Hobart facility. Homes Tasmania is building more opportunities to increase housing for young Tasmanians in need, allocating total funding of \$7.86 million between the two service providers to operate the facilities.

The other Youth2Independence program is through Homes Tasmania, which has committed over \$5 million to expand the Youth2Independence program for young people who will be benefiting from living in a small and homelike environment which is different from the other facilities that I have mentioned before. The Youth2Independence homes will help improve the lives of about 50 young people who are at risk of homelessness, including exiting shelters, statutory care or youth detention every two years. The Youth2Independence homes will deliver 20 new modular homes and convert 10 larger public housing properties in 2023.

Two Youth2Independence homes pathways will be available with an onsite manager for young people who need 24/7 support in their cluster homes and inreach support for young people living in shared homes with low support needs. Cluster homes will provide five one-bedroom units and an onsite manager unit with four sites in the Burnie, Devonport, Launceston and Clarence municipalities. Share homes will be located nearby.

I had the opportunity to attend the opening of one of the share homes in Launceston which will be managed by Youth, Family & Community Connections. It was a privilege to witness, again, the joy and pride of those who completed the project and to meet the staff and the volunteers from the Youth, Family & Community Connections who were really so excited and looking forward to commence the delivery of these vital services on the premises.

One of the initiatives that has recently been in the media, and I have met a number of people who have been quite excited about it, is the Private Rental Incentives Scheme. It is designed for Tasmanians having difficulty accessing private rentals in today's strong property market and it is recognised as being a strong property market. This program has been boosted by providing incentives for a total of 400 private rentals to be available over the next two years until the 30 June 2024. Property owners are invited to be part of the program by supplying one

or two-bedroom properties close to major urban centres. These homes will be made available for affordable rent to low income households with low or no support needs.

In the words of a young man who has made his properties available under this scheme and who was recently interviewed, Centacare Evolve Housing (CEH), which is administering the maintenance and the rental agreements, is providing a great service looking after the tenants well and without the burden of what would be normal real estate agent fees. He was very happy to have these properties looked after by CEH. He was a young man who worked overseas and decided to make his properties available for people who needed social housing. He has long-term tenants and he was very happy with Centacare Evolve Housing and how they delivered the service.

In his words, he really encouraged other members of the public to consider this scheme and its benefits. It has been a real privilege to assist a number of community organisations to connect with each other and with Housing Tasmania in getting housing projects off the ground, and there have been a number of instances that I have been quite delighted to be part of, and I feel that it is making a difference.

There is another initiative of the state Government that I would like to refer to and that is the School Lunch Project. Why is this important? From my experience in the real world before I got into politics, working with community services and not-for-profit organisations, you understand how important nutritious meals are to the development, the mental and physical wellbeing of children and how it influences outcomes, especially for children living in disadvantaged conditions.

Under the School Lunch Project, we can talk about the School Food Matters which currently works with 15 schools in 2022 and is expanding to 30 schools in 2023 to deliver free hot school lunches to Tasmanian students. It operates with funding from the Department of Communities Tasmania, dietician expertise from the Department of Health and operational support from the Department of Education in partnership with a community organisation, Loaves and Fishes Tasmania and Foodbank Tasmania, school food service staff and participating schools - everyone together. They are serving delicious and nutritious hot meals to their students and, again, it delights me to say it is a perfect example of how we should be flexible and encourage these collaborations across multiple types of stakeholders because they know how to deliver things best. In my electorate of Bass amongst the schools participating are Beaconsfield Primary, Bridport Primary, Waverley and Winnaleah District School.

Professor Rebecca Golley from Flinders University identified that a universal school-provided lunch model could help to ensure all children have access to food at school, reduce stigma of children not having lunch or having different types of food compared to their peers and help to ensure children are provided with healthy lunch options.

What are the benefits of school meals for students and health and education outcomes? Number one is assisting the Tasmanian government to deliver against the recommendation 62 from the PESRAC interim report. It also improves the food security of Tasmanian primary school-aged children by ensuring they get a healthy lunch each day, rich in vegetables and fruit. It improves the eating culture of young Tasmanians by normalising sharing healthy, seasonal food. It improves the concentration, mood and behaviours so children are ready to learn. It improves educational outcomes and attendance at school of children living in low-income communities. Using food that is local and seasonal improves freshness and nutrient density

and reduces waste. It has been estimated that for every dollar invested it returns three to 10 times the economic return from improved health and education among school children and increased productivity when they become working adults.

I had the privilege of working in a similar program when I was in Western Australia as the state manager for Save the Children. Working with the state government there we did a similar thing. We rolled out programs in the Kimberley for schools where the attendance was very poor. The result of it was exactly that. Not only children came to school, their mums came to school to help in the canteen. They also had the opportunity to have a nutritious meal. It was and is a very good program.

I will highlight, in the time I have left, one particular piece of legislation which I was very proud to speak to. It is a significant amendment initiative by the Attorney-General, the Criminal Code Amendment Bill 2022 - non-fatal strangulation/stealthing. The focus on protecting women is something very close to my heart as I have seen and heard too many sad and traumatic stories in the years past. Quite often we focus on numbers and figures, but it is important to pause and reflect on some qualitative achievements, rather than simple legislative changes. We need to look at legislative changes that have a profound impact on our community and a profound impact on those who are vulnerable. These are the achievements we should be talking about.

I was proud to be speaking about this important reform at that time, when it was presented by the Attorney-General. The reform demonstrates that strengthening Tasmania's family violence laws is a priority for our Government. This is a matter important to me, particularly in my previous roles within the community sector. I know that the Attorney-General has also championed this issue very much and she spoke a lot at that time. The state Government wants to ensure that it does everything it can to make sure that all Tasmanian women, as well as the broader community, remain safe and protected.

There are a number of dedicated services across government, including our Safe at Home service, which is Tasmania's integrated and dedicated criminal justice response to family violence. The Safe at Home service system is designed to meet the needs of victims, both adult and children, while holding perpetrators accountable for their behaviours. It aims to improve the safety of adult and child victims of family violence in the short and long term. It ensures that perpetrators are held accountable for family violence as a crime and change their offending behaviour as a result, reduce the incidents and severity of family violence in the long-term and minimise the negative impacts of contact with the criminal justice system on adult and child victims.

We have also provided significant funding to support this very important service, which has provided increased resources for the flagship Safe at Home Coordination Unit to address significant increases in demand, additional specialist Safe at Home legal aid lawyer, additional Safe at Home police prosecutor, additional staffing and extended hours for the family violence counselling and support service, and additional court support and liaison officer in the south of the state.

While there have been significant successes and changes in the legislation, the state Government acknowledges that there is always more that can be done. It is fantastic to see that there is a continuous amount of work across the Government in preventing and responding to sexual and family violence. This is a subject I really wanted to talk about in my reflection over

the last 12 months of some of the items important to me. There is no doubt there is a lot more work to be done and hopefully some of the key elements will be addressed as the economy, internationally and all around us, becomes a little more stable, and we can tackle some of the issues that have been talked about.

[5.17 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I rise to give my reply to the Premier's state of the state speech. On behalf of the Tasmanian Greens I acknowledge and pay my deep respects to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, to their elders past and present and those living amongst us today, to the warriors who fought in defence of their land, and to those who were murdered, banished and enslaved in the process of the colonisation of Tasmania. As the Greens, we are committed to truth-telling, treaty, justice, and a voice and constitutional recognition, and to bringing real change and self-determination for Aboriginal people, including through the return of land.

What a harsh and confronting state of the state Address from the Premier. Harsh because it was an unadulterated ode to business, mining, investment and the economy. Our cities are quote, 'gateways of commerce', not living communities. It was confronting, because in his Government's year of working towards treaty and truth-telling, it was 47 minutes before the Premier mentioned Aboriginal people in his speech. Shame on him. That followed on his full throated commitment to do everything possible to get a cable car on kunanyi, to open the pinnacle of that wild place to development. That effort has been roundly rejected in the Tasmanian planning court, by the Hobart City Council, by 12 000 Hobart residents, and most importantly, by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. The Premier shamefully and dishonestly declared he is listening to and learning from Aboriginal Tasmanians. He has cultivated selective hearing, because he is deaf to their shouts and outrage at his party's continued efforts to privatise the pinnacle of this steep and spiritual mountain.

Listening to the Premier's Address, I thought ChatGPT did a passable job at pretending we had someone at the helm. It could not simulate a Premier who understands his duty is to govern in the public interest. It could not give us a leader with the heart and bravery we need to make in-roads into the grave and complex issues Tasmania and the planet faces, now and in the near future.

