



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 23 September 2025

REVISED EDITION

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Tuesday 23 September 2025

The President, **Mr Farrell**, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS

The following answer to a question on notice was given.

No. 11 - Unlawful Retention of Human Remains

Ms WEBB question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY

In relation to the Coronial Project currently underway into the autopsy specimens retained by the R. A. Rodda Museum of Pathology at the University of Tasmania, and noting the independence of the Coroner's Office as established under the *Coroners Act 1995* to report, investigate and hold inquests into deaths, fire and explosions, can the government please:

- (1) Clarify the scope of the Current Coronial Project inquiry including whether the Project is investigating the deaths of those individuals from whom the autopsy samples were contained in the Museum of Pathology collection, or the autopsies of those individuals, and any other matters regarding the circumstances surrounding the Museum of Pathology's collection;
- (2) Confirm whether there has been any request for additional resourcing, or any other form of assistance, from the Coroner's Office to assist with matters associated with the Coronial Project including community consultation, and if so, please detail the request and any government response provided;
- (3) Clarify whether, on the conclusion of the Coronial Project, family members who wish to do so will be consulted on the eventual disposal or repatriation of their family member's remains; and
- (4) Detail whether the government has received updates from the Coroner's Office on the progress of the Coronial Project, including but not limited to, the expected completion date.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the honourable member for the question.

The Magistrates Court of Tasmania, including the Coroner's Court, is an independent statutory authority.

From the outset, I note that the coroner's investigation was complex; a significant period has elapsed since the autopsy specimens were retained, and that different legislation was in operation at the time of the deaths.

Coroner Cooper handed down his findings on 8 September 2025, which were published on the Magistrates Court website on 11 September 2025.

- The Coroner confirmed that between the 1950s and early 1990s, 177 specimens of human remains were retained without lawful authority or consent.
- With respect to additional resourcing, in 2023, an additional Senior Administration Officer position was approved for six months to undertake duties specifically related to the Museum Cases Project. This position was filled from 2 August 2023 to 1 February 2024, and was extended to 1 June 2024.
- In February 2025, the Coronial Division and the Department of Justice established and offered access to appropriate professional support through Converge International, a leading provider of mental health and wellbeing support and the Department of Justice's Employee Assistance Program provider, to family members impacted by the project. Family members can access support at any stage and utilise several free appointments with a qualified clinical professional.
- Of the 177 retained specimens, approximately 100 have been identified and either returned to families or respectfully disposed of in accordance with their wishes and legislative requirements.
- 'Disposal' of human remains, within the meaning of the *Coroners Act*, means things such as cremation, burial (including burial at sea), or placing remains in a mausoleum or similar. While the Coroner authorises the 'disposal' of human remains, the Coroner does not have any role in determining the manner of disposal.
- The existing practice, according to the court publication 'The Coroners Court - A Guide for Families and Friends', is for the senior next of kin to be notified by the court once the certificate authorising release is signed.
- It is expected the senior next of kin, possibly in consultation with other family or friends, will then determine the preferred option for 'disposal'. For the sake of completeness, I note there are different provisions that apply where human remains are suspected to be remains of an Aboriginal person.
- Coroner Cooper has noted from his findings that, given current coronial and forensic procedures, it is highly unlikely that such practices will recur, and accordingly no recommendations were required.

- More information about coronial procedures, including how families are supported, is available on the court website at www.magistratescourt.tas.gov.au/coronerscourt.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, before we move on to special interest matters, I welcome guests of members who are here today for the hearing of a special interest contribution. We have guests of the honourable member for Rumney and the honourable member for Elwick, who will no doubt be more fully introduced when they come to their contributions. Our first contribution today is from the honourable member for Mersey.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

Junior Soccer - 2025 Devonport Cup

[11.19 a.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, this morning I would like to focus on all things football in my electorate of Mersey. By football, in this instance, I mean soccer.

On Saturday night I attended the Devonport City Strikers' annual presentation dinner. As patron of the club, it was wonderful to see that the Strikers won the McDonald's Women's Super League (WSL) and the Men's Under 21s for the second year running.

I was also delighted to report that the Devonport Strikers' multimillion-dollar, 700-seat grandstand redevelopment on Valley Road is complete and is in use. The outstanding new facilities include two A-League-standard change rooms, medical and physio rooms, function amenities, and a gymnasium, to name just a few improvements.

I am aware that the Valley Road redevelopment is just the start of the Strikers' bold vision to turn the facility into a state-of-the-art sporting centre capable of hosting A-League matches. Indeed, in Football Tasmania's 2025 policy proposals to government, Football Tasmania's CEO, Tony Pignata, states:

Tasmania's rising football participation demands better infrastructure. Government funding will create modern, inclusive spaces, helping more Tasmanians enjoy the game while promoting healthier, connected communities.

Football Tasmania recently celebrated its end-of-season awards night. It was great to see that the Devonport City Strikers featured in numerous awards. However, today I will focus on the Devonport Junior Soccer Association (DJSA). I am very proud to say that I am also patron of this association. The DJSA currently has 107 teams, which equates to 980 players, registered for their Saturday morning competition at Meercroft Park in Devonport. I can assure you that Saturday mornings at Meercroft are indeed a sight to behold.

The DJSA also runs an annual Devonport Cup event, which this year was held 6 to 8 June. The event caters for boys and girls aged from under 9 to under 16. It was the first tournament

of the year for the junior associations and club teams. The event is very inclusive, as teams whose players are registered with Football Australia are eligible to participate with their club, association, or school. This prestigious event brings together junior soccer players and their coaches from across the state to showcase their development and highlight emerging talent. The focus of the event is teamwork, fair play, fun, and development.

This year's Devonport Cup featured more than 1800 players from across the state. That is 138 teams, including 30 all-female teams, competing in 308 games across five venues: Meercroft Park, Valley Road, Byard Park, Devonport Oval and Girdlestone Park. It attracted over 6000 visitors to the city of Devonport. What an enormous benefit for the local tourism, hospitality, and small-business sectors. It was also truly wonderful to see such a large number of young players hitting the field and showcasing their sportsmanship and love of the game. As you'll be well aware, the organisation and staging of an event of this magnitude takes considerable planning, coordination, and teamwork. I am delighted to say this event demonstrated outstanding community spirit, with cross-code collaboration from the East Devonport Football Club and the Mersey Colts Cricket Club, as well as the vital support from the Rotary Club of Devonport North and Devonport City Council.

I congratulate the DJSA committee, their volunteers and the subcommittee for their tireless effort and commitment in staging such a significant event. I also acknowledge and thank all the referees, administration staff and the hardworking volunteers who set up the pitches and amenities each morning and who took them down after all others had left.

As we were all aware, without these dedicated volunteers, events such as this would not be possible. Thank you also to the businesses, organisations, groups and individuals who provided sponsorship for this year's cup. Each and every donation plays an integral role in making this a sporting event that all community members can be proud of. Similarly, I recognise the vital and important role that Football Tasmania plays in supporting and engaging our youth, growing participation across all areas of the game and assisting regional clubs to be sustainable into the future.

From the feedback I have received, I would suggest to Football Tasmania that an area of improvement might be the public acknowledgement of those junior and youth associations that work tirelessly to provide statewide tournament opportunities. I am proud to say that the Devonport Cup not only highlighted the strength and growth of junior sport in our region and the rest of the state, but also provides significant economic and social boost for the greater Devonport area. Indeed, I again look forward to supporting our future soccer stars at the 2026 Devonport Cup. Thank you.

Ashgrove Cheese Factory

[11.23 a.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I would be surprised if there is anybody here today, including our guests in the Chamber, who hasn't driven past or visited the Ashgrove milk and cheese factory located at Elizabeth Town, in the heart of the dairying and cropping region in northern Tasmania. That is my patch. The factory is now known as Ashgrove Dairy Door, with its iconic painted dairy cows grazing in the front paddock. Aren't they a picture? They look fabulous. I'd love one at my place.

Ms Lovell - If one goes missing, we'll know where it's gone.

Ms RATTRAY - I promise I haven't got one.

Ms Forrest - That's why the potholes are there: to slow you down, so you can have a good look.

Ms RATTRAY - That's exactly right. We can talk about that a bit later. Several generations of the Bennett family have been farming the land surrounding the milk and cheese factory since the 1880s. In 1993, brothers Michael and John and their families built the Ashgrove Cheese factory near the rotary dairy. The first vat of cheese was produced on 29 November 1993. From an initial small factory, the factory has grown in size over the years. The factory store, which opened in April 1994, has enabled customers and tourists to learn how the cheese is made. This store has been upgraded and now is an impressive visitor centre that continues to share with visitors the process of cheesemaking, with an opportunity to taste and be educated on how to make delicious cheeses and possibly how to eat them.

Ashgrove marketing manager Anne Bennett was recently asked what makes Ashgrove so special. The answer was: the people and the cows. Not surprising. This was supported by master cheesemaker Angel Williams, who has worked in the industry since 2015. She added, 'If you look after the cheese, it will look after you.' Ms Williams also said there is always room for improvement and can always be better, but in her view, and in the view of loads of Ashgrove product-buying customers, it's difficult to see how these award-winning products can get any better.

Ashgrove continues to be recognised for its cheese, milk, butter and cream ranges. In 2012 Ashgrove Farm milk won several awards including Best Farm Light Milk at the Dairy Industry Association of Australia awards, and in 2015 Ashgrove traditional butter won the prestigious Sydney Royal Show Champion Butter, as well as gold medals for farmhouse butter, unsalted butter - we often cook with that - and herb and garlic butter. In 2016, Ashgrove Farm non-homogenised milk and traditional cloth-aged cheddar were both awarded national gold at the Dairy Industry Association of Australia awards.

In 2017, John Bennett AM was awarded the ABC Rural Kondinin Group Australian Farming Legend of the Year in recognition for his work. Recently, in early June, at the 2025 national Dairy Industry Australia Awards, Ashgrove Cheese was awarded 20 medals, of which eight were gold and 12 were silver; the other products that won gold must have been exceptional.

The next time anyone is passing Ashgrove, take a minute to reflect on the enormous contribution the Bennett family has made to the dairy industry, to their community and our state, producing and marketing high-quality and high-value products. I again extend my congratulations, and I'm sure the congratulations of others, to the Ashgrove team on their continued success.

Dementia Action Week 2025

[11.28 a.m.]

Ms THOMAS (Elwick) - Mr President, I rise today to mark an important occasion: Dementia Action Week 2025, which took place last week from 15 to 21 September. Dementia week is a time to raise awareness, foster understanding and celebrate the resilience of those affected by dementia, their families, friends and carers.

In 2023, dementia was the leading cause of death in Australia, accounting for almost 17,400 deaths, and was the leading cause of death for women and the second leading cause for men after coronary heart disease. In 2024, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimated that there are 425,000 people living with dementia in Australia. However, with an ageing and growing population, it is predicted the number of Australians with dementia will increase to over 1 million by 2065.

Sadly, despite the range of factors known to contribute to the risk of developing dementia, studies show that Australians generally know little about it. Dementia Action Week is a unique opportunity to create awareness and battle the stigma that surrounds dementia. Dementia Australia is working hard to engage with state and federal governments to launch a national conversation about the risk factors associated with dementia. In July 2024, the latest Lancet Commission report, *Dementia prevention, intervention, and care*, identified 14 modifiable risk factors that can significantly reduce the risk of developing dementia. If these factors are implemented across one's lifespan, it could see global cases of dementia halted or delayed by up to 45 per cent. However, it is vital there is increased awareness about these risk factors through preventative public health promotion and further investment in research. It's never too late to start reducing your risk of dementia.