All of us live with the reality of runaway global heating and the evolving breakdown of the natural world. You would not know that from the Premier's or the Opposition Leader's comments. Crickets from both of them on the climate emergency. Both major parties are captured by decades of donations and they have shackled our nation to the profit-making interests of fossil fuel companies. Yesterday's IPC final choice for humanity could not be starker. Oil and gas profits or a liveable future, we get to choose. At the moment at the federal level, the Labor Party is choosing to go with their donors. The Greens are standing strong. We are standing for the children, we are standing for the people living here today who know they reject the sort of future that the Labor and Liberal parties and their donors want us to have. It is not a habitable planet.

We are witnessing the extreme transformation of sea and landscapes, expanding threats to food systems and climate extremes that are reshaping our social and built fabric, but we do not have a Premier who is brave enough to even acknowledge this reality let alone address the challenge. The challenge is dramatic; sectoral emissions reductions and a scale-up of community support. We know, because as climate scientists have told us, that the safest place

on the planet in the climate crisis that we will live through for the rest of our lives, is the place that has the strongest communities. That is something Tasmania could really be proud of. We could put all of our efforts into strengthening our communities, into building engagement and networking, so we can be as resilient as we need to be for the inevitable succession of extreme events that will keep on occurring in our time.

Under a decade of the Liberals at federal and state levels, our public support systems are so eroded in real investment and privatised to for-profit businesses, that our health, housing, education, disability and aged-care services are in critical downward spiral. A large proportion of Tasmanians do not have private health insurance, they are renting, they are in mortgage stress, they are homeless and reliant on buses. They are living on the edge and the services they desperately need when they fall off the cliff - like a safe house when they escape from family violence, or an ambulance to get to hospital on time - no longer exist.

Under minister Michael Ferguson, 100 bus services were cancelled in one single day. Too bad for all those people who were trying to get to work. Jeremy Rockliff as Premier has proven the point: regardless of a person's progressive or conservative social values, all Liberals are the same at the core. His speech detailed what drives Liberal Party priorities in government: cut public services and shovel as much money, assets, and Crown land possible into private hands. The people who stand up and protest loudly at that obvious injustice and blatant transfer of wealth to the rich, lock them up, criminalise their right to speech, and bankrupt their organisational bodies.

Tasmania needs a Premier to fight for our island and people, not one who caves to the wealthy and his conservative Cabinet. Jeremy Rockliff is no Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Would that he was, then he would stand up to the bullies like Gillon McLachlan, he would fight the corrosive influence of dirty money, secret deals, and sports rorts corruption that is threatening the heart of our democracy.

Instead he has narrowed his vision as Premier to delivering just one thing: a stadium Tasmanians do not need and do not want. Instead of spending precious capital on health facilities and infrastructure to withstand extreme climate, his transformation of 'Tasmania' - yes, you can buy the MONA rip-off Liberal merchandise - will bring us decades of debt for a loss-making venture.

The Liberals under Jeremy Rockliff have developed into an unabashed cheer squad for big business. There is no community view or sacred place that stands in the way of donors' interests that they will not malign or bulldoze. Consultation processes around all controversial discussions are cynical box-ticking formulae without transparency or accountability. Now the gloves are fully off. Planning overlord Michael Ferguson is openly abusing his ministerial powers, overturning strategic planning processes and council decisions to fast-track conservation land for developers. There is no planning process or tribunal that has upheld the protection of Aboriginal heritage or wilderness against a private development that the Liberals would not appeal to a higher court, or write special legislation to circumvent, and that includes the rights of people with disabilities. There is no science they will not deny if it messes with business as usual for their mates.

For this Liberal Government, rubbishing science and scientists is second nature. The Liberals know better than the WHO, better than the Ausage epidemiologists and the AMA. According to Jeremy Rockliff and the rest of the Liberals, COVID-19 in Tasmania is nothing

to worry about. Never mind that the world's best research is steadily amassing evidence of hugely increased risk of serious organ damage from infection and repeated infections. Do not worry about the burden of disease it is bringing down the line or the devastation that COVID-19 exhaustion is bringing to our healthcare workforce. It is obviously operating on our society. We have clearly had a step change in the way people are able to be involved in business and work since the start of the pandemic. It is the start of the pandemic.

It is not over, despite what the Premier falsely perpetuates as he did yesterday. It is continuing and it will keep changing and we need to be smarter and cleverer than that bloody little virus. That means planning for a future with a pandemic and doing everything we can to make sure that we have safe air, safe ventilation in schools where children are wholly unvaccinated, in hospitals where people are sick and cannot move and desperately do not need another infection, in our workplaces, and in our public spaces. This is the sort of planning the Liberals should be doing, but instead they are winding back surveillance. There is barely anything left. They have finished testing. They have ended infection control measures in health care centres that are mandated.

The Premier pushed at National Cabinet to end COVID-19 isolation requirements and he now allows more people to go back to work without symptoms and remain infected. What a surprise that the wheels are falling off in many parts of our economy. You could not have a clearer and starker statement yesterday than the IPPC Synthesis report, following by the comments of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres. He said, 'Humanity is on thin ice and that ice is melting fast'. Developing nations must make a quantum leap and end new fossil fuel exploration and quit coal, gas and oil altogether by 2040. We are staring at a future where temperatures, despite anything we do today, are likely to reach 1.5 degrees by the mid-2030s. What has been described as a very dangerous planetary tipping point is now closer to us today than the beginning of Tony Abbott's prime ministership and the start of a decade he shepherded in of Liberal pork barrelling, Robodebt, sports rorts and worse by far, the fostering of climate denialism to justify their repeated emissions reduction inaction. All of that to do the bidding of Liberal fossil fuel industry donors.

So it goes on with the Labor Party. We stand at a time in history more important than any other. Now is the time to throw away incrementalism, to call out the gaslighting and the greenwash, the pathetic attempts to keep business as usual staggering on to line the pockets of the super-rich as long as possible. There is no justification for opening coal and gas mines anywhere in Australia or elsewhere on the planet.

The federal parliamentary research showed our country has oodles of capacity and they showed that last week despite minister Bowen's falsehoods in that regard. There will not be a loss of energy generation if we ban new mining, but I tell you what there will be: enormous jeopardy for businesses, community safety, good supply lines and natural systems from the greater heating that we have coming towards us if we do not end coal and gas mining. Every day, every tonne of emissions into the atmosphere is taking us likely past that 1.5 degrees of heating. We likely cannot stop that but we sure as hell can do and must do everything possible to stop more carbon emissions being added to that too-high level. The Liberals have a trenchant focus on our current net-zero emissions levels, which come from our carbon-storing native forests but industry emissions in many sectors have continued to rise and are enormous. Focusing on net zero is a deliberate and dangerous red herring. It is a strategy the Liberals are using to cover up the inadequacy of focusing on ephemeral, volatile landscape carbon stores.

The science is crystal clear: ultimately, and soon, we must put a stop to all the carbon we are emitting into the atmosphere. Offsets were never meant to be an excuse for business as usual. That is an uncomfortable and hard reality and the solutions are not obvious. We do not pretend they are. They are not easy and they are not going to be painless. The job of every government is to best position their people for a safer future, which means planning a pathway to absolute zero and incentivising the industries we need to get us there.

The IPCC Synthesis report's message is that we have to phase down existing industry production. That means cutting total greenhouse gas emissions for Tasmania, starting with the big-emitting sectors. In Tasmania, our priority is to end native forest logging and burning, to electrify transport and direct combustion, and assist agriculture and industrial processing to dramatically reduce their emissions. These have stayed high and have been quietly increasing over the last few decades. Saying we have the world's best emission strategy does not make it true. The Liberals have no plan to reduce energy use, no incentives and no targets for businesses' emissions. On top of this, our state's emissions are expected to rise under the Liberals' planned population growth.

The Government and Labor both voted against setting industry emission targets in last year's review of the Climate Change Act. Our amendments to that bill, based on the science and the expert advice, would have reversed this trend of delay, gaslight, all fine and normal.

The latest research by Dr Jennifer Sanger estimates that native forest logging by state-owned Forestry Tasmania is our largest carbon-emitting sector, greater even than transport. On the brink of climate tipping points, what level of madness or, perhaps, state capture continues to legislate the clearfelling and landscape-level burning of native forests? They are forests rich in carbon stores and irreplaceable habitats for threatened and endangered animals and plants. The Greens have committed to ending this dangerous industry and would invest the state subsidies that prop it up into regional communities to create reliable, carbon-neutral jobs in landscape restoration and bushfire prevention.

Alongside the climate emergency, we are living in a global and national biodiversity crisis of human making. Australia has lost 96 per cent of its healthy intact ecosystems since colonisation. Only 4 per cent of these remain across the continent, and about half of them are in Tasmania. We are a crucible of the planet's remaining healthy ecosystems. We have a responsibility to protect them. With this in mind, we are deeply concerned about the Liberals' testosterone-enhanced push for Marinus, with many questions on behalf of this island and its people.