This year's theme for Dementia Action Week was 'Nobody can do it alone', highlighting the role each of us plays in creating a dementia-friendly society. Dementia is a condition that touches many lives in our community, often in quiet and unseen ways. It challenges not only those diagnosed, but also their loved ones who provide daily support and care. It is during Dementia Action Week that we are reminded of the strength and compassion that underpin these relationships and the vital importance of community support.

In the City of Glenorchy, there is a shining example of such support: the Friendship Hub. This remarkable initiative provides a welcoming space for people living with dementia to connect, engage and find friendship and belonging. The Friendship Hub offers more than just activities. It offers dignity, respect and a sense of purpose for many who might otherwise face isolation. The Friendship Hub was founded by a wonderful community advocate, who joins us here: Ms Lil Mirtl. I'm very happy to welcome Lil to the Chamber today. Thank you for being here, Lil.

Launched with the vision of creating a safe, accessible and inclusive space, the Friendship Hub invites seniors to come together to share stories, learn from each other and form lasting friendships. Whether over a cup of coffee, a board game, or a craft session, the hub offers meaningful moments and a sense of belonging for all who attend, including those living with dementia and their carers.

Lil's contributions to our community have been nothing short of extraordinary. Through her tireless volunteer work, kindness and leadership, she has enriched the lives of countless

people in Glenorchy and beyond. In recognition of this, Lil was recently honoured as joint 2025 Glenorchy Senior Citizen of the Year. She brings a wealth of experience to her community work. Lil is a former educator who specialised in supporting young students with a disability. She dedicated her career to nurturing inclusion, understanding and personalised learning. Lil's lifelong commitment to advocacy and care has naturally extended to her work with seniors, especially those navigating the challenges of dementia.

The Friendship Hub meets twice a week in Glenorchy. Lil has given our senior citizens not just a place to gather, but a place to thrive. Her care, passion and advocacy are making a lasting impact. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you, Lil, for all that you do. Fully community-funded, the Friendship Hub relies on the generosity of individuals and local supporters. Donations help cover the costs of running the hub and allow the team to continue focusing on the health, happiness and wellbeing of all seniors in the Glenorchy area. Lil's vision is to see the Friendship Hub expanded into other locations, but of course this requires like-minded community members who can join in and take the time to actively engage in coordinating such a group.

May I take this opportunity to extend an invitation to any members in this place or anyone listening online who may like to become volunteers or just participate in the weekly sessions. If you have a good listening ear and a few hours to chat, play cards or just connect, Lil would love to hear from you. You could also do a crossword, which I did when I visited last week. Duncan came with me and had a game of chess.

Lil Mirtl embodies the spirit of service and community that we value in our community so deeply. Lil's recognition as Senior Citizen of the Year is well deserved, and it reminds us all of the power of commitment, compassion and active participation in making our community stronger. As we acknowledge Dementia Action Week, I encourage all members of this parliament and the wider community to support initiatives like the Friendship Hub, to acknowledge the challenges faced by people living with dementia and to celebrate the achievements of community champions like Lil. Together, we can build a more inclusive, understanding and caring society for people of all ages and stages of life.

I will close by noting the National Dementia Helpline number, which is 1800 100 500. It offers emotional support and guidance 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Breast Cancer Screening Mobile Services

[11.35 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, to continue a bit of a health theme, breast screening is one of the simplest and most effective steps we can take to protect women's health in Tasmania. It saves lives, it supports families, and it strengthens communities.

Today I wish to bring to members' attention a matter that touches so many lives in Tasmania. That is breast cancer screening and, in particular, the vital role of the mobile breast screening buses - or currently, bus - that travel across the state to provide critical screening services to those residing in rural and remote areas.

We know that breast cancer is the most common cancer affecting women in Australia. The good news is the survival rates are steadily improving, and one of the biggest reasons for

this is early detection. Screening saves lives. A mammogram, which is simply a low-dose X-ray of the breast, can pick up cancers too small to feel, sometimes as small as a grain of rice. Detecting cancer this early gives women and their doctors the best chance at successful treatment and recovery.

Research shows that breast cancers detected through Australia's national breast screen program carry a 54 to 63 per cent lower risk of causing death compared with cancers diagnosed in women who had never been screened. That is a remarkable difference.

BreastScreen Tasmania offers free screening mammograms every two years. The target group for women is aged between 50 and 74 because the evidence of benefit is strongest in this age group. What's really important to remember is that women over 40, and even those over 75, can still access free screening, if they wish. They just need to book an appointment and ideally have a chat with their GP about whether screening is right for them.

I want to pause here to share a story. Earlier this year, a constituent of mine received her screening invitation when she was 74 - the upper end of the invitation age. If she'd been just a few months older, she wouldn't have automatically received that letter. Her mammogram picked up something that hadn't been there before. She went to Hobart for further tests, and it turned out to be cancer. Thankfully it was caught early, and after surgery in Launceston, no further treatment was needed. She believes screening saved her life. Her experience highlights just how important it is that women over 75 know they are still eligible, and how critical it is that awareness extends beyond the official reminder letters that are limited to within that 50-74 age group.

This brings me to the mobile breast screening service - the 'breast buses'. For more than 30 years, BreastScreen Tasmania has been serving women across the state. For much of that time the mobile buses have been the backbone of the program in rural and regional areas. These buses bring high-quality breast screening technology into the communities, making it possible for women to get checked, without travelling long distances to Hobart or Launceston.

Until recently, I'm sure all members are aware, there were two buses: *Ida* and *Luna*. Together they would visit around 30 regional and rural towns each year. Between them they would screen about 13,000 women annually. Over a third of all women screened in Tasmania across the whole program, around 35,000, received a mammogram each year. Across Tasmania, about one in 20 women, roughly 5 per cent, were called back for further tests after their mammogram and most of these women will thankfully not have cancer.

About 90 per cent of women who were diagnosed with breast cancer do not have family history of the disease. That means screening is important for every woman, not just those who think they may be in a high-risk category.

Screening appointments are free, take less than half an hour and are performed by specially trained radiographers. The radiation dose is extremely low, interestingly similar to what you would get naturally from the environment over 18 weeks. While mammograms are not perfect and no test is, the benefits of finding cancer early far outweigh the small risks involved.

Recently, the service has faced challenges. In April this year, *Luna* suffered serious water damage and, at over 30 years old, the cost of repairing it was too high. *Luna* was retired. This

left *Ida* as the only mobile bus in operation. For communities in southern and eastern Tasmania this has meant cancelled visits and long waits.

Whilst planning is underway for a replacement bus, the process has been delayed with an earlier tender withdrawn. To my knowledge, no new one has been released. The Department of Health has indicated a new bus is unlikely to be ready before summer in 2026. In the meantime, *Ida* continues to travel around the whole state, providing this life-saving service to as many communities as possible.

For women in rural Tasmania, access can be the difference between being screened and not being screened. Taking time off work, arranging transport and travelling several hours to a major centre can be daunting and, for many, it is simply not practical. The bus removes these barriers. It brings screening to women where they live, making it easier, more comfortable and much more likely they will participate.

Over 30 years, more than 755,000 screens have been performed and many lives saved by cancers caught early. The importance of the mobile buses is clear. Without them, thousands of women each year would face major barriers to screening.

We need, however, to keep spreading the message. For a woman over 40, you can access breast screening. If you're between 50 and 74, you'll be invited back every two years, but you don't need to wait for the letter; you can book anytime. If you're over 75, you can still have free mammograms, you just won't get the reminder.

Women should talk to their GP and make a screening appointment. We should encourage all the women in our lives to do so.

Women's Health Education Network Miscarriage Project

[11.41 a.m.]

Ms LOVELL (Rumney) - Mr President, before my own special interest contribution, I will add to the member for Mersey's contribution this morning. I was one of the families who came to Devonport for the Devonport Cup. I had two small boys with me. It was a beautifully organised tournament. The real boost for Devonport would have been in the retail sector, particularly those shops that sold umbrellas and raincoats - after the weather we had on day one.

I will start by acknowledging Peta Titter, who's the CEO and founder of the Women's Health Education Network, and Marco van der Heide, who is Secretary, Public Officer, Director and co-founder. They have joined us in the Chamber today.

I note that I will be speaking about pregnancy loss, specifically miscarriage. I acknowledge this can be a difficult topic for many. I encourage people to take whatever steps they need to keep themselves safe. If anyone finds this too difficult to listen to, my contribution will only be about five or six minutes. Then we will be on to other topics.

I wanted to share with members the work of the Women's Health Education Network, otherwise known as WHEN, because this organisation really flies under the radar but punches

above its weight when it comes to service delivery and support for women in the community. Excuse the overuse of idioms in that paragraph.

WHEN is a women's health organisation working to educate all women across Australia to give them the power to make decisions to live and age well through exercise and movement. It is evidence-based, and the team is made-up of health professionals with backgrounds such as nursing, continence education, clinical psychology and general practice.

WHEN is an entirely volunteer-run organisation, and with the exception of one very small and very specific allocation of project funding, WHEN receives no additional funding for women's health. It is well known that Tasmania has relatively low literacy levels, and that is even more true when it comes to health literacy. That is the focus of WHEN: to educate and empower women to make decisions that support their health and wellbeing.

I met with Peta recently, and even though this is an area I have a particular interest in, there were still things I learnt that surprised me. For example, there are guidelines for exercise in pregnancy. I knew that already, although exercise probably wasn't my main focus during my pregnancies. What I didn't know is that these guidelines have been formulated entirely around keeping the baby safe, which, of course, is important - but there was nothing in those guidelines to help women make informed choices to keep themselves safe. This is something that WHEN is working on changing.

There's so much I could talk about today, but I wanted to focus on WHEN's most recently released project: the Miscarriage Project. Miscarriage is a subject that is often still seen as something that shouldn't be talked about. This leaves many women who have experienced miscarriage feeling alone, sometimes ashamed, or like they've failed, but importantly, often without enough information to make informed decisions about their own health and wellbeing after experiencing a miscarriage.

In Australia, one in four women will experience miscarriage. I am one of those one in four. Statistics indicate that I'm far from the only person in this building to have had that experience, or to know and love someone who has. My experience was a supported one, both medically and personally - I was very fortunate in that regard. However, there was no information for me on what physical changes I might experience, and I didn't think to ask or look for that information anywhere. I suspect that if I had, I would have had difficulty finding much.

The Miscarriage Project aims to help with that. There are many amazing organisations that already provide support for the emotional impacts of pregnancy loss, but the Miscarriage Project was created to address the unanswered question of: 'Why did nobody tell me what would happen to my body after pregnancy loss?'

With evidence-based information on things like hormonal shifts, bleeding, changes to teeth, joints, breasts, hips, skin, feet and more, the Miscarriage Project aims to inform women about what they can expect to experience physically, literally from head to toe - something many women have told WHEN they wish they had known. After all, when you are experiencing physical changes, and either haven't been told about them or can't find any information when you go looking, this sends a clear message that what you're experiencing is either not normal or not important.

The Miscarriage Project is a web-based resource and incorporates the experiences of many women, including Olympian Jana Pittman, as well as academic insight and the clinical experience of health professionals. I have shared with members in the Chamber today a flyer with a QR code that links to the Miscarriage Project. I hope that you will all find space in your electorate offices to make this available for constituents.

I also encourage members to engage with WHEN and with Peta to learn more about their work and advocate for the awareness of, and funding for, this innovative and important organisation. Thank you to Peta and Marco, to your board, and to all of the health professionals and others who help shape your organisation and support the work of the Women's Health Education Network.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

[11.47 a.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the sitting be suspended until the ringing of the division bells.

This is for the purpose of a ballot.

Sitting suspended from 11.48 a.m. to 12.20 p.m.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, before calling on orders of the day, I welcome with pleasure Noah Johnston. I must remember the 'S', because I know Johnstons and Johnsons get very fussy about that, and rightly so. Noah Johnston is a work experience student undertaking a placement in the honourable member for Nelson's electorate office. Noah is a year 10 student from St Aloysius Catholic College. I'm told that Noah is keen to learn how parliament works and about the work of the members of the Legislative Council, what we are up to and how we go about serving our electorates. It's great to see young people with a good solid interest in the parliament. I know that the honourable member for Nelson will show you everything and keep you very well occupied. I know that all other members of the Legislative Council will make you feel very welcome and thank you for doing work experience for a Legislative Council member.

Members - Hear, hear.

MOTIONS

Committee Membership

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) (by leave) - Mr President, I will add my welcome to Noah. I hope you enjoy your time with the honourable member for Nelson and learn lots.

Committee of Privileges

Ms RATTRAY - Mr President, I move -

That Mr Farrell as President, Ms Forrest as the Chair of Committees, Ms Armitage, Mr Gaffney and the mover be appointed as the Committee of Privileges of this Council to inquire into and report upon complaints of breach of privilege which may be referred to it by the Council.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Orders Committee

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That the President, the Chair of Committees, Ms Armitage, Ms Thomas and the mover be appointed as the Standing Orders Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Subordinate Legislation Committee

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That Ms Forrest, Mr Harriss, Mr Hiscutt and the mover be appointed to serve on the Subordinate Legislation Committee in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the *Subordinate Legislation Committee Act 1969*.

Motion agreed to.

Joint Standing Committee on Integrity

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That Ms Armitage, Ms O'Connor and Ms Webb be appointed to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity in accordance with Section 23 of the *Integrity Commission Act 2009*.

Motion agreed to.

Joint House Committee

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, I move -

That the President, Ms Forrest, and the mover be appointed to serve on the
Joint House Committee of this parliament.

Motion agreed to.

Joint Sessional Committee on the Parliamentary Library

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, I move -

That Ms Armitage, Mr Farrell, Ms Forrest, Mr Gaffney, Mr Hiscutt and the
Mover be appointed to serve on the Joint Committee of both Houses to
manage the Parliamentary Library.

Motion agreed to.

Public Works Committee

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, I move -

That Mr Harriss and the mover be appointed to serve on the Public Works
Committee in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the *Public
Works Committee Act 1914*.

Motion agreed to.

Public Accounts Committee

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, I move -

That Mr Edmunds, Ms Forrest and Ms Thomas be appointed to serve on the
Public Accounts Committee in accordance with the provisions of Section 2
of the *Public Accounts Committee Act 1970*.

Motion agreed to.

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, I move -

That a message be transmitted to the House of Assembly acquainting that House of the appointment of honourable members to those respective joint committees of both Houses of parliament.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Sessional Orders - Government Administration Committees

Ms FORREST (Murchison) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the Sessional Orders governing the operation of two Government Administration Sessional Committees A and B, which were in place in the last session of the 51st Parliament, be approved again for this session.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Government Administration Committees - Re-Establishment

Ms FORREST (Murchison) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council agree to the re-establishment of two government administration sessional committees in the following terms:

1. Sessional Committee A on Government Administration
 - 1.1 The Sessional Committee A on Government Administration is re-established.
 - 1.2 The committee consists of not less than five members.
 - 1.3 The functions of the Committee are to inquire into and report upon any matters relating to -
 - (a) Any bill or other matter referred to it by the Council;
 - (b) The administration, processes, practices and conduct of any department, agency, government business enterprise, state-owned company, or other entity for which the following ministers are responsible:
 - (1) Treasurer;
 - (2) Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal;
 - (3) Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing;
 - (4) Minister for Ageing;
 - (5) Minister for Aboriginal Affairs;
 - (6) Minister for Energy and Renewables;

- (7) Minister for Parks;
- (8) Minister for Sport;
- (9) Minister for Environment;
- (10) Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy;
- (11) Minister for Community and Multicultural Affairs;
- (12) Minister for Arts and Heritage;
- (13) Minister of Infrastructure and Transport;
- (14) Minister for Local Government; and
- (15) Minister for Housing and Planning.

- (c) The administration, processes, practices and conduct of any other entity, including those in which the local government has an interest.

1.4 And that Mr Harris, Ms Lovell, Ms O'Connor, Ms Thomas and the mover be appointed to serve on the said committee.

2. Sessional Committee B on Government Administration

2.1 The Sessional Committee B on Government Administration is re-established.

2.2 The committee consists of not less than five members.

2.3 The functions of the committee are to inquire into and report on any matter relating to:

- (a) Any bill or other matter referred to it by the Council.
- (b) The administration, processes, practices and conduct of any department, agency, government business enterprise, state-owned company, or other entity for which the following ministers are responsible:

- (1) Premier;
- (2) Deputy Premier;
- (3) Attorney-General;
- (4) Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation;
- (5) Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs;
- (6) Minister for Business, Industry and Resources;
- (7) Minister for Skills and Jobs;
- (8) Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management;
- (9) Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events;
- (10) Minister for Racing;
- (11) Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence;
- (12) Minister for Education;

- (13) Minister for Children and Youth;
- (14) Minister for Disability Services;
- (15) Minister for Primary Industries and Water;
and
- (16) Minister for Veterans Affairs.

- (c) The administration, processes, practices and conduct of any other entity, including those entities in which local government has an interest.

2.4 And that Ms Armitage, Mr Edmunds, Mr Gaffney, Mr Hiscutt, and Ms Webb be appointed to serve on the said committee.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Ministers from Legislative Council to Attend House of Assembly Question Time

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That leave be granted to Members of the Legislative Council who are Ministers of the Crown to attend the House of Assembly if they think fit so as to respond specifically to Questions without Notice seeking information of the kind covered by the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly.

Obviously this is a previous arrangement that was in place.

[12.30 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I want to make sure that the Leader for the Government was ad-libbing about if the ministers 'think fit' because this is not about whether the ministers think it fit to attend House of Assembly Question Time. This would be an agreement that they do.

Mr PRESIDENT - This is a point of clarification. I did call that the motion be agreed to, but there was a point of clarification raised by the member for Hobart that the Leader will now answer. If there are other speakers after that, we will call them.

Ms O'Connor - You asked a question - 'the question is' - and I stood and asked a question.

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

Ms THOMAS (Elwick) - Mr President, I, too, would like some clarification in response to the member for Hobart's question. I'm sure the Leader will answer that question in summing up, in response.

My point in rising today is that whilst I am happy to support this motion, it has come to my mind that we don't have the same in return. We don't have the other ministers come to our

House in our Question Time at 2.30 p.m. Whilst I don't intend to move an amendment, or make a song and dance about it today, it's just a question that's been raised in my mind about fairness and comity between the Houses, which we've discussed quite a bit lately. Why it's the case that it's one way and not the other. It might be something for the Leader to take notice of and for further discussion about - if other members are interested in knowing down the track.

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, this motion is similar to motions that have come before the House on a number of occasions. I take the member for Elwick's point that this House is quite capable of holding our ministers to account. We do it during our Question Time, albeit it's not as long as the Question Time downstairs, but there's not as many members up here. I think we can do that in a thorough and rigorous way, and we do.

I'm not sure we need to agree to this. I think we're quite capable of scrutinising our own ministers. That said - and I do take the member for Elwick's point - if we are not deemed fit by the place to adequately hold these ministers to account, that's a bit of an insult. Likewise, why would we not expect the ministers to come up here to our Question Time and sit on that red couch there and answer questions from us? We have to go through the Leader. We have to wait. We often don't get the answers in a timely fashion - through no fault of the Leader's office. These systems don't work that well.

The other point that's not mentioned in the wording of the member's motion, and she did seem to put extra words in, is in relation to the clarification sought by the member for Hobart - but it doesn't state that they will not attend Question Time other than when we are not sitting.

I also take umbrage with the fact that - and we've had this with the former minister for Disability, she's still the minister for Disability - when she was bringing in the disability bill, she was still expected to attend Question Time downstairs when we were needing briefings on that bill, which was a bill directly being introduced in this place. The 'when the minister sees fit' could fit into that, no two ways about it, but the members are members of this place. The three ministers are members of this place first, and their obligation is to this place first.

I have a strong view that we are quite capable of holding them to account, and we don't necessarily need to approve this motion. That said, I will listen to other contributions, and to a response from the Leader about the need for real clarity around this.

Mr PRESIDENT - You've already spoken.

Ms O'Connor - I asked a question for clarification and then it wasn't answered. I asked it from my seat.

Mr PRESIDENT - Yes, but then we decided that it was a question when I said it was a point of clarification.

Ms O'Connor - Right, so I can't -

Ms Webb - Speak on the question put to us.

Ms O'Connor - Is that right?

Mr PRESIDENT - Well, because we called it. I did ask whether it was a point of clarification, but you said you'd spoken, so we moved around to other members.

Ms O'Connor - There are very problematic responses to this motion in here. Ministers of the Crown are paid a quarter-of-a-million dollars, you know. It was the Premier's decision to make ministers in the Legislative Council, and they need to be answerable in the Assembly, which is the House of government. We're the House of review.

[12.36 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, this is something we will no doubt discuss elsewhere in more detail. It's not necessarily seemly to be discussing it on the Floor in too much detail right now. I am also interested to hear the clarification about the wording of 'when they see fit' - the minister 'sees fit'.

Without going into too much detail on some of the other matters, I believe ministers should present to the lower House to be scrutinised. The fact that they are called on by this motion to do so outside of our sitting time typically doesn't interrupt their responsibilities here. That's designed to be that way, even though, as the member for Murchison pointed out, sometimes it does interrupt briefings. That potentially could be worked around if briefings were not left until the very last minute. There are workarounds for that.

Our scrutiny of ministers in this place does not substitute for lower House scrutiny of ministers - it's as simple as that. It's no comment on our effectiveness in holding ministers to account here through questions and scrutiny. It's simply that parliament is made up of two Chambers and they should both have the opportunity to scrutinise. Having said that, it's an interesting question that we'll discuss elsewhere about ministers presenting here. I don't believe that's a good idea, and I'm happy to discuss that in detail at another stage. I don't believe it's according to our parliamentary arrangements, and we couldn't do it as readily outside of the responsibilities of the other place.

On that, let's find a mechanism to discuss this in more detail outside of sitting time. I'm very interested to hear the explanation from the Leader about the clarification over wording.

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I believe the arrangement we have is a pragmatic one. We have ministers up here who need to be able to ask questions in the lower House. Ten o'clock we don't sit; we sit at 11 o'clock. It makes sense to me to send them down there to have that scrutiny. I don't have any issue with that. I believe if we have some issues with the wider thing, that's something we should do in-house and discuss it, not here on the Floor.

I will be supportive of the ministers from this place going downstairs at 10 o'clock to be scrutinised, to be asked questions and then returning to this place at 11 o'clock. It just makes sense.