Through the millions of dollars of non-stop spin, campaigns, publicly funded influencers, wall-to-wall *Mercury* full-page ads and advertorials, Google and social media popups, and many movies telling the story of colonisation and appropriating the history of wilderness activism in the service of getting Tasmanians to swallow the dream of Marinus, we understand we are being spun.

What is Marinus? So far, we know Marinus is a \$3.557 billion debt to Tasmanians, depending which day of the week it is. Of course, we need more renewables but the proposals for Marinus mean the destruction of vast healthy habitat in the protected areas and rainforests of the north, north-west and north-east for industrial-scale wind farms and transmission corridors. How can it be green power when it comes at the expense of the environment? Greta Thunberg has been campaigning with and on behalf of the Sami in far northern

Scandinavia. She knows, they know, that we cannot continue with this tradeoff between our priorities. When it comes to nature, we need it all and we need it to be intact.

Marinus means Hydro and TasNetworks would focus on buying and selling power to the mainland markets. As a consequence, it clearly means no possibility of a local hydrogen market because Hydro would not be stumping up for a firm contract to a hydrogen company when they are trying to play the national spot market to repay their enormous debt. If we are wrong, tell us how and show us how.

The Government's first focus should be planning to reduce our state's emissions, not looking to export to create company profits. In the headlong rush to take on decades of debt for Tasmanians, the Liberals have no plan for what our first priority must be: to rapidly electrify Tasmania's transport and direct combustion sectors, which together, are 40 per cent of our state's emissions. So much for their commitment to action.

In a climate and biodiversity crisis, we need to retain critical habitat like Robbins Island, with its myriad threatened and critically endangered species, thousands of birds and carbon stores. Instead of Marinus, we could refocus our state to the key priority of cutting absolute emissions in every sector. Instead of Marinus trashing the wild north of Tasmania to export electrons to the mainland, we could take out a state-backed loan to generate a local emissions reduction and jobs-intensive electrification industry: one that partners with small-scale investors to generate distributed, sector-specific emissions reduction solutions; one that prioritises investment in rural and regional areas for energy security, with new generation situated close to existing transmission lines and in places that are not biodiversity hotspots.

The Greens have been asking these questions of the Liberals for years. Tasmanians demand answers about what is being done in their name, with their money and in their future interest.

In the United Nations Decade on Ecosystems Restoration, a top priority must be to protect, enhance and restore natural systems. The Robbins Island approval shows a monstrous failure of Tasmania's environmental laws. If it were to go ahead - and we are hoping it falls over in the appeal, it would destroy habitat and species on the edge of extinction, like the eastern curlew, the orange-bellied parrot and the large disease-free Tasmanian devil population.

The wind farm proposed is an industrial remaking of a wild place like nothing on Earth, a place where Aboriginal clans have gathered for tens of thousands of years. Aboriginal heritage will be destroyed, with just a sticks-and-stones assessment ticked off as good enough by the EPA. We cannot be naive about this. There is no offset on the planet that could replace Robbins Island. There are no conditions that can mitigate the industrialisation of this Ramsar-deserving ecosystem. There is no other island at the bottom of the world for Arctic and Siberian birds to migrate to.

Our laws and regulatory bodies should protect critical irreplaceable nature like Robbins Island but they have not. To have had an approval by the EPA on any single one of these issues is inexcusable. It is a travesty that they stamp their approval with all of them. All eyes are now on Tanya Plibersek, God help us, to do her job of protecting critically endangered species and an inestimable cultural heritage.

It just shows how captive the EPA has become to the Statement of Expectations from the minister, which directs the EPA board in its decision-making. A Greens government would legislate, as we tried to do last year, for the complete independence of the EPA from Liberal or Labor governments. Both parties are committed to development at any costs and we need our Environmental Protection Agency to look first at the environment.

Even as the wildlife of our oceans struggle to adapt to warming waters and invasive species, the Liberals allow them to be burdened with pollution from salmon industry waste and antibiotics - 34 tonnes of antibiotics in the last 20 years, and nearly five tonnes in the last four, used by Tassal in our southern public waterways. That is not okay. Finding excess levels of antibiotics in wild-caught fish two kilometres from a fish-farming lease is also not okay. It is shocking. So, where is the EPA? Oh, that is right, they signed off on Tassal's antibiotic conditions. Business as usual, nothing to see here.

Increased nutrient levels devastate inshore marine environments. The Tasman Peninsula, Bruny Island, the Channel and Huon, and the new leases those companies have opened at Brabazon Point and off Garden Island - we have seen those communities record devastating changes in their inshore marine environments. We should not have salmon farming in shallow waters with minimal flow. We welcome and support the new coalition of public citizens who have established a marine life network to further the push for marine parks. Now, more than ever, we need to support the '30 by 30' global commitment Australia has signed up to. We will support the push for expanding marine protected areas to 30 per cent of lutruwita/Tasmania's coastal waters within the next seven years. That is what we need.

The Greens will wait to see the Liberals' final 10-year expansion plans for fish farms, but it does not take a genius to join the dots. Jeremy Rockliff hosted a \$4400-per-head Liberal Party fundraiser while the salmon plan consultation process was still open. He gave the stage at the dinner to the CEOs of JBS and Cooke Canada, who flew in especially for a private chat. They own our salmon companies - lock, stock and stinking barrel. The Premier promised them he would back them all the way, even though the salmon plan would not be very popular. A school kid could work out big salmon will get everything it wants: free public water, real estate and a licence to pollute - no questions asked. Money trumps people and environment every time for the Liberals.

Without a legislated independent EPA free of ministerial influence, Tasmania is on a fast track to the same marine catastrophes that we have seen occurring in overseas countries. We applaud and support the marine communities and their fight to defend their waters. We will not stop until salmon farming and its pollution and plastic harm is out of our oceans for good.

Mr Speaker, there has been an incredible surge in recent years in community organising, in activism, and in an awareness of how we need to change to survive as a community, and to live on just terms with each other. This year will be such an important year for all Australians with the referendum on the Voice. It gives us pause to reflect and have deep conversations with each other about what the ongoing process of colonisation looks like, and how we can act to bring real justice to Aboriginal Tasmanians, and to all Aboriginal Australians.

Increasingly, in Tasmania, we see young and old people coming together: people at both ends of the life spectrum understanding the pressures and the threats with the changing climate, putting their lives and bodies on the line to defend ancient forests and the rare and beautiful animal and plants that exist nowhere else on earth. They will stand in takayna. They will stand

in the Wentworth Hills. They will stand in the southern forests. They will stand in the eastern forests. They will stand in the north-east. They will stand wherever there are ancient beautiful forests with priceless species that need to live in that habitat. Irreplaceable habitat; habitat that cannot be regrown. It has its own time and place.

They will stand there and they will continue to resist the senseless and mindless clear-felling and burning of our native forests subsidised wholly by the public purse, for no reason. They stand up to protect our local places. They will be there regardless of what this Government does, to always protect kunanyi from a cable car. You can be sure of that. They will be there to protect marine waters from large-scale fish farm pollution.

They are outraged at the Liberals reaching in to Clarence Council's decisions. Now that they have become more progressive as a council, this Liberal government wants to dive in over the top of planning processes, to take control of things they have lost control of because the people are taking over. Where bad laws exist, good people will stand up.

It was heartening yesterday to see an amazing show of Tasmanians coming out on the spur of the moment to the lawns of parliament to stand against those fascists, fake feminists, trans-phobes who, in pathetically small numbers, were still prepared to demonise and hate peaceful people who just want to have a life, who just want to exist, who just want to be included in the community like every one of us.

With these people we will always stand for lutruwita/Tasmania. If the Premier is serious about leaving this island a better place, then he should see all of us as allies and resources - and get out of the conversations behind closed doors with private developers, and come out into the light and join with Tasmanians.

Time expired.

[5.47 p.m.]

Mr WOOD (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I rise in response to the Premier's state of the state Address and to commend Premier Rockliff on his vision for Tasmania. Over the last year, since being elected as the Liberal member for Bass, I have been delighted to serve my community as a member of the Rockliff Government.

Launceston, at the heart of Bass, is rightly renowned for its Georgian and Victorian architecture, stunning parks, beautiful Cataract Gorge, an epicurean repute. However, this area of the state is so much more than the city of Launceston. Bass is a diverse region, from the scenic beauty of the Tamar River with its viticulture and agrifood focus, to verdant farmland and the most spectacular beaches. Likewise, its communities, which are so vibrant, also have distinctive characteristics and needs, and it is indeed my honour to represent them.

When I was elected to this position in April 2022, I stated that two of my concerns were the cost-of-living pressure and community issues in Bass. I am proud to be able to reiterate the work and focus that this Government has consistently been putting into these areas. Of particular note is the \$5 million cost-of-living funding that this financial year is being delivered directly to organisations best placed to help Tasmanian families in need.