Mr PRESIDENT - Before I call the Leader, I remind members of the motion, which was that leave be granted to members of the Legislative Council who are ministers of the Crown to attend the House of Assembly, if they think fit, so as to respond specifically to Questions without Notice seeking information of the kind covered by the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly.

That's the words of the motion. I call the Leader to explain the questions raised by members.

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I thank you and -

Ms O'Connor - There are two different sets of words floating around, Mr President. The Resolution that we have on the Order of Business for today does not have the words 'if they think fit'. When we got the Resolution from the House, they didn't put the words 'think fit' in there. There was no escape hatch.

Mr PRESIDENT - The reason for that is they have requested that we send the members down. We have structured the motion as we see fit to send the members down. That's why the wording is different: this is our motion whereas that's the Resolution from the House of Assembly. They've asked the question and we've responded with the motion that we have before us.

Ms O'Connor - That the Council 'sees fit', or the ministers themselves?

Mr PRESIDENT - It's effectively putting our conditions on to what they have asked.

Ms Webb - It's not as the Chamber 'sees fit'. It's as the ministers 'see fit'.

Ms O'Connor - No, you don't get that choice.

Mr Duigan - That's how it's been. That was the last one, I remember.

Ms O'Connor - Was it? Are you sure about that?

Mr Duigan - Yes, I am.

Mr PRESIDENT - Yes, this is the way it's been since the time of Dr Goodwin, when she was going down. This is the same motion that we have constructed for the last few sessions of parliament. There's nothing changed here to the motions we've moved in the past. That's why it's different, because it shows that the members are members of the Legislative Council.

Ms RATTRAY - I concur with the President's response to that.

Ms O'Connor - So you should.

Mr PRESIDENT - Order.

Ms RATTRAY - Obviously that's the response that this House provides back to the request from the other place and yes, that's what has been advised that it is how I present the motion.

At the end of the day, this is the Legislative Council and it's about the exclusive cognisance of the two Houses that members owe a duty to the Legislative Council first and foremost. If we were to meet at 10 a.m., then our members wouldn't go if they were ministers.

It's just taking all obligations to the Legislative Council first and foremost. It allows the minister to decide.

Ms O'Connor - No, the minister can't be allowed to decide. Some ministers might not just feel like it; then Westminster accountability falls over downstairs.

Ms RATTRAY - It's highly unlikely that's going to occur, member. The ministers take up these positions and know their obligations. I wouldn't expect that it would ever be the case. If these are the words that we've used since Dr Goodwin went down to Question Time quite some time ago, since 2014 actually, over 10 years this has certainly been the way it is.

I thank the President for his contribution.

Motion agreed to.

Ms RATTRAY - Mr President, I move -

That a message be transmitted to the House of Assembly acquainting that House of the appointment of members of those respective joint committees of both Houses of Parliament.

Motion agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms Forrest, Member for Murchison

[12.44 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I want to make a point of personal explanation or a question before we move on to the subsequent motions that are before us. If the wording that will be presented to this Chamber is different from what's on the Order of Business, as is the case with that one, I ask that the wording of the motions be circulated to all members, so we know what we're actually agreeing to, ahead of being called upon to speak or vote on a particular motion.

Mr PRESIDENT - I appreciate that. I understand the confusion it has caused.

Ms Forrest - The question is, are they the same? The ones that are coming up.

Ms O'Connor - All we can go by is the Order of Business and then the wording is different.

Mr PRESIDENT - I will discuss that in the break, but yes, I understand the confusion it's caused.

MOTION

Joint Workplace Culture Oversight Committee - Re-Establishment

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That:

- (1) The Resolution of the House of Assembly be agreed to with the following Amendments:
In paragraph (2):
 - (a) *leave out* "submissions and related correspondence" and *insert instead* "evidence"; and
 - (b) *leave out* "Fiftieth and"
- (2) The Members to serve on the part of the Council be:
Mr Farrell;
Ms Forrest;
Ms Lovell; and
Ms Ratray.
- (3) Thursday, 25 September 2025 at 1.15 o'clock p.m. be the time, and Committee Room 1 be the place, for holding the first meeting of the said Committee.

[12.46 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, this highlights it again, and I reiterate the member for Murchison's request that we have circulated to us the wordings of the motions that will be put to us, because there's an adjustment here. Just to flag with everyone, there will be adjustments on the Electoral Matters Committee as well, which you won't have seen.

The question I have on this one relates to the part that was to be changed in paragraph (2) of the motion. To clarify, I think we are deleting 'all submissions and related correspondence' and having it say 'all evidence'. I think that was correct.

I am concerned because 'correspondence' is distinct from 'evidence'. I understand we might substitute the word 'submissions' for 'evidence' and it would incorporate hearings as well, but surely 'correspondence and papers' should still be there. I'm not sure if we've excised that or not. I'm looking for clarification just to repeat what that change was and whether it actually should retain 'correspondence' if, in fact, we've excised it.

[12.47 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I appreciate the member for Nelson's query and hence the desire to have the rest of the motions to be presented to this House prepared in full for their circulation.

I don't know if I can fill in 15 minutes here, but I'll give it a shot.

There are a couple of things in relation to the questions that the member for Nelson asked. This committee hasn't held hearings and has no intention of doing so. It's been operating through consultation and communication with members. It has considered evidence that is received by the committee, whether it's by form of correspondence or whether it's information that's put out. Members would be aware of being consulted on the draft code of conduct and the alcohol policy, for example, things like that. That's all evidence before the committee. The implementation tracker that's on the committee website has a lot of information there. Most of it's already public. Hopefully that allays the member for Nelson's concern about that. It's not a committee that holds hearings. It's a committee to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in the *Motion for Respect* report.

Ms Webb - No, it was more related to correspondence. I was asking about the correspondence part.

Ms FORREST - Sorry?

Ms Webb - It's the correspondence element that I was asking about.

Ms FORREST - It's considered as evidence received by the committee.

Ms Webb - Okay. Any correspondence received.

Ms FORREST - Yes. We receive it obviously from the Motion for Respect Team, feedback. The important thing is that a lot of the communication and correspondence occurs between the Motion for Respect Team and the committee. The committee is not doing the work of the Motion for Respect Team. We were overseeing the work of that team to deliver the recommendations of the *Motion for Respect* report. I hope that's clear.

Ms Webb - I'm not unclear on the function of the committee. I was clarifying that correspondence wasn't going to be dispensed with as carrying over.

Ms FORREST - The committee only has received evidence. We haven't received submissions and the evidence we get from the Motion for Respect Team comes through that process.

The other matter - there was a change, just for members' benefit, in taking out the '50th Parliament' because we did that the last time we had an early election. We actually took in all the information from the 50th Parliament then. It's just the 51st Parliament that we need to include here. That was the other amendment that was necessary. The Clerks gave me the opportunity to review this motion that came up from the House of Assembly and, as has been identified by the member for Nelson and me, there are further amendments that will be required to some of these motions or resolutions that were sent from the House of Assembly because they didn't consult with us. None of them talked to us. None of them had any common decency to pick up the phone and have a chat with members who established these committees in the former parliament. The Energy committee came from here, the Gender and Equality Committee came from here, the Electoral Matters Committee came from here. I don't know if the member for Nelson got a phone call, but I sure as heck didn't on any of them.

It's strange and it shows a complete lack of regard for this House to today be down the stairs debating and just debated a bill to increase the numbers on the Public Accounts Committee Act with no consultation. This is not respecting the cognisance and the comity that we expect. It's completely unacceptable.

No, I don't know if any other member had any other consultation from the Premier or even his crossbench liaison team that he now has. Obviously, we don't fit into that category. I'm not sure where we fit. I imagine the box we're in is 'pesky upper House members'.

It's very disappointing that we're not having any communication. As the former chair of this joint committee on workplace culture oversight, I would have expected at least a phone call to ask, 'Do you want to review this motion to make sure it's right?' However, I didn't get anything like that. Nothing.

Ms O'Connor - You're not the chair anymore.

Ms FORREST - I didn't say I was the chair. I said as the former chair of that committee, I thought it would have been respectful. I thought it would have been respectful for the member for Nelson to get a call about the electoral matters one, to make sure that she was fine with the wording that was being proposed. I would have thought that, as the member who moved the gender and equality committee, I would have got a call about that.

But no, and so whilst I'm happy to support this motion, it's important that we re-establish the committee and get that work done. It's been delayed too many times now. The timelines have blown out. There's no way we can meet the actual timeline set and we were getting so close. The member for Rumney can concur with that, and the President himself, that we're getting really close to winding up that work and actually delivering on all of those recommendations and we'll move on once the committee is re-established.

It's just so frustrating. We've had two elections and a sad passing of our monarch during the period. I just want to make those points. Those points about the lack of consultation relate to all of these that are originating in this House. The energy one was a bit of a mess and a significant amendment, as you'll see when we do get those motions circulated. I assume that's probably happening, I hope it is, as we speak so we can have a read of them and everyone can be aware of what's actually being amended and the reason why when we debate each motion.

I just wanted to make those points. It makes it really hard for us to properly consider a motion when we don't have it in writing. We don't accept amendments that aren't in writing; these should be in writing.

I will leave it at that. I hope we can have a bit more of a collaborative approach across the parliament. I hope someone downstairs is noting this and maybe the Leader's staff can feed this back because it's not a good way to start in a new collaborative parliament that we're supposed to be in, that we seem to out on the left, right, back position, on the back flank.

Motion agreed to.

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, I move -

That a message be transmitted to the House of Assembly acquainting them accordingly.

The comments have been noted and will be passed on.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Joint Sessional Gender and Equality Committee - Re-Establishment

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That:

- (1) The Resolution of the House of Assembly be agreed to;
- (2) The Members to serve on the part of the Council be: Mr Edmunds; Ms Forrest; Mr Harriss; and Ms Thomas;
- (3) Monday 13 October 2025 at 10 a.m. be the time, and Committee Room 1 be the place, for holding the first meeting of the said Committee.

Motion agreed to.

[12.55 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That a message be transmitted to the House of Assembly acquainting them accordingly.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters - Re-Establishment

[12.56 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That:

- (1) That the Resolution of the House of Assembly be agreed to with the following amendments:

In paragraph (2):

leave out that paragraph and insert instead:

"(2) Any aspect of the administration, operation and conduct of the:

- (a) 23 March 2024 General Election of Members of the Assembly and the 2024 Legislative Council periodic elections, shall stand referred to the Committee for any inquiry the Committee may wish to make; and
- (b) 19 July 2025 General Election of Members of the Assembly and the 2025 Legislative Council periodic elections, shall stand referred to the Committee for any inquiry the Committee may wish to take"

In paragraph (5) after "be authorised to receive all" *insert* "evidence,"

- (2) The members to serve on the part of the Council be: Mr Gaffney; Ms O'Connor; Ms Thomas; and Ms Webb.
- (3) Wednesday 8 October 2025 at 12 p.m. be the time, and Committee Room 1 be the place, for holding the first meeting of the said Committee.

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I want to put on the record the reasons for those changes - the amendments to the message we received from the other place. It was to ensure that while the committee could continue with the work it was doing on reviewing the 2024 Assembly and periodic upper House elections, we would also - because that's a function of the committee - put in a review. There's an expectation there would be a review of the elections this year - the general election and the upper House elections that were held in May. That would continue on as work of that committee. That's the only change and the explanation for the change from what is on our Notice Paper.