Mr Speaker, as you would be aware, there are 35 Neighbourhood Houses in Tasmania that all do an outstanding job. These organisations offer accessible, locally driven programs that respond to community needs, specific to their individual communities. I am thrilled that in further recognition of their significant work right across our state, each Tasmanian

Neighbourhood House has been allocated \$50 000. The four Neighbourhood Houses in Bass - located in Scottsdale, Beaconsfield, George Town and Ravenswood - have indicated to me just how grateful they are for this continued support and contribution, enabling them to further create and manage the specialised programs and support they offer in their communities.

An extra \$1 million in additional support has been committed to the family assistance program, allowing the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul, Anglicare, and the Launceston and Hobart City Mission to extend more support to vulnerable Tasmanians. An extra \$1 million has also been provided to Aurora Energy to help customers experiencing financial difficulty, bringing the total amount available to \$2.7 million. Additional funding of \$500 000 has gone to both Foodbank Tasmania and Loaves and Fishes Tasmania to help purchase and distribute food and help them upgrade their distribution vehicles to continue their fantastic work in our communities.

I would like to highlight the success of the school lunch program. With \$350 000 in additional funding being delivered this financial year to the fantastic school lunch program, we will be able to add another 15 Tasmanian schools to the program. Three of these schools are in my electorate of Bass. The Tasmanian Liberal Government is committed to ensuring Tasmanian children have the best possible start to life by supporting them to be happy, healthy, and active. That is why we are delivering on our commitment to extend the School Lunch Pilot program. Having access to fresh, nutritious food is important for overall wellbeing. The Government is already providing more than 3000 healthy lunches to over 1600 students across 15 public schools each week through the School Lunch Pilot program.

Recently, we announced the additional 15 successful schools selected from an expression of interest process to participate in the initiative next year. These schools are: Mole Creek Primary School, JRLF Senior School, Waverley Primary School, Clarendon Vale Primary School, Huonville Primary School, Campbell Town District High School, JRLF East Devonport Primary School, Dodges Ferry Primary School, Montello Primary School, Swansea Primary School, Fairview Primary School, Bridport Primary School, Cosgrove High School, Winnaleah District School and Havenview Primary School. This will take the total number of schools participating in the pilot program to 30.

The wellbeing of children and young people is a priority for the Government. That is why we have committed \$1.87 million to this pilot program. This helps ensure children and young people have the material basics such as access to nutritious food to thrive in learning and in life, more importantly. School Food Matters has done a great job delivering the program with about 50 000 meals served within the 15 schools, and a menu that all children, I am told, thoroughly enjoy.

School Food Matters works with new schools to develop food plans and implement a healthy lunch program along with key food security partners Loaves and Fishes' dietitian and food safety adviser support. The two-year pilot will be independently evaluated by the Menzies Institute for Medical Research to understand whether there are benefits to student engagement, challenges and costs of providing nutritious cooked school lunches. Our Government supports healthy eating and physical wellbeing in our schools through a range of programs and funding commitments. These food programs in schools build the health, literacy and understanding for children and their families.

A further \$150 000 is helping the Tasmanian No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) to provide a no-fee, no-interest loan to Tasmanians for items such as rental bonds, car repairs and essential

white goods. This means that if a Bass constituent contacts my office with concerns over their increasing costs of living and financial concerns, I am able to refer them to local community organisations that have been directly assisted by the Liberal state Government.

As well as helping support those in need at a time of increasing national and global economic uncertainty, I am pleased to report the work that this Government is doing in Bass to help keep our communities and their members safe on numerous levels. For example, in the last Budget the state Government contributed \$1.9 million to Safe Space in Launceston. Safe Space offers a temporary safe place to sleep on a night by night basis where there are showers, laundry facilities and nutritious hot meals. It is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year and provides access to phone and internet as well as support, coaching and case management to help people consider what may be their next step.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to providing a comprehensive range of housing and support services to help Tasmanians in need. That is why we introduced the Safe Space program in 2019, starting in Hobart and then expanding to Launceston and Burnie in 2020, delivering new crisis accommodation for homeless Tasmanians. This site has been operating at or near its expanded capacity of 33 beds and this extra funding will allow the Launceston City Mission to continue its amazing work in delivering this vital service. The Launceston Safe Space site also incorporates a commercial kitchen that is used to provide breakfast, lunch and dinner for Safe Space clients, as well as other people who need extra support with weekly meals. The Safe Space program is an innovative and integrated response that is making a real difference to the everyday lives of the homeless. Safe Spaces are crisis shelters with low barrier entry conditions that are available for people who are homeless and for whom other shelters or emergency accommodation may not be suitable.

Current projects we are delivering to tackle homelessness include a new 26-bed Youth2Independence facility in Hobart and a new 25-bed Youth2Independence facility in Burnie. These are under construction and a 20-bed expansion of the Launceston Youth2Independence facility is nearly complete. There are 15 new units at the Launceston Women's Shelter, 23 crisis and transitional units for at-risk youth in Burnie, a dedicated men's shelter on the north-west coast for men with or without children, and a new 50-bed crisis and transitional accommodation facility for men in Hobart.

These housing support services are in addition to our ambitious plan to build 10 000 affordable and social homes by 2032, with the program currently on track to complete 1500 homes and dwellings by 30 June 2023. Homes Tasmania will continue to work closely with all housing service providers to deliver housing support for Tasmanians, including those in need of emergency shelter and accommodation. We encourage anyone who is homeless or is at risk of homelessness to contact Housing Connect 24 hours a day seven days a week on 1800 800 588. This Government has committed \$3 million to complete the \$5.2 million youth housing and homeless initiatives around the state.

We have more police on the beat and have improved working conditions and support staff levels. In Bass we have committed to complete the \$7 million refurbishment of the Launceston Police Station, which has already been partially completed by a local firm, Premium Constructions. The Tasmanian Government is committed to supporting our hard-working and dedicated police officers to keep Tasmanian streets and communities safe.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Churchill Fellow - Dr Rosie Nash

[6.00 p.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin - Minister for Community Services and Development) - Mr Deputy Speaker, for nearly 60 years, the Winston Churchill Trust has flown talented Australians around the globe to pursue their passion and bring their knowledge home. Churchill Fellows are people from all walks of life and all sectors - the arts, science, health, agriculture and beyond.

I had the honour recently of meeting Dr Rosie Nash, a Tasmanian Churchill Fellow. I spoke to Rosie about her upcoming fellowship to 12 countries across Europe to meet with health literacy experts and explore the question of whether health literacy should be treated as a health, education or community issue.

Rosie is a pharmacist of 20 years' experience and a senior lecturer in public health. She also founded the charitable organisation HealthLit4Everyone, and is a mum of two wonderful children.

In 2016, Rosie recognised that there were no programs to support the development of children's health literacy in Tasmania, or for that matter, globally. Research shows that health literacy is a social determinant, that it can influence educational attainment, health outcomes and the productivity of whole communities.

Rosie's work has been published in three World Health Organization reports as an exemplar for how to prevent non-communicable diseases. She is also editing a book titled *Global Perspectives on Children's Health Literacy: The intersections between health, education and community*, to be published by Springer in November this year. It includes 24 chapters from 22 separate nations.

As part of her fellowship, Rosie will be heading to 12 countries across Europe - including visiting London, Belfast, Dublin, Munich and Paris. She will be meeting with her colleagues from health literacy associations, public health associations, health foundations, global health networks and departments of education, among many others. Rosie has mentioned she has been overwhelmed by the response of her colleagues and their networks to her research and her fellowship. Northern Ireland's health department, for example, really wanted to use Rosie's presentation as a springboard to start talking about health literacy in Northern Ireland. In Geneva she is meeting with colleagues in two departments within the World Health Organization headquarters, health-promoting schools and non-communicable disease prevention.

Tasmania is extremely proud of Rosie, and I look forward to hearing more about her work upon her return from the fellowship. As a Tasmanian Government, we look forward to working on ways to support her endeavours to benefit children not only here, but throughout the world.

Old Nick Hobart Theatre - *Grease*

[6.03 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on the adjournment to talk about the latest Old Nick Hobart Theatre Summer School production of *Grease* at the old Mount Nelson College. This was yet another stellar performance by these young actors, who really did put their heart and soul into a most engaging and entertaining performance.

Grease is a much-loved musical, and the Rydell High yearbook was the book they circulated for us on the night. It was a tremendous performance. They did a cracking job. It was thrilling to see so much talent and enthusiasm of such young performers loving their craft, learning their craft, and doing such a great job. I just want to do a massive shout-out to all at the Old Nick Theatre Summer School.

In this production of *Grease*, David Thomson was the director, Andrew Castles was the music director, Caitlin Carnaby was the choreographer, the tireless Mark Holmes was the production manager, Helen Cronin did costumes and props design, Gareth Kays was lighting designer, Andrew Johns was sound designer, Christopher Oakley was the set designer, Karl Sanger was the set builder, Alex O'Brien was the graphic designer, Bianca Paine was the marketing and sponsorship manager - I was the sponsor this year, and Bianca did a great job in keeping us in the loop and giving me all the social media content to share and make sure people knew about the performance - Bianca Lekkas was the marketing coordinator and Janelle Johns was the production assistants.

About 1000 people came along over the nights to see the performance. They had a great car - an old Morris that they basically salvaged from somewhere, which they did a lot of work on. That was the main feature of the 'Greased Lightning' song that rolled out onto the stage and the performers did a magnificent job.

We had guest performers for the teenagers. I know John X, Darren Sangwell and Andrew Hickman were guest performers for the teenagers. On the night I was there, Samantha James Radford stole the show with a cracking performance. They did a tremendous job.

We have many talented young Tasmanians treating the boards in Tasmania. The Old Nick do a great job in fostering that talent, allowing them to perform and enjoy their work, and they move on into other roles across the arts and culture industry in Tasmania.

They also worked together to raise \$3500 for the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute in honour of Australia's original Sandy, which was a wonderful thing to do - to not only have the performance, but be able to use the performance to raise money for a great cause.

The performance of *Grease* was magnificent. It has a special place in my heart because I was also in a performance of *Grease* for the long lost and forgotten Southern Cats football club player's review in 1998, where I played the role of Danny, and I thought I did a cracking job.

Mr Barnett - You want to recite one now?

Mr O'BYRNE - Ha ha, no. I just want to acknowledge the great performers in the Old Nick Theatre Summer School 2023 production of *Grease*. What a production it was. We look forward to next year.

I do have another piece, but I will run out of time, so I will do it on another adjournment. Thank you for your indulgence.

Endometriosis Awareness Month

[6.07 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, March is Endometriosis Awareness Month. They ask us to wear yellow. Many who have been in the House would know I have raised the issue of endometriosis and its diagnosis on many occasions.

It is a significant issue for women across the world, and in Australia it affects one in nine Australian women, where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus forms in other parts of the body. It is painful, it is debilitating for some, it is regularly misdiagnosed, and its treatment is invasive, expensive and frankly, incurable.

It is also treated in a gendered way. Without doubt, if a man presented at ED with significant, crippling abdominal pain, they would not be sent home with Panadol, told to take a walk or to use a heat pack. We would order tests for the man. We dismiss women's pain and women's issues.

Last year I shared my daughter Sophia's story and I seek to do so again:

Over six years, my life was defined by undiagnosed health issues. Debilitating pain progressively got worse. It affects my ability to participate in my education, work and my social life, and is a significant factor of breakdowns in my mental and physical health, as well as relationships.

After facing years of dismissals from doctors, I was finally able to get a full diagnosis of endometriosis, an extremely painful, common disease. While six years might seem a long time for a diagnosis, I was actually extremely lucky, as most women have to wait until their thirties and forties to get a final diagnosis. It comes with a whole list of symptoms, like chronic fatigue, decreased effectiveness of your immune system, infertility, pelvic pain, food intolerances, periods that mimic that one scene from *The Shining*, ovarian cysts, hormonal disruptions. I am not exaggerating when I say the list goes on. Everybody's body is different and has to endure and fight different aspects of the disease. Not one experience can put to justice how exhausting and painful it can be.

I am beyond privileged to have been able to seek help through various doctors and have an amazing support from my loved ones. However, not everyone is as lucky and not everyone has the opportunity to advocate for their health and body as freely as me. Race and economic status play an essential role in access to treatment. Disturbingly, despite having a similar disease incidence, women of colour are less likely to be diagnosed than Caucasians, and are

1.6 times less likely to be admitted to hospital for endometriosis, if you manage to get a diagnosis. It is another form of health care that is more readily available to those who can afford it. If you can afford private health care, then you can access specialist gynaecologists quickly. The wait times are growing.

Sixty-five per cent of endometriosis hospitalisations in Australia are either self-funded or funded by private health care, but even with private health care women with endometriosis pay on average \$3670 a year in out-of-pocket expenses for tests, treatments and surgeries. That does not take into account the money they lose being unable to work when in pain. Awareness and education are essential to development and treatment but also just to understand and empathise with us.

Having been a supporter of someone with endometriosis, I and those who support women with endo are pleased that federal Labor has now funded the nation's first endometriosis and pelvic pain clinics around the country, to support the management of endometriosis, pelvic pain and women's reproductive health. The GP-led clinics will offer more focused support for diagnosis and treatment for multidisciplinary care teams. The \$16.4 million investment establishes targeted endometriosis and pelvic pain GP clinics to improve women's access to specialised and timely support in primary health care settings. Family Planning Tasmania will be the first to host one in Tasmania. As part of the broader measures to support women's health and management of endometriosis, \$25.5 million has been committed to add a new pelvic MRI scan to the Medicare Benefits Scheme.

This is the first MRI scan listed on the MBS to investigate conditions that affect fertility. It will offer help and hope for more than 16 000 women a year who are having difficulty conceiving and for women with severe endometriosis and other conditions that affect fertility. From the agony of pelvic pain to difficulties conceiving, women with endometriosis can suffer greatly in their day-to-day lives. They deserve better access to specialised care. Endometriosis and pelvic pain clinics will be a crucial front door for women who need answers and support. It will be gathered expertise under one roof with the referral pathways in place for women to get the support they need and hopefully will remove the economic barrier for many women to receive support.

It is important that women have access to the right diagnostic tools to improve diagnosis and treatment. I commend federal Labor and thank it on behalf of those who have an endometriosis diagnosis, those who should probably have an endometriosis diagnosis and those who love and support them.

Burnie to Wynyard Shared Coastal Pathway Montello Primary School - Disability Access

[6.12 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about two really important projects in my local community.

The first is the Burnie to Wynyard shared coastal pathway, which has probably been the most re-announced project by this Government of any project across the state. Last week the

minister Michael Ferguson and local member Felix Ellis re-announced again with local mayors their commitment to funding this pathway. This project has been in its infancy for the last 17 years. It has been around for a very long time. This Government first made its commitment to it in 2016 and again in 2017.

There have been other reiterations of it related to coastal erosion and the requirement for more funding. The community just wants to see it built. The councils are behind it. They are ready to go. They have been waiting for the Government to reallocate funding of the \$12 million. You have re-announced it now, so let us just get on and build this cycleway. I ran into my good friend and former mayoral colleague, Robbie Walsh, at the Wynyard Show on Saturday. He has always wanted to ride his horse along that coastal pathway, once it is finally built. He thinks he is running out of time. I am encouraging everybody involved to get on board, let Robbie ride his horse and let us get this thing built.

The second project that I want to talk about is Montello Primary School. This primary school has terrible disability access. The facilities are very poor and the school community has been advocating for a very long time to have improvements made to that school. My representations to the Premier, who was then the Education minister, date back to 2019. This school had been on the priority 1 list for the last five years. Rather than budget funding being allocated to this important project, it was overlooked a number of times. It was only once we made a commitment to fund this project at the last state election that the Government came on board and also made a commitment.

There was \$7.1 million allocated by the Government at the time. Since then, there has been a good consultation process with the local community. The fact remains that the disability access to this school is shocking. It is preventing parents from getting access to their children's classrooms. It means that kids who might have an injury have to change classrooms, using the classrooms that are upstairs rather than downstairs, causing disruption to their learning.

There are parents and relatives who do not have access to the school campus because they are in a wheelchair or have a disability. There are immediate needs at this school that must be addressed right now. While it is great to have this master plan in process, during recent discussions with the school community and with the school association, they have raised concerns that the disability access needs to be fixed now but also that the funding allocated is not enough for the work that needs to be done.

I put on the record tonight to the minister, Roger Jaensch, to consider increasing funding for this project in the next state budget because it is a critical project for this school community. The current school site is not fit for purpose. If the minister had read this consultation report he would get a really good understanding of what some of the issues are.

In the time I have left I will read a couple of those comments into the *Hansard*. This is feedback from students, parents and teaching staff. They say:

Any improvement is a good improvement. The state of the school is a shambles. Montello Primary is a great school led by an amazing principal. It has many children with complex disabilities and desperately needs more funding to assist supporting these children's needs.

The amount the department currently gives is far from enough. Sensory equipment is few and far between; one-to one-aides cannot be provided for children with special needs.

The school and parents all support their needs due to there not being enough funding.

It is not disability accessible to most of the school. I am in a wheelchair and my son is currently in grade 1, and as he moves to the older levels I will no longer be able to access the classes he will be in because I cannot get there in my wheelchair.

\$7.1 million is nowhere near enough to give Montello the redevelopment that it deserves. That \$7.1 million is a big Band-Aid. Montello students, staff, families deserve so much better.

The windows are unsafe. People could fall out of the windows that are at double storey with windows that open completely, or things could be thrown out windows to the ground and hit someone on the head. The windows are dangerous and should be fixed immediately.