Motion agreed to.

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That a message be sent to the House of Assembly acquainting them accordingly.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Joint Select Committee on Energy Matters - Re-Establishment

[12.58 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

- (1) That the Resolution of the House of Assembly be agreed to with the following amendments:

Leave out paragraph (2) and renumber the remaining paragraphs accordingly.

In paragraph (3) (as renumbered) *leave out* "Fiftieth and".

- (2) The members to serve on the part of the Council be: Mr Edmunds; Ms Forrest; Ms O'Connor; and Ms Lovell.
- (3) Friday 26 September 2025 at 10 a.m. be the time, and Committee Room 1 be the place, for holding the first meeting of the said Committee.

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, in relation to the changes that were necessary there, in the last parliament we combined the Legislative Council inquiry in GAA with the joint committee to make the work more streamlined. That's that change. We didn't need to take that evidence into account - we've already done it. The other change was to update the reference to which parliament.

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - I don't recall, and maybe I've forgotten, nominating for this committee. I'm wondering if there's been a mix-up.

Ms Webb - Were you listed just then?

Ms O'Connor - I think I was listed. Was I?

Ms Webb - Yes, you're listed. You're named.

Ms O'Connor - I don't believe I nominated for it.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

QUESTIONS

Budget - Discussions with Ratings Agencies

Ms FORREST question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY

[2.31 p.m.]

Regarding discussions between the Treasurer, Treasury and rating agencies.

- (1) Have each of the rating agencies been informed of the plan for the interim budget? If so, on what date was each agency informed?
- (2) How many times has Treasury engaged with each rating agency since the election?
 - (a) What dates were these meetings and/or engagements?
 - (b) Who attended each of these meetings or engagements?
- (3) Has there been any form of advice from any of the rating agencies since the election? If so, what was the form of this advice?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question.

- (1) Treasury met with credit rating agencies Moody's ratings and S&P Global Ratings (S&P) on 24 June 2025 and 27 June 2025 respectively, to provide a short briefing on the *2025 Pre-Election Financial Outlook Report*. During each briefing, it was outlined that additional budget arrangements would need to be put in place following the election and prior to the end of the year. It was noted that the timing and form of the 2025-26 Budget would be a matter for the incoming government. Additionally, the Treasurer and Treasury officials met with Moody's on 22 September 2025 and are scheduled to meet with S&P on 1 October 2025. As part of these meetings, additional information is being provided regarding the 2025-26 Budget.
- (2) Treasury meets with Moody's and S&P several times per year. These meetings typically involve the secretary, relevant deputy secretaries, directors, and other staff as needed from across the department. Since the 2025 election, Treasury engagement with the ratings agencies has been at officer level to make the necessary administrative arrangements to meet with Moody's and S&P in September 2025 and October 2025 respectively.
- (3) The answer is no.

National Climate Risk Assessment - Urban Growth Boundary

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT

[2.33 p.m.]

Australia's *National Climate Risk Assessment* report 2025, which had to be squeezed out of the Albanese government, which sat on it for a year, puts down a challenge to us all in terms of climate risk. As minister for Housing and Planning, I point you to the introduction, which says:

Outer urban areas of cities stand out as watchpoints. These areas are particularly susceptible to adverse impacts because of their circumstances (location, demographics, proneness to hazards).

This includes, for example, bushfire.

Your government has a policy of extending the urban growth boundary rather than providing for more medium density in cities and towns. My first question to you is: have you asked for a briefing on the climate change risk assessment report, given it touches on all your portfolios? Second, would you please consider the advice that is given in this report when you are next briefed on plans to extend the urban growth boundary, which could put communities at risk in the future.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question. I have not been briefed on that full report yet, but I will seek some further information. If I can swing back to putting on my mayoral, part of one of those regional areas being Sorell, we were obligated by legislation to bring down flood mapping. That is done on a regular basis as subdivisions go in, so it's updated probably not annually, but every couple of years as well.

I'm well aware of the pressures on some of those points that you raised in your question. I'm happy to take a bit more advice on that. We are discussing strengthening medium and higher density in as many areas we can. I am doing a fair bit of work on that with the State Planning Office as we speak.

King Island - Electricity Tariff

Ms FORREST question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN

[2.36 p.m.]

I know that the flat-rate electricity tariff charged on King Island is 32.61 cents per kilowatt hour compared with the Tasmanian mainland peak electricity tariff of 18.75 cents per kilowatt hour and the off-peak electricity tariff being 4.03 cents per kilowatt hour. This flat-rate arrangement related to a time when almost all electricity was generated through the use of diesel generators. I acknowledge Hydro Tasmania has a community service obligation, or CSO, which I understand is a guarantee to provide electricity and maintenance to the Bass Strait islands, and cost/pricing is not part of that obligation.

My question is: with the increasing use of renewable energy on King Island and reduction in the reliance on diesel-generated electricity, will you consider reviewing the power pricing policies for King Island residents to enable them to access time-of-use tariffs to enable businesses and households on King Island to have access to similar benefits mainland Tasmanians experience, and if not, why not?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question. I take a particular interest as a landholder on Flinders Island, which has a similar CSO obligation from Hydro Tasmania as does King Island, and note the great work that Hydro Tasmania does in delivering very stable, reliable and - to some extent - increasingly renewable power to those remote and difficult locations at a price that most islanders would agree is reasonable, particularly when you would ask them about their solar feed-in tariffs, which are 1:1. If you put a solar panel on your house on King or Flinders island, you get a 1:1 feed-in tariff. That is very prospective and that's all about bringing down the amount of diesel we burn on the islands.

I note the CSO is a responsibility of the Treasurer and that aspect would sit with him to understand the pricing aspects of how that power is delivered. Hydro is a really valuable member of those communities. Hydro is the generator and the retailer in that area and does a great job, noting the feed-in tariff is extremely good.

Most often when I talk to islanders they say, 'Please don't look too hard at our energy costs.'

Supplementary Question

Ms FORREST - A supplementary question, Mr President?

Mr PRESIDENT - I will hear the supplementary question.

Ms FORREST - The statement I made at the beginning was to give context to the question. My question was: will you consider revealing the power pricing policies for King Island residents to enable them to access time-of-use tariffs?

Mr DUIGAN - Mr President, I thank the member for her question. The power prices are a matter for the Treasurer, as I understand it.

Ms Forrest - No, it's an energy tariff we're talking about. That's you.

Mr DUIGAN - Well, again, as I would say, most times I talk to islanders about their power prices they say, 'Don't look too hard.' However, if you have somebody who would like to contact my office to start that piece of work, then I would be more than happy to have a look at it.

Kingston Learning Centre - Long-Term Options

Ms WEBB question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER

[2.40 p.m.]

My question is about the long-term future of the Kingston Learning Centre at the site of the old Kingston Primary School. As you're aware, minister, the abrupt closure of two blocks and all the car parking facilities on 22 August caused a serious disruption to a range of community organisations reliant on those affordable facilities, especially U3A, whose term 3 commenced yesterday, on Monday 22 September, I believe.

Minister, in correspondence to me last week, which I appreciated it, you stated the Department for Education, Children and Young People is now exploring the possibility of reopening part of the car park while continuing to investigate long-term options for the site.

My question is: what exactly do you mean by 'investigate longer-term options'? I'm particularly interested to know, are you committed to retaining the Kingston Learning Centre at its present central site at the old Kingston Primary School or are you or your department considering alternatives for that site which would mean the Learning Centre would have to move?

Can you guarantee the necessary refurbishments of the site will occur to facilitate the Kingston Learning Centre remaining there in the long term, for current use?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for her interest in this matter. The car park was closed by Libraries Tasmania due to a recent safety incident. I'm very mindful of the impact this closure has had on some of our really valued community groups, and I do recognise the disruption that's been caused. These concerns around the disruption have to be really carefully balanced with the obvious need to ensure public safety, which has to be the highest priority.

I know that Libraries Tasmania has worked with the affected client groups, and the vast majority have been able to be accommodated in the two main buildings. As I advised you in my reply to your letter, we have been looking at available options, and a number of options have been presented, quite wide-ranging options, about what we could do there. Where we have settled is that sections of the car park will be reopened this week, allowing access for our valued community groups, while we take a little more time to explore long-term options.

A community consultation session is going to be held with the user groups regarding the reopening of the car park, to make sure that their voices are clearly heard and that they're part of that conversation. At this stage, I'm not aware of any considerations in moving the learning centre.

Ms Webb - In terms of the longer term? My question was about that longer term.

Ms PALMER - I'm not aware of that. I know that we are going to be bringing the community groups together, but the advice that I have is that that is about a long-term solution to the car park.

Glenorchy Youth Hub - Funding

Ms THOMAS question to MINISTER for CHILDREN and YOUTH, Ms PALMER

[2.43 p.m.]

Just prior to the election I met with then-minister for Children and Young People, Roger Jaensch. During this meeting I advocated for the government to provide funding towards the establishment of a youth hub in Glenorchy, as requested in Glenorchy City Council's community budget submission, and noting the allocation of \$2.3 million over three years for place-based diversionary approaches in the Youth Justice Reform Taskforce Action Plan 2024-2025.

During the 2025 state election campaign, the government announced 'continued investment into diversionary programs such as JCP Youth, the creation of a statewide Divert and Connect program and', pleasingly, 'the establishment of a new Youth Hub in Glenorchy'.

My questions are as follows:

- (1) In line with this election promise, will the government demonstrate its commitment to at-risk youth by funding the establishment of a youth hub in Glenorchy in the upcoming 2025-2026 Budget?
- (2) What funding amount will the government commit to establishing a youth hub in Glenorchy, and over what time period?
- (3) Will the government consider ongoing funding to assist with the operations of the Glenorchy Youth Hub beyond this establishment funding, or does it expect Glenorchy ratepayers to foot the bill for this important early intervention and diversion service ongoing?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the honourable member for the question.

- (1) The Tasmanian government is delivering on its commitment to targeting the root causes of youth offending and reducing the number of children and young people in the youth justice system by investing in place-based diversionary approaches.

By investing in place-based diversionary approaches, we will target the root causes of youth offending to reduce the number of children and young people in the youth justice system.

The first sites to trial these innovative local initiatives will be across Hobart's northern suburbs, with the aim of reducing the involvement of children and young people in the youth justice system and keeping our communities safe.

Engagement with Brighton and Glenorchy municipalities is ongoing to develop and implement place-based community initiatives that target the

root causes of offending in these areas. The government has invested in the Glenorchy CBD to develop and deliver place-based programs and services to operate out of the Glenorchy Youth Hub, which is under development by the Glenorchy City Council.

- (2) The Tasmanian government recognises the Glenorchy City Council's leadership in supporting young people and proposal to establish a Glenorchy Youth Hub. This government has identified a \$500,000 allocation from the Youth Justice Reform place-based funding to support the early establishment of the hub.

Engagement with Brighton and Glenorchy municipalities is ongoing to develop and implement place-based community initiatives that target the root causes of offending in these areas. Programs and services are being developed through a co-design process and will have a focus on youth justice, early intervention, prevention and diversion.

The Brighton community has been working with the support of a facilitator for the past six months to develop a variety of initiatives to support young people, which will be implemented in the community soon.

Discussions are also underway with the Glenorchy City Council regarding a co-design approach to develop the hub's services.