There is no access for people with disabilities, no wheelchair access for those that are in wheelchairs. Children who are on crutches aren't able to access their classrooms because they can't walk down 40 stairs to get to their class. Toilets that are hidden and accessible to bullies, not in view of staff at all times. Students need to walk to get to the toilets from their classrooms - long distances. The bottom toilet block is called the dungeon and has been the dudgeon for the 40 years when I went to the school myself. Whilst they are all very clean, they are very outdated and need to be bulldozed.

Stairs, stairs, stairs, stairs and then let's add some more stairs. There's no room for children that need to have a break out of class. There are no offices for all those important meetings that take place in schools and there is no storage for important things.

From the front fence that has been there for 70 years to the back of the school that needs a bulldozer through it, Montello deserves more.

I could go on all day about why \$7.1 million isn't going to give Montello Primary School the rebuild they deserve. I'm a fourth generation of Montello. My grandparents and parents worked at the school. My mother, myself and my brother went to the school and then my children went to the school. I now work at Montello and can see the sadness of what we work in and educate children in every single day. It isn't safe. It doesn't have disability access of any description and Montello students deserve better.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I could not agree more. That concludes my contribution and I call on the Government to fix this problem.

Blind Cricket Tasmania

[6.18 p.m.]

Mr YOUNG (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight I rise to speak about Blind Cricket Tasmania. It was my distinct honour to represent the Government and Mr Street at the jumper presentation for Tasmania's blind cricket team. At that point I got to meet a group of dedicated inspirational cricketers. Bringing together ACT and Tasmania's blind and low-vision players and the dual representative CATS team for the 2023 National Cricket Inclusion Championships has been an extraordinary accomplishment for all involved. From three long years back first establishing Inclusive Innovations Tasmania (IIT) and then Blind Cricket Tasmania to forming an MOU with Cricket Tasmania, building the program, acceptance by the National Blind Cricket Association, winning the State and National Community Partnership Awards, fundraising and chasing grants to finance the trip and then, of course, the enormous team effort to compete at the National Cricket Inclusion Championships, for the very first time a Tasmanian team finally got there.

Thanks to Sunny Drury, the chair of the IIT, for providing this following information about our performance at the championships:

The NCIC was frankly a physical and sensory overload and superhuman effort by all. There were laughs, tears, confusion, collaboration, heartbreak, celebration, exhaustion, achievement, injury, admiration, empathy, anxiety, amusement and inspiration but, above all, joy, as part of the collective chemistry and effort between diverse passionate people and personalities united in a common cause. If you have not experienced blind cricket, believe me, it is in a league of its own and we invite you to visit the BCT website for what we predict to be a massive eye opener.

And it is. It is not quite as easy as you think it might be.

The generosity of ACT players means we owe them a great debt of gratitude that we will repay in time by upskilling our players and strengthening our Tigers squad. We learnt many things about ourselves and each other that were predictable as they were sometimes surprising and sometimes challenging but, above all, we have created an enviable culture and sustainable future while making friendships that will last a lifetime.

The 2023 NCIC campaign was filled with some amazing achievements. Though we did not win a game, we were competitive in most clashes, earning the respect of other teams with our 'never give up' attitude against some formidable odds. A shout-out to all the NCIC blind state teams for their help and kinship but particularly grand final winners New South Wales, who even helped some of our Tas batters take guard correctly and applauded our efforts all day. They beat us by over 200 runs but the score did not tell the positive human-centred experience of the game.

Blind Cricket looks to grow the game in Tasmania and give similar access to others in the ACT and relatively close regional areas. We now have the platform and responsibility to ensure that we put these processes,

relationships and agreements in place to offer the surety of a pathway for more talented blind cricketers to play in the NCIC.

Our on-team, on-ground cohesion and competitiveness were achieved through outstanding leadership from captain Michael Hamilton who, along with other ACT players, selflessly went above and beyond to support our debutant players, mostly from Tasmania. Captaincy is both relative opportunity and responsibility and we are thankful that our team leadership puts the success of others before their own aspirations. For that, they win the greatest award of all - the admiration of their teammates and the broader blind cricket community.

You can have a look on the IIT Facebook page for some fantastic pictures of the tour. I would like to give my congratulations not only to all the team members but to a long list of special people, including but not limited to coach Taylah Purton, assistant manager Jason Smith, team support professional Elsa Wrighton, NCIC team captain Michael Hamilton and everyone at Inclusive Innovations Tasmania and Blind Cricket Tasmania. The time and dollars invested by so many to help our players have been significant to say the least. I hope that being part of history in making this dream a reality brings as much satisfaction and pride to them all. Blind cricket in Tasmania now has a bright future ahead thanks to all their contributions.

Blind cricket team values included respect, commitment and teamwork, and that is what everyone has done with a smile on their face and a care for their teammates. You have all represented your region, families and communities with humility, passion and great skill. Congratulations and well done.

Forest Industry in the Huon Valley - Tribute

[6.23 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about the great work that our forestry sector is doing in the Huon Valley, in particular, the outstanding work they have been doing in actively managing our plantation, working forests and adding value through downstream processing. I am a supporter of the Tasmanian forest industry and I have enjoyed, particularly over the last two years but longer than that, getting to know the timber workers and their families in the Huon Valley.

Last year, as part of that getting to know the industry a little bit better, I was able to tour plantation forests with Nick Steel from the Tasmania Forest Products Association, Andrew Morgan from SFM Environmental Solutions, through the Lenah Estate around Mt Wellington/kunanyi as well as more recently spending time at Southwood with Josh Turnbull and his team.

Last week, I spent a few hours with TP Bennett & Sons logging and cartage contracting as they harvested Tasmania's native working forests. It was a fantastic experience to be a part of what they do for only a few hours. I understand now even more how important the work is and how important it is to them and their families, and the pride they have in that important work. Bennetts is a family-owned business, owned and operated by the family for around

60 years. It has been a big part, an integral part, it is a generational business that has been set up and operating in the Huon Valley for that period of time.

I thank, in particular, Tammy Price who invited me to meet the team as they worked in two coupes just outside Dover. Tammy is an important part of the Bennett family. I have known Tammy for a little while through my former role as mayor of Kingborough and her involvement with the Bruny Island Boat Club. She is currently the president of the Bruny Island Community Association. I have to tell you, Mr Speaker, this is the most formidable community advocate you will ever encounter. She is a powerful force for the things she believes in. One is Bruny Island and the boat club but also the Tasmanian forest industry, which she has been an important factor in, and advocate for, over the years.

I was able to spend some time in those two coupes. Those coupes had been harvested before. I saw the old tram tracks through the coupe and also spoke to workers, in one case whose father had worked in the coupe when it was harvested many years earlier. The crew behind the business are some of the most knowledgeable people you will find in terms of the history of this area, what is there and what is not there, and it was great to get a good understanding.

I thank, in particular, Gerard Bennett, who was my tour guide, for introducing me to his great crew who were there doing the hard work of harvesting through cable logging. Keith, Caitlin and Pat were all knowledgeable and passionate about their work. They are proud of the work they do. They understand that by managing these forests they are producing valuable sawlog resource that is used for practical purposes, including for building homes that we live in. It is not until you spend time speaking to workers like Gerard, Keith, Caitlin and Pat that you realise how important their work is and how much they know about the coupes themselves, the local area and the environment.

They have spent their working lives in many cases working there. This is generational business where their parents have worked either within this business or other businesses doing this important work. They point out that the great thing about trees is that they grow back. We need this timber to build homes and these coupes will be restored for future generations, as they should be.

However, they are frustrated and I was contacted. We were supposed to do this tour last year but we were held up because, in exactly the correct process, there was a wedge-tailed eagle found in one of the coupes so the coupe was not logged and the tour of that coupe did not go ahead. I was contacted earlier this year and I will read a little bit of the message I received:

Hi Dean, I am wondering if you could find out what is going on with the new protest legislation and when it comes into effect. We have had three protests in just two weeks. This area has been cut over multiple times. There is an old tramway here and we are frustrated.

This has been our community and workers who have been told for many years now that anti-protester legislation was going to help and support them. When I went and spoke to them about the experience they have had over the past few weeks and a couple of months now -

Government members interjecting.

Mr WINTER - What has happened over this period, as was told by Labor during this period of time -

Mr Ellis - We will bring it back in if you want.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr WINTER - The protesters are still there. They showed me a video of exactly what happened as the protesters arrived in this coupe. They walked through. They were asked politely to leave by the workers there, by the workers I was speaking to -

Mr Barnett - You should have caught up with them last year when you voted against the legislation. You voted with the Greens.

Mr WINTER - because there was already legislation in place to stop people from trespassing into these coupes. What they have promised this sector and this workforce for years has not worked and will not work and has not protected a single worker or the productive work that goes on in that area.