- (3) The implementation of the Glenorchy Youth Hub will include ongoing evaluation of its success and effectiveness to support at-risk young people to divert them from offending behaviours and ensure community safety. Therefore, the ongoing funding will be considered as part of the Tasmanian government budget processes, and the success of the Youth Hub to divert at-risk young people from the youth justice system.

Launceston General Hospital - Temperature Control

Ms ARMITAGE question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY

[2.48 p.m.]

My questions are regarding upgrades to the air-conditioning and cooling in older parts of the Launceston General Hospital buildings, including D Block. Can the honourable Leader please advise:

- (1) A media release on 4 February 2025 stated that 'the Department of Health ... is working with external engineering experts to develop a permanent solution to temperature control issues in older parts of the LGH site and will implement the recommendations once received'.
 - (a) Has an engineering firm been engaged to complete this work? If so, can you please advise which engineering firm is undertaking the work or, if not, when is a firm expected to be selected?

- (b) What stage of the solution process is the Department of Health currently at?
 - (c) Is it expected that a permanent solution will be implemented in time for the upcoming 2025-26 summer period?
 - (d) What sort of permanent solutions are being explored? Will these require significant retrofits and alterations to existing buildings and structures?
 - (e) Do you have any indication of how much a permanent solution might cost?
- (2) If a permanent solution is not expected to be in place for the upcoming summer, what heat-mitigating solutions are planned?
 - (3) What measures will be put in place specifically for healthcare staff, understanding that exhaustion and fatigue symptoms are made worse by stifling heat?
 - (4) What measures will be put in place specifically for patients, understanding that health outcomes can be significantly adversely affected by stifling heat?

ANSWER

Mr President, I acknowledge the honourable member's ongoing strong advocacy for the Launceston General Hospital in the north of the state.

In answering:

- (1) For question (1).
 - (a) An engineering firm was engaged in February 2025 to design a permanent solution to fix temperature-control issues in older parts of the Launceston General Hospital. This solution will address heating and cooling issues in the 4O maternity unit and inpatient wards on levels 3 to 6 of D Block.
 - (b) The works commenced in June to upgrade the heating and cooling system that services D Block and the 4O maternity ward at the LGH, with works on Ward 4O progressing first. Delivering these types of critical systems and upgrades within a working hospital is a highly complex task. Due to the disruptive nature of the works in patient rooms, it will be necessary to decant patients from individual wards. The upgrades have been carefully staged and sequenced to minimise disruption to clinical services and to maintain continuity of care.
 - (c) By November 2025, the commissioning of upgraded heating and cooling systems is anticipated in eight patient rooms on Ward 4O.

A further two patient rooms will be commissioned in early 2026, with the remaining 10 patient rooms completed by mid-2026. External early works have also commenced on D Block, with the relocation of Ward 3R expected to occur in October 2025, allowing internal works to commence. It's expected the first ward in D Block will be completed by early 2026, with the remainder of the wards completed throughout 2026.

- (d) The works currently underway for Ward 4O and D Block will provide a permanent solution to temperature-control issues in those areas, including in every patient room. These works require extensive construction works to upgrade rooftop plant and install ductwork and in-ceiling fan coil units to areas previously not directly serviced by heating and cooling.
 - (e) The cost of the contract for works on Ward 4O is \$3.2 million and the cost for works on D Block is \$4.4 million, which has been met from the existing LGH redevelopment budget for Stage 2.
- (2) Interim measures have already been implemented, including window tinting upgrades, window seal replacements and the installation of sun-blocking blinds. Windows are also able to be opened, and portable air conditioners will also be deployed as required.
 - (3) Staff are expected to benefit from the measures described in the response to question (2).
 - (4) Patients are expected to benefit from the measures described in the response to question (2).

Supplementary Question

Ms ARMITAGE - I may have missed the answer. Part of my first question was, can you please advise which engineering firm was engaged?

Ms RATTRAY - The honourable member is absolutely correct. She didn't miss it. It isn't in the response, and I will endeavour to have that provided to you by the end of the week.

TT-Line - Additional Borrowings

Ms FORREST question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT

[2.54 p.m.]

What were the additional borrowings provided to TT-Line specifically to fund? Further to that, are there any design features on the new vessel that need additional work, other than the final fit-out, to make the vessels fit for service? Are there any issues that have not yet been disclosed publicly?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question. In regard to the extra capital funding that may be required or is required for TT-Line, that will be going through the budget process that the Treasurer is working on at the moment. I believe the second part of the question, if we just clarify, was about extra work that may be needed?

Ms Forrest - Design features and any work needing to be done, beyond the fit-out that's being done.

Mr VINCENT - All my knowledge on that is the fit-out is happening there at the moment, but when it goes over to Geelong, it will be having trials on the gantry over there. If any alterations need to be made, they will be made while it's over there. That is all the knowledge I have at this point in time. Unless you know something specific there that I could follow up on, which I'm happy to do of course, that's my knowledge at present.

Supplementary Question

Ms FORREST - I have a supplementary question.

Mr PRESIDENT - The member for Murchison.

Ms FORREST - The money has already been forwarded, the additional funding during the election period by way of extended borrowing. That's a decision already made. My question was: what were the additional funds specifically to fund? That was the question. And as the minister responsible, I expect you to know that. I need you to think about that one.

The other point I was making is: it was related to any design features of the vessel not related to the fit-out. A lot of that was always going to be done in Tasmania. To be more specific, is there any work required to the bow or the beam to strengthen it to enable it to safely berth against the fenders in either Geelong or in Devonport?

Mr VINCENT - Mr President, I seek more advice on that costing. Sorry for the time taken there. The extension to the debt ceiling was made during the election campaign -

Ms Forrest - Election period.

Mr VINCENT - Election period, sorry, in relation to concerns raised by the board on the long-term stability of the debt level of TT-Line and that's been made. That is still ongoing work being done on that ceiling required for it to remain operational.

Ms Forrest - What was it to fund? Why did they need to do it? What were they needing to fund - that was the question.

Mr VINCENT - Because of the debt level that TT-Line is presently carrying.

Ms Forrest - They increased the debt to deal with the debt level?

Mr VINCENT - No, the capability of the debt level to be able to be serviced.

I am not aware of any structural issues that need to be taken care of at this point in time at all but I'm happy to follow that through and just check on anything. I know of minor things. In relation to the fender work done, there are some small adjustments being done on the Devonport Wharf that are to take in the slight movements in the fenders to allow for the strengthening of parts of the ship against the fenders. I don't believe any of that needs to be done in Geelong - not that I've been informed at this point in time.

Ms Forrest - No, that needs to be done to the ships, not in Geelong.

Mr VINCENT - I'm unaware of what needs to happen on the berth to make slight adjustments to it there to match up with the ship. I'm happy to follow up on that for you. Thank you.

National Climate Risk Assessment - Medium-Density Housing Developments

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for HOUSING and PLANNING, Mr VINCENT

[2.59 p.m.]

I have a follow-up question. As you'd be aware, a number of medium-density housing developments in Hobart have been cancelled due to rising construction costs. I'm sure you'd agree this kind of development is exactly what we need to help resolve the climate crisis. Also, we know that urban sprawl is costly for the climate and places communities at more risk.

Do you acknowledge that there's a problem? On the back of your previous answer, it sounds like you do. What changes are you considering instigating to encourage and support more medium-density development in our cities and towns?

ANSWER

Mr President, excuse me for turning my back to you, but I will address the member for Hobart.

We're starting to do a fair bit of work with the medium and higher density. It gets quite complex once you go past three or four storeys in the tier level of the builder that's required to go above that, and also with the fire and building regulations above what I believe is a fourth storey.

A while back they were talking about apartment buildings to be seven or eight storeys high. More of that conversation is about the affordability - being able to have those places used for tenancy of an affordable nature, which is more than it needs to be around the four-storey mark. I haven't got completely through all that yet. I'm working on that because that's very important in relation to the northern corridor, where we're talking about a much greater need for medium and higher density. I hope in coming weeks to meet with the Glenorchy City Council to see where they are when isolating some of those residential places along that corridor, to see where we may be able to start talking at that level of medium density.

Ms O'Connor - But in the city as well and surely you'd be making uniform changes across the planning?

Mr VINCENT - Yes, we have not decided on any deadset planning changes at this stage while we're still investigating that. It would be nice to talk to a couple of the builders who have hit that cost wall. Once again, we're seeing with some of the things that Homes Tasmania - and I did meet with the builder at the weekend who was explaining the cost if you go above a second line floor, to be able to be in that affordable area of \$575,000 to \$615,000 for an apartment. I'm starting to understand some of those complications of building regulations versus costs for people to be able to afford to take those on.

Ms O'Connor - To finish off, you know we need a mix. You could have some apartments that are higher-end and some that are more affordable within the same complex.

Mr VINCENT - Yes, certainly, and that blend is starting to come out. This is what I was touching on because I suppose I have been concentrating on the more affordable places, because that's where there is a huge need at the moment. It is an area of housing - in crisis housing and youth housing and the lower end of affordable housing - that I haven't been totally exposed to in my past, so I've been concentrating on that. However, we are seeing more and more evidence, especially with metro developments, where you have to have a blend, because of that cost factor as you go up.

It is a priority for Homes Tasmania to be effective in delivering the number of homes they have. We need to work through a lot of things there, but the density of blocks of land for one- and two-bedroom units is just as important as the density of going up in the air as well, so it's an area I am doing a lot of work on at the moment.

MOTION

Joint Select Committee on Energy Matters - Re-Establishment

Resumed from above (page 26).

[3.03 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, due to the identified administrative error, on your indulgence, I move -

- (1) That the Resolution of the House of Assembly be agreed to with the following amendments:

Leave out paragraph (2) and renumber the remaining paragraphs accordingly.

In paragraph (3) (as renumbered) *leave out* "Fiftieth and".

- (2) The members to serve on the part of the Council be: Mr Edmunds; Ms Forrest; Mr Harriss; and Ms Lovell.
- (3) Friday 26 September 2025 at 10 a.m. be the time, and Committee Room 1 be the place, for holding the first meeting of the said Committee.

[3.04 p.m.]

Ms LOVELL (Rumney) - Mr President, I appreciate that the wording for these motions was circulated over the lunch break, but I was in a session and didn't get a chance to have any conversations about that.

I have a concern with the last part of the amendment in relation to the first meeting time. As a member of this committee, I wasn't aware that that meeting time had been set. I am not available, and I believe there are other members who are probably not available either. I'm concerned about us moving a motion that we can't meet because some of us might not be able to be at that first meeting, and whether that leaves the committee short of a quorum. I'm seeking some clarification around how we deal with that.

Mr EDMUNDS (Pembroke) - Mr President, I would be interested to know how flexible that is, as I have issues making it at that time, and others that were prescribed earlier today.

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - On this particular committee, after hearing rumours that all the committees were going to be re-established downstairs - and knowing that the process is when the message is sent to us, we have to go back with a meeting date - I spoke to the committee secretary, not because I'm the current chair, but I was the former chair and someone has to have that conversation. I said to him, 'Can you look at this date as an option?' - but there's never been any confirmation. I assume, from the secretary's point of view, they don't have the power or right to send out a meeting invitation to say, 'If you are elected to this committee ...'.