Mr Barnett - Why are you raising this?

Mr Ellis - You are digging a hole.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr WINTER - The protesters there, unfortunately, that day did something that was completely and utterly pointless. They showed me the remnants of the processed operations on the site. On the site we saw pieces of rope still hanging there with an excrement bucket underneath it unfortunately left by the protesters, presumably for the workers to clean up. It is just not good enough. Unfortunately, this business cannot recoup the money that it has lost: estimates are \$10 000 through that work by the protesters. The tree they hung those off was not even going to be logged.

Time expired.

Australian Tourism Awards

[6.31 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, I rise to talk about our world-class tourism industry. We know we have something very special in this wonderful state. The data tells us that the world wants more of what we know is fantastic about Tasmania, not only the data on tourists coming back after the height of the pandemic but also the record spend and yield; over \$3.5 billion to the 12 months to December. That is almost \$1 billion more than the previous record. It highlights the fact that not only are people coming back post-pandemic but also that yield is increasing per visitor.

We know we have some of the world's best experiences, unique offerings, world-class and top-class food and beverage. What makes our visitor economy what it is and respected across the country, respected across the globe is the tourism operators who run our businesses,

our tour guides, hospitality staff and transport operators. These are the people who make our visitor economy tick. It was these people who were acknowledged and recognised at the Australian Tourism Awards in Sydney on Friday night, which I had much pleasure in attending. It was an honour to join the Tasmanian contingent who travelled to Sydney to represent our state and showcase once again what we have to offer travellers.

In another fantastic show of confidence in our tourism industry, Tasmania won 10 medals. Having this many Tasmanian tourism businesses represented on the national stage is a sign of strength and reputation of our tourism industry and the amazing variety of quality experiences our island offers to visitors. I speak for everyone who attended Friday night's awards on reflecting how special the moment was when the wukalina Walk was announced as Australia's best Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island tourism experience. It was a truly special moment for the dedicated team who have worked tirelessly on this product, which is also supported by our Government. It was an incredibly inspiring and touching moment for myself and the entire Tasmanian contingent of tourism operators. The wukalina Walk team received a standing ovation when they received their award.

The Bangor Vineyard Shed won gold in the tourism, wineries, distilleries and breweries category and Coal River Farm for excellence in food tourism. I want to acknowledge the teams behind both these businesses for their hard work, their dedication and commitment to offering their patrons excellence in every single way. Tasmanian operators shone from right across the state. You would be interested, Mr Speaker, to know that the Big4 St Helens Holiday Park won silver in the caravan and holiday park section. The Ship Inn at Stanley won silver in the 4-4.5-star deluxe accommodation category. The Tasmanian Walking Company won silver in eco-tourism. Our bronze medallists included Air Adventure Golf in tour and transport operators; Mures Tasmania in tourism and restaurant and catering services; Peppers Silo in business event venues and Villa Tahlia in self-contained accommodation.

Tasmanian tourism is world-class and supports thousands of jobs right across our wonderful state. These results will help attract even more people to come here, to see for themselves the amazing experiences we have to offer. Awards such as these are a timely reminder of the hard work, the grit, the risk-taking, and the determination that goes into developing a tourism product from the ground up. I want to acknowledge all of the Tasmanian finalists for the work they have put in.

Just making it to the national stage is a huge achievement. I was able to reflect that to all those nominated prior to the event on Friday night. Being with my fellow tourism ministers from across the country last week highlighted to me just what a success story our visitor economy is and one we want to build on for decades to come.

Congratulations to all the finalists and congratulations to the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania, their CEO, Luke Martin, and chair, Daniel Leesong, for their commitment to excellence within the industry and supporting our Tassie operators through the awards process. It was a very proud moment for me, as Premier and Minister for Tourism, as it was for all those who attended the awards on Friday evening.

Online Access Centres

[6.36 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about the state of our online access centres at the moment, one of my pet topics. The Government started the process of closing the online access centres in 2015. Through a community campaign, we managed to stop those closures. A grant was provided to the remaining online access centres. The grant was an insufficient grant and now most online access centres are unable to keep their doors open because of lack of funding.

This process of starvation by the Government is not appreciated. We are working with a number of online access centres around Tasmania. The might of these online access centres is underestimated by the Government. What they provide in service to their communities cannot be replicated by Libraries Tasmania. The digital services they provide, the community services they provide, are vital to so many of our regional communities.

I have information here about the St Helens online access centre, but over the next week I will also provide insights into other online access centres around Tasmania. One of them is Devonport. One of the Braddon members is in the House tonight. Most online access centres around Tasmania are willing to start community campaigns around this and we will work together. It is a really important and vital network to maintain. There are also online access centres in your electorate, Mr Young, that are being starved of funding and are looking at closing. It is important that all members in this House recognise that those online access centres have amazing community reach.

The majority of their staffing is by volunteers. They produce publications and those publications have vast reach. They go into almost half of Tasmania's households, so I think it is really important that the function of those online access centres is respected and that the reach of those online access centres in our smaller communities is appreciated and acknowledged by the Government. The last time they tried this, the community backlash was really negative against local members.

I will read to you about St Helens online access centre in the time that I have:

The online access centre in St Helens has been in operation since 1999 and serves community members and visitors alike. The current president of the St Helens Online Access Centre Association committee is Rosina Gallace. She has tried to raise these concerns with the state Government over the last three years. Her concerns are that they are running out of money and they cannot keep their doors open with the insufficient funds they have been provided. She talks here about meeting former minister Jeremy Rockliff when he was Minister for Education. They have also dealt with former premier Peter Gutwein, and with Mr John Tucker, and also Mr Roger Jaensch quite recently in his role for Minister for Education.

It states here that:

After raising concerns around the insufficient government funding allocation and stating that the centre would have to close its doors if funding was not increased, the comments that came from one of the Government's top

advisers in late 2022 were to suggest that the services the centre was offering could be delivered by the library, Service Tasmania or the Business Enterprise Centre.

There are various reasons as to why this is not in any way a solution to the very real threat that, if not funded appropriately, we could lose the centre's services.

The library, Service Tasmania and the Business Enterprise Centre are not equipped or resourced to deliver face-to-face and one-on-one services. They do not have the resources in terms of computers and other office equipment, or the staff, including volunteers who possess special IT skills.

As the nature of the St Helens Online Access Centre is to provide customer support generally one-on-one, it should be obvious to the Government that neither the library nor Service Tasmania deliver these services, and regularly refer their customers to the St Helens Online Access Centre for specialist IT support and service.

They go on to say that the median age in the St Helens region which that Online Access Centre services is 56. They also talk about the intermittent - or lack of - internet connection in that area. That is a common issue across the municipality, with many people unable to access the internet at their homes or even businesses. That is one of the functions of that Online Access Centre.

The current situation is that the St Helens Online Access Centre includes one person part-time for 16 hours a week, supported by four volunteers - so you are getting real bang for your buck, your government dollar, when you are funding that online access centre. You are employing one coordinator part time, and they are being assisted by four volunteers. That is actually cost-positive for the Government, and I doubt you have ever really looked at the model of the online access centres like that. The volunteer contribution outweighs what those online access centres cost.

I can provide all that data to the Government - which we did last time. It was in the PESRAC report - recommendation 34, off the top of my head, talking about the importance of online access centres for digital inclusion, digital education and being able to communicate properly with people around Tasmania, and the importance of those online access centres.

We will be launching a new campaign. I think all online access centres will be meeting soon, and we will not be using the coordinator. We will be using the volunteer committees.

Forestry Industry - Workplace Protection Laws

Reginald Andrew Watson - Tribute

[6.43 p.m]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Veterans' Affairs) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to make a contribution tonight in honour of a great Tasmanian, Reginald Andrew Watson.

Before I do, I will quickly respond to the breathtaking hypocrisy of the member for Franklin, Dean Winters, just a few moments ago, supporting the forest industry and then making a very big complaint about Tasmania's workplace protection laws, a complaint about its enforcement thereof -

Members interjecting.

Mr BARNETT - and here he is, interjecting on me, the member who is part of the state Labor Party who opposed our workplace protection orders, who voted with the Greens to oppose tougher workplace invasion orders. In an own goal, he has dug this massive hole, and he has dug deeper and deeper and deeper. Even the Leader of the Opposition is coming in to support, on behalf of State Labor, to complain about workplace protection laws. This is absolutely weird. No doubt we will have more to say about that in due course.

I want to pay tribute to an outstanding Tasmanian, Reg Watson - 5 September 1949 to 17 March 2023. Community-minded, kind and caring, Reg was an advocate for conservative causes, for the Royal Family, and was a defender of his beliefs. He was a family man. He was a friend of my grandfather, H.S. Barnett. They were both members of the RAAF Association. My grandfather was president for a number of years in Hobart. Reg was a friend of Legacy Hobart, like my grandfather, and he was likewise a friend of my father, the late John Barnett, and a friend of mine.

Reg was a sixth-generation Tasmanian. In fact, his father, Reginald Gordon Watson, was a Rats of Tobruk man. His grandfather, Frederick Wentworth Watson, was a trooper of the Second Tasmanian Bushmen serving in the Boer War. Reg Watson was such a supporter of the Boer War commemorations in Hobart and in Launceston each and every year. I met with him as Minister for Veterans' Affairs, but also just as a member of parliament regularly and consistently, to support the Boer War commemorations, particularly in the north. He was there so consistently with Dr Frank Madill and so many others to pay respect to and honour our veterans, particularly those Boer War veterans and their families.

Reg had four daughters, and 13 grandchildren. He lived on the eastern shore for nearly all of his life on our island state; he lived all of his life here. He was a respected journalist, passionate local historian - and particularly a military historian, renowned throughout the land, especially in Tasmania. He wrote thousands of articles - not just in the *Mercury*, but across the state, and his military history was fantastic. His extensive research and efforts were so substantial - an outstanding person indeed.

We had a quite a bit to do with each other, both of us so commending and congratulatory of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. We worked together to pay tribute to her on the Platinum Jubilee. He was part of the Council for United Commonwealth Societies, and I proudly produced the flyer, supported by Reg Watson, with a photo of Her Majesty's visit to Tasmania - seven visits to Tasmania during her reign.

Of course, Reg Watson was there to fly the flag on many occasions. He loved the flag. He actually wrote about the Tasmanian flag, and some of what he has written has now been included at a federal level in Canberra in the history of the Australian flag and Australian flags, including the history of the Tasmanian flag.

He was a member of the Naval, Military and Airforce Clubs of Tasmania. I have mentioned the Royal Airforce Association, in which my grandfather was very involved, and president of for some time.

He was the Tasmanian convenor for the Australians for a Constitutional Monarchy, and certainly very strongly led the charge in that regard. He was also a delegate to the United Commonwealth Societies, past president of the Hobart Town First Settlers Association, member of the Lindisfarne Historical Society, member of the Glamorgan and District Historic Society, Boer War study groups, and did so much to support the Boer War commemorations.

He was a member of the Royal Australian Artillery Association of Tasmanian, the Soldiers Memorial Walk, Friends of Hobart Legacy and also a member of the Lindisfarne Returned Services Club. He was a committee member of the Tasmanian Tobruk Association, Lindisfarne Motor Club, Boat Club, a keen fisherman, a hunter. A book collector, stamp collector, coin collector, and antique collector. He was a fine, outstanding man.

In the few moments left, I pay a tribute and say he will be greatly missed. I am looking forward to the commemoration service and funeral this Friday to commemorate and celebrate his life at the Christian Family Centre at Risdon Vale at 1 p.m., to pay tribute. I know many members in this House would likewise remember him with much affection. I pass on my condolences to his family and friends.

Time expired.

Forestry Legislation

Wynyard Show

[6.50 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Mr Deputy Speaker, before I start, I would like to make mention of probably one of the most breathtaking displays of hypocrisy and perhaps amnesia that we have seen in this House for a very long time. Mr Winter may have only just realised how important the forest industry is but we had a debate about this last year. You voted against that bill, you watered it down. Your people in the upper House, including someone who is up for election very shortly, led the charge on that. I look forward to seeing the amendments you would like to put up to the Police Offences Act that you think could augment the powers in that bill so that we can respond, because you were the ones who watered it down. We are more than happy to go through every single vote, to put back every single piece in that legislation that you voted against, that you watered down, that you amended. We can bring it back into parliament and we can actually look after the people that you so hypocritically claim to care about. You voted against their interests and we will always back them.

I rose tonight to speak about agricultural shows, particularly one of the best agricultural shows on the north-west coast of Tasmania, and the whole of Australia, frankly, the beautiful Wynyard agricultural show. We have a very fine tradition and, in that best tradition, the Wynyard Show has been a fixture on our calendar for more than 133 years.

Like so many other community organisations, Wynyard show society had to cancel the 2022 and 2021 shows, but like all tough north-west coasters, the 133rd Wynyard agricultural

and pastoral show of 2023 went ahead. According to president Chris Stunden, fantastic local fellow, entries were actually a little above the last show, which was held in 2020. Saturday's weather was superb, as it always is on the north-west coast. Do not believe the weather man. The large crowds were enthusiastic, with almost half the tickets purchased online.

Plenty of things for families, of course: a haybale maze, obstacle races, tractor and trailer backing, which I know is always a big hit, particularly among politicians. I will not name any politicians who took part, nor will I mention their performance. Needless to say, it is a bit of an institution. Of course, there is music, farm equipment displays, and some outstanding sheep, cattle and horses. We know that the north-west coast produces the best red meat you will find anywhere in the world. There were jumping competitions, carriage driving competitions and the fantastic interactive display of Paddock to Plate, which is a big part of the north-west-coast brand. Kids can see the cow being milked, the cream being separated with a vintage cream separator, right through the whole process to the end product of cheese or butter. By all accounts, there was cheese and butter going everywhere but that is another story.

The sad reality for Tasmania's show societies can be the financial cost of staging a show and difficulty in sourcing volunteers to help. This can make things tough for regional events. In this case, it is heartwarming to see that for some of the smaller regional towns, local shows such as Wynyard are a great way for town and country to mingle. Congratulations to the Wynyard Agricultural and Pastoral Society for the great spectacle they provided while showcasing the best of local agriculture.

In the industrial hall there was some fantastic produce and baking, and a whole range of other things. My sponsorship was for the best honey cake using local honey and I am sure it was a delicious and worthy winner. I also give a big shout-out to our woodchopping event winners. Wynyard is timber country and we have some phenomenal woodchoppers, both past and present hailing from -

Ms White - By all accounts, they could not get any wood to chop. Is that true?

Mr ELLIS - No, that is Victoria, where they have shut down native forestry. We actually get inquiries now from Victoria, where Labor shut down native forestry, to provide timber for their woodchopping shows. Woodchopping is going great in Tasmania. It is going terrible where Labor have locked it up but that should not take away from the fantastic effort of those who participated. I am surprised this is getting so political, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The 250 mm veterans chop - David Mayne, a famous name there; 300 mm Wynyard Show champion chop - Stephen Foster, another famous name; 275 mm underhand chop - Henry Mayne, brother of David; 225 mm chop - Bill Purton from Wynyard; 300 mm - Neville French Memorial chop - Tony Dick; 450 mm double-handled sawing - Jillian Stratton and Bevan Harman, brother and sister; 250 mm chop - Brent Walker; 375 mm single-hand sawing - Andrew Kelly.

After Saturday's competition the chopping arena was officially named, on this weekend at the Wynyard Show, the Harman Family Arena. Gillian Stratton and Bevan Harman are two of Kevin's children. It just goes to show that with those names the fine tradition of timber and timber sports that run through so many of these families and so many of these small country towns. I congratulate the Wynyard Show for another fantastic show and I am looking forward to the 134th.

Waterbridge Food Co-Op

[6.57 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about an important program that has been delivered in my electorate of Lyons, the Waterbridge Food Co-Op. This is a program that delivers food to people right across the southern part of the Lyons electorate. It has been operating for a number of years but, sadly, their funding run out in October last year. They have been surviving on one-off funding and that has also come to an end. They have informed me that they have about three months left before they have to shut shop. That will mean that many thousands of meals that are currently delivered throughout the community can no longer be delivered.

Over the last financial year, they provided 18 631 meals across that community and went to a number of areas: Central Highlands, Southern Midlands, right through Brighton municipality. Those meals are going to people who are unable to access affordable nutritious food from other sources. Some of the clients provided with meals through this program are older single people living alone, often living in remote locations, and they rely on the social aspects of the volunteers visiting them. In many instances, those clients provided with food through the program are also then identified as requiring further support and given that support, which otherwise might have been overlooked.

The story of Lyn needs to be shared. She tells of the experience she has had accessing Waterbridge Food Co-Op:

An extended time with health issues and unemployment called for some creative budgeting on my behalf for the survival of my mortgage and myself. My mortgage, the rates and insurance take more than 60 per cent of my income. This meant that other consumables had to be reduced. My power bill currently averages less than \$100 a quarter. This is achieved by being cold and not using the oven. Water charges are divided by eight so I say an occasional prayer that my neighbours are also waterwise. My current usage was 160, so they are looking after me too. The prepared meals from Waterbridge are an essential part of my budget survival. The serves are generous and can make two meals with some extra frozen vegies.

I am aware that the Government is working with Waterbridge. The minister's staff met this week and I know the minister has been invited to visit them. I encourage him to do that. They need more funding. They support thousands of people in our community who would otherwise go hungry. I urge the Government to allocate funding for Waterbridge Co-Op so that they can survive.

The House adjourned at 7 p.m.