The problem in this House is that we don't know who is on what committee. We haven't had a lot of clarity around that, mainly because we have so many committees to fill, and it's been problematic to fill some. I believe that's been a bit of a muddle, to use a word that the former member for Western Tiers used to use. With so many committees, it's going to be really difficult to agree on meeting times to re-establish the committees and get the work done. I acknowledge the question asked by the member for Rumney. I assume the secretary will send out meeting invites, and if you can't achieve a quorum, what does that mean? With everything so tight, there's so little time. We have hardly sat, and we will have very little time for committee work to be done before we start the budget session. Then it's the end of the year. There were so many committees that wanted to get work done, reports finished, et cetera.

It's been a really difficult process for the Clerks and the committee secretaries, I'm sure, trying to navigate all of this. I'm not sure if there's any advice you or the Leader can give - I don't know who can give the advice here. If one of these dates that are set can't be met, what's the process from there?

[3.07 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, a couple of options have been put forward. I acknowledge the comments that have been presented in this matter. You can attend remotely. There is an ability to amend the message. In regard to how the date was set, the committee secretary set the date. As the honourable member for Murchison has just indicated, there are not a lot of dates available to choose from.

I also picked up on the member for Murchison when she said the committee secretary would obviously send an invite, and if there are not enough members to attend, then the meeting won't proceed. If there's a mind to amend the date, that's going to be difficult, because how do

you know how that will be? They're the options presented. I expect that there will be a conversation about the Friday date, if this message sees favour of the House.

[3.09 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I wanted to clarify, do we need to have a date in this motion? Can we just amend it to take the date out and then have the date set later, now that we know the full membership? It puzzles me, because membership could have been readily ascertained for at least some of the key members of these committees. While a formal meeting invite might not have been able to be sent ahead of time, I would've thought some phone calls could have gone down nicely, particularly with past chairs of those committees.

I'm concerned about the date that was set in the motion for the Electoral Matters Committee. I would have preferred no date and to try to get one sooner. I don't really understand why dates are limited. We have a hell of a lot of dates available in October when there are no sittings.

Mr PRESIDENT - While you're on your feet, would you like to move that the debate stand adjourned so this issue can be -

Ms WEBB - I move -

That the debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Voluntary Assisted Dying Online Portal

[3.10 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I move -

That:

- (1) The Legislative Council notes that a General Practitioner based on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania who has been involved in approximately 80 cases of Voluntary Assisted Dying under the provisions of the *End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act 2021* (the Act) has expressed concern about the lack of an electronic portal for the submission of relevant requests, applications and information required under the Act and this has resulted in cumbersome administrative complexities and workload; and
- (2) The Legislative Council further notes that:
 - (a) Tasmania is the only jurisdiction in Australia which has Voluntary Assisted Dying legislation that does not utilise a

portal to facilitate the effective and timely transfer of information as required by the legislation;

- (b) Medical Practitioners are refusing to actively participate in the legislated Voluntary Assisted Dying process because of the cumbersome and time-consuming paper-based system currently in place;
 - (c) Medical Practitioners who have been very supportive of the legislated Voluntary Assisted Dying process are now walking away from the process; and
- (3) The Legislative Council calls upon the Tasmanian State Government to purchase or develop an online portal for use by Primary Medical Practitioners, Consulting Medical Practitioners, Administering Health Practitioners and the Voluntary Assisted Dying Commission established under the Act.

I rise to speak again on the apparent lack of movement from the government on the development of a portal for healthcare practitioners involved in managing Tasmania's voluntary assisted dying process. I also welcome and acknowledge Dr Bert Shugg in the Chamber. He is the president of Dying with Dignity Tasmania, and I welcome Noah. When you figure out how this parliament works, would you talk to me about that? I would be most pleased.

Mr PRESIDENT - Today would have helped.

Mr GAFFNEY - The portal that I refer to would allow medical practitioners to best manage and ensure compliance with the voluntary assisted dying (VAD) legislation. As it stands, medical practitioners are largely undertaking non-remunerated administrative work that prohibits those who would otherwise assist in the VAD process and increases the strain on those who already do.

I received an email informing me that a dependable, conscientious and responsible GP who has been involved in over 20 per cent of all voluntary assisted dying events in Tasmania has recently chosen to withdraw from participating in VAD anymore, due to the ineffective system currently in place.

For those listening or members new to this Chamber, 'an event' is the term Canadians use in their MAID legislation, which is Medical Assistance in Dying. An event describes the occasion when an individual takes the voluntary assisted dying substance.

Our Tasmanian doctor participated in approximately 80 events either as the primary medical practitioner or the consulting medical practitioner.

The current system in the Tasmanian VAD process results in unnecessary and repetitive paperwork applications, exacerbating time delays that may impact on Tasmanians' eligibility and accessibility to VAD, creates possible security risks and ongoing inefficiency for healthcare practitioners, who, quite frankly, do not have the time to burden themselves with the level of administrative work required. As general practitioner Dr Alice Frampton from Howrah stated in an email to me after she heard I was making this motion:

I have to say that the hours (literally hours) spent filling in Adobe forms, saving, uploading and emailing them has been a huge time-waster for me, and it's definitely a barrier for other GPs who I work with getting involved in VAD. I'm shocked that we are editing Adobe forms so clunky and I'm concerned about the security of this highly sensitive information.

This is entirely out of line with every other Australian VAD jurisdiction - which is seven - six states and one territory. The ACT commences on 1 November 2025. Tasmania was the third state to pass and implement legislation and, yet, we're the only jurisdiction not to utilise and take advantage of a portal. Administrators, medical practitioners and healthcare professionals who I have spoken to across said jurisdictions are shocked that we do not have a portal in place. Tasmania needs a portal to provide effective healthcare options for vulnerable Tasmanians.

VAD is proving itself as a necessary option for suffering individuals as part of the end-of-life health care in Tasmania. Already approximately 250 Tasmanians have chosen the VAD pathway, with many others assessed as being eligible for VAD.

Instead of dissecting each of the points on the notice of motion, I am pulling it all together as one presentation. An interesting aside is studies have shown that 80 per cent of people assessed as eligible have not needed to complete the event. However, studies have also revealed that their quality of life improves once they are assessed as eligible because of the assurance that, if necessary, they have an option if their suffering becomes too great - a peace of mind.

I imagine several people in this Chamber today probably are aware of more than one person from within their community or network or friendships who have chosen VAD. The feedback I have received from family and friends has all, without exception, been positive and incredibly supportive of the legislation, albeit acknowledging there is a lot of paperwork. Indeed, I have even been contacted by several Tasmanians just days prior to them taking the VAD substance to thank me and the other members of this parliament who supported the legislation and have allowed them the choice - a choice for which they are most grateful and one that has allowed them autonomy over their quality of life and, importantly, the quality of their death.

Doctors are very caring people and choose to be involved in VAD out of empathy for the individual and family. However, as professionals, it's not surprising that doctors who are navigating the process and completing extensive paperwork keep that stressful and exasperating fact to themselves as the families they are helping are trying to cope with much greater issues at the time of assessment, understanding processes and making decisions.

I have heard from a variety of interest groups and medical professionals in the period since the passing of the *End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act 2021*. I have done my best to pass on those voices as well as the various recommendations coming from internal government reviews of the voluntary assisted dying scheme in Tasmania. It is important that we continue to ensure the best outcomes for those Tasmanians who have chosen VAD or who are yet to be confronted with that decision.

One of the areas in which stakeholders have been most vocal in the Tasmanian VAD space is the need for a portal. Indeed, in the weeks prior to this motion, I received supportive emails from medical practitioners across the state. It seems to me that as I have heard and

passed on these recommendations, the government has done its best to avoid acting on them. Consequently, it is putting Tasmania behind other jurisdictions to the detriment of our healthcare professionals and, by extension, to our most vulnerable and suffering Tasmanians.

There have been many calls to eliminate unnecessary barriers faced by doctors and patients and the government has an opportunity to easily and relatively cheaply do so. The following extract from the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Commission Annual Report 2023-24*, pages 42 and 43, says:

Database and Portal

Unlike some other jurisdictions, Tasmania does not have an electronic portal to which medical practitioners providing services as PMPs, CMPs, and AHPs may submit forms that are required to be provided to the Commission. Instead, the Office of the Commission operates a "manual" portal process, as described earlier in this Report.

PMPs, CMPs and AHPs are provided with access to required forms for the next stage in the patient's voluntary assisted dying journey only once the forms provided for the preceding stage have been checked, and any issues resolved.

Compliance checks are undertaken as soon as reasonably practicable once formal notification of relevant events, and copies of forms, are supplied.

While this approach is effective to identify instances of non-compliance so these can be addressed before the VAD Commission's consideration of a request to issue a VAD Substance Authorisation, it is cumbersome and time consuming and practitioners and patients alike have expressed frustration with it.

In all Australian jurisdictions (and New Zealand) where voluntary assisted dying is legal, forms are transmitted between medical practitioners and the respective voluntary assisted dying oversight body through a dedicated "on-line portal". On-line portals have been designed and developed either in-house, or under a contract with the commercial developer.

Recommendation 8: That the Tasmanian State Government purchase or develop an online portal for use by medical practitioners acting as PMPs, CMPs, or AHPs, and registered nurses acting as AHPs, and for the Commission.

For example, in speaking to one of the doctors, Friday afternoon, they've dealt with the situation. They've sent their form through, an Adobe form that they send through. It gets looked at on Monday morning. They haven't put the date in. It has to go back to the doctor who's working all day Monday. On Monday night, he or she looks at it very late and then he has to fill in that form and send it back.

In our legislation there are time restrictions, whether it's 48 hours or seven days. In fact, due to our process, that doctor may have broken the rules. If they had a portal in place, when

you went to press the button on the Friday, if you hadn't filled in all the information, the form wouldn't send. Therefore, he'd have to go back to where he'd missed the date and put it in. The process would continue.

That's what was relayed to me by a doctor who was very stressed about what he was doing. Then he would get a smack on the wrist from the commission because he hadn't filled in the paperwork in time because they're working so hard. It's not something they can pass over to their staff because they're not allowed to. They're required to fill in all the forms themselves because of the nature of the legislation. That's how it should be.

Frankly, the hesitancy of the government to commit itself to a portal, which I must from the outset note is much needed, already evaluated, cost effective and implemented in other jurisdictions, is disheartening. Undeniably, the longer we wait for certainty on the future of managing VAD and the more we ignore the calls of medical professionals, constituents and interest groups, the more we undermine the intent and accessibility of the legislation that this parliament relatively recently passed into law. We must not forget over 80 per cent of Tasmanians agreed with a person's right to choose the VAD pathway if their circumstances satisfy the criteria and they are determined eligible by two doctors.

I will also take a moment to clarify that when I speak of a VAD portal, I'm referring to an online portal for use by practitioners and those involved in the administrative application, review and training processes, not a portal for those individuals seeking to use the voluntary assisted dying process. The case for such a portal is to support secure access to VAD services by doctors, promote compliance and streamline the process for those involved in the administration of VAD applications. While this may seem obvious, the government seems to have trouble appreciating this issue.

An email I received from Louise Nott, the director of medical oncology at Icon Group, as well as a clinical associate professor for the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, outlines the challenges that face VAD without a portal. She says:

The current system for VAD documentation is extremely time-consuming, repetitive, and confusing. The reliance on emails and smart Adobe forms creates unnecessary complexity and inefficiency. In a very busy clinical environment, this becomes a significant barrier to participation for practitioners who might otherwise be willing to engage in VAD.

A dedicated VAD portal would streamline documentation, improve accuracy, and reduce administrative burden, allowing clinicians to focus on patient care rather than navigating cumbersome processes. The lack of a portal is a major disincentive for practitioners and risks limiting access for patients who are eligible and seeking this service.

As I foreshadowed earlier, I became aware just a few weeks ago that a general practitioner from the north-west coast, Dr Keith McArthur, had given notice of his intention to withdraw from the VAD space. Dr McArthur made clear in his email that the primary reason for his withdrawal was the excessive workload and administrative difficulties faced by inadequate administrative support in the application process. A VAD portal would have undoubtedly eased much of his burden. Dr McArthur has given me permission to share this information.

On another note, I often give forums, and at several of those forums Dr McArthur has been with me. I would speak about the history of VAD and he would talk to the group about how it's working at the moment, his role in it, and how it functions. I understand his desire to be involved in 80 cases out of 250, over 20 per cent. This man is withdrawing his involvement because of a lack of funding for a portal. He says:

The administrative work associated with providing VAD care to Tasmanians has exploded to take up truly excessive time.

A portal would likely have mitigated much of this.

I have also heard that the Tasmanian government is of the impression that a VAD portal is not required in Tasmania - I am not aware if this is indeed true and if it is - who advised them of this.

These last 2 weeks have been the most challenging that I can remember in my entire life and this is all due to the VAD non-clinical administrative complexity and workload.

I know that I am not the only GP who has quit because of the administrative burden.

Despite the moral injury I will suffer by withdrawing from VAD work, the emotional and physical demands of continuing working in the VAD space as it is currently set up are now unacceptable and causing me personal harm.

I am ceasing all private VAD work until further notice.

The government is failing to provide medical practitioners the support they need to work within the VAD space. Since this email, I've received further correspondence from Dr McArthur, other practitioners and various interest groups further outlining the difficulties imposed by the cumbersome and unremunerated administrative workload associated with the VAD space.

It is fair to say that most of the doctors who choose to undertake the required training modules and are currently involved in VAD are in the older age group with years of medical experience. The nature and seriousness of the VAD legislation requires that only the medical practitioner responsible can access and have input into the paperwork. Dr McArthur highlighted these issues and his concern with the following explanation:

... since leaving the VAD Clinical Lead role -

Which he was in -

I have had significant IT challenges in managing VAD administrative tasks. The burden of time to manage the complex password protected email forms in the required timeframes has proved challenging and now impossible. I purchased a new machine for which I planned to consolidate the VAD work, this machine has windows 11 which is very different to windows 10. I am not supposed to use THS machines for private VAD work. I am in the GP

surgery part time and forms sent to my GP email are very difficult to access from elsewhere. Various machines will only print in specific locations. Adobe forms that I open in online web-outlook emails are missing the fillable fields. There are firewalls and other security issues.

I would like to acknowledge that Tasmania would be the last jurisdiction to implement a portal. To set the scene, when I speak to practitioners and VAD interest groups in other states and territories, and even my colleagues overseas, they are stunned that Tasmania does not utilise a portal. The necessity of such an online portal in the VAD space has been recognised across various jurisdictions. Dr Andrea Bendrups, an experienced practitioner from Victoria and the president-elect for the VADANZ, the peak body representing Australian and New Zealand VAD practitioners, stated the following:

Victorian VAD practitioners have been successfully using an electronic portal for their communications with Safer Care Victoria for over 5 years. This facility allows for additional documents to be added to previously submitted material if needed to meet the requirements of the secretariat. It also allows communication between the assessors and the secretariat for process checking to occur and be stored securely. It also provides a single repository of all of a patient's clinical, identity and processing records for easy review or audit purposes.

This is in stark contrast to the issues highlighted with our archaic OneDrive system used in Tasmania. While a portal allows seamless initial applications, supplementation and variation of application, an adequate communication avenue and secure storage for clinical records and audit purposes, the Tasmanian system relies on individual uploads of information, haphazard community communication via email, insecure file storage and unreliable information transfer methods.

As Dr Bryan Walpole, a retired Tasmanian emergency physician, puts it:

A VAD (Voluntary Assisted Dying) portal is sorely needed, most other states have one and it is essential for the pathway to progress and simplify it. At present, a disincentive to participate in the process is the complicated pathway.

General practitioner Dr Jennifer Connor also emailed me stating:

I only take on one patient at a time, usually every 6 weeks or so, as I need to fit in with my regular work in general practice. One of the huge, time components is emailing and filling in the forms. A portal would streamline the process immensely and I, and other doctors, may be able to see more VAD patients.

There are a clear set of needs and benefits which so far have gone unaddressed and overlooked. Such a portal reduces unnecessary strain on medical practitioners. It promotes involvement from more practitioners and administrators, allows access to training, and a streamlined application process for the approval and administration of VAD substances. The opportunity to utilise and take advantage of the effectiveness and efficiency of a portal will

also allow streamlining of the forms, which is, as mentioned by many medical practitioners, exceptionally repetitive and time-consuming.

VAD practitioner Dr Rob Bohmer stated:

I would strongly support a VAD web-based portal rather than the cumbersome emailing forms.

Dr Bohmer continued by writing:

You will get opinions from us in trying to make the forms more user friendly.

Why is it, colleagues, that although we have managed to pass the enabling legislation, and while we have retained proportionally similar levels of support in the House of Assembly and Legislative Council, we are undermining the very legislation that members, community groups and constituents fought so hard to pass? In effect, the government has shown its willingness to support a bipartisan bill, but through lack of funding for a portal, is undermining its effectiveness and potentially its longevity.

Many of the members who voted on this bill are still in parliament, or at least active politically. It is a shame the government that was so proud to pass a forward-facing and community-oriented VAD bill is now happy to leave those same processes straggling behind other jurisdictions, hamstringing those healthcare practitioners putting in the hard work to provide a functional VAD system in Tasmania.

We were the third state to implement the legislation, understanding that the processes would and should be subject to refinement for the betterment of Tasmania. Yet now, as the time comes to do so, we will be one of the last to implement those refinements, and for no good reason.

The cost is not prohibitive. The need is there, and the political sentiment is, as it was five years ago, in favour of better health outcomes for Tasmanians at every stage of their lives. The Tasmanian legislation has the object of 'providing an efficient and effective [VAD] process'. The government is undermining this very objective by failing to provide support for VAD practitioners and professionals in line with the minimum standards of other jurisdictions. In doing so, the government is unintentionally driving medical practitioners away.

As we've heard, practitioners are leaving this space, and those who would otherwise be involved in VAD are not joining due to the government's decision not to fund a portal. Medical professionals cannot and should not be expected to support the Tasmanian VAD system when faced with cumbersome, unremunerated and unreasonable loads of unnecessary administrative work.

I must stress that the case of Dr McArthur is not representative of simply a single disgruntled practitioner. Rather, it is illustrative of broader sentiment across the Tasmanian VAD area. Various peak bodies, representative groups, practitioners and stakeholders have either reached out to me or otherwise spoken of the need for a portal in Tasmania.

For example, emergency physician and associate professor Geoff Couser wrote to me:

Given that the VAD process is reliant upon the goodwill of medical professionals to engage with a high stakes process with complicated patients, anything that makes our participation in the process easier and more attractive is not just welcome, it is essential. A portal allows for easier standardized access which can assist a workforce already under immense pressure to provide clinical services. A portal would also allow for increased safety and regulation to ensure compliance with the legislation. This contrasts with the existing system, which is inefficient, error-prone, clunky, and actively acts as a disincentive for practitioners to get involved with the process.

There is already a case that the Tasmanian doctors operating in the VAD space, unlike the New Zealand model, are not remunerated adequately for their efforts, irrespective of the existence of a portal. An article in the *Medical Journal of Australia* highlights that even with a portal, doctors involved are subject to various obligations and expectations, many of which are unfunded. Some examples of such unremunerated activities include: travel; undertaking mandatory training; obtaining and gathering prognostic information; undertaking the steps of application; as well as providing support to the patients and their loved ones during, and sometimes after, the process.

The Medicare framework does not adequately support practitioners; state-based resources are few and far between; and private billing is sparse, given the perceived insensitivity. In fact, I have had one doctor say to me he's been involved in nine cases, either as a consulting medical practitioner or as a primary medical practitioner, and he has not billed anybody because it's too cumbersome, they don't get enough for the work and he just does it because he is in care of the person that he wants to be his patient.

Considering this, it is ridiculous that the Tasmanian government is not adequately supporting the administrative load that Tasmanian practitioners alone face. In a field where practitioners are already undertaking unremunerated work, the government is imposing on them even more. A general practitioner wrote to me:

VAD is woefully under-remunerated. I can only make VAD viable by charging a gap. The WA state government has implemented their own fee structure to address this.

This is in a jurisdiction that already has a portal to ease the administrative load on its practitioners.

The government is failing in its role to support compliance with the legislative and administrative requirements. Moreover, it is ignoring the needs of the medical industry to the detriment of end-of-life care in Tasmania.

The case for a VAD portal is clear. It is not simply that the government is letting down those practitioners relying on it, forcing healthcare professionals to go out of their way to afford Tasmanians the same standard of care as in other jurisdictions; nor is it simply that the government is ignoring its role under the very same legislation it so recently passed. Rather, as the government drives practitioners away from end-of-life care, it is doing so despite a noticeably clear, easy and relatively inexpensive solution.

There is no logic to the lack of movement by the government on a portal. The use case is there. The viability of such a portal has been demonstrated across other jurisdictions. The price is pennies on the dollar compared to other projects. For example, the Western Australian portal was developed for just more than \$1.7 million. This is a drop in the ocean of government spending.

It is not the case that the technology is unproven or at risk of budget blowout. Rather, Howrah doctor Jennifer Connor stated to me:

We can learn from other states as to what works well. Please do not disadvantage patients trying to access VAD in Tasmania.

Prior to the Tasmanian act, three attempts to bring in legislation allowing VAD were made in the state - in 2009, 2013 and 2016. Each of these failed, broadly hamstrung by the lack of community involvement. The successful legislation took community consultation, stakeholder involvement and revision. It is a pity that at the moment the legislation was passed, the government has seemingly turned its back on the exact community which made it possible, ignoring the needs and pleas of those on the front line of end-of-life health care.

We pride ourselves as leaders in progress across environmental policy and various industries. We have taken pains to ensure this reputation is ongoing and sustainable; yet, somehow, we are failing to do so when it comes to end-of-life care. The government has recently been very vocal and proactive in supporting a new red tape reduction portal; yet it continues to leave its health care behind.

The use case for a VAD portal is simple: the administrative burden that VAD practitioners face is excessive and undermines the efficacy of the VAD system. A portal is a necessity to ensure functionality in the VAD space, provide adequate support for medical practitioners going out of their way to provide services and ensure the best outcome for the end-of-life care in Tasmania.

As I mentioned earlier, the government was questioned on whether it intended to invest in a portal or otherwise supportive administrative management of VAD applications. In response, the government stated that the portal was not viable and that there was no need for it because Tasmania has a rate of complete VAD applications like other states.

This response shows the government does not even understand the use case for the portal and does not appear to understand the need for one - hence the need for this notice of motion. Such a response outright ignores the fact that the Tasmanian doctors must work harder and take on more unremunerated load to provide similar end-of-life care and completion rates as in other jurisdictions.

It is ludicrous to suggest, as the government has done, that a VAD portal is not viable or that it's too expensive. Various other jurisdictions have already implemented a portal, and for meagre costs comparative to other, more controversial projects proposed by both sides of parliament. While the government prioritises a roofed stadium, it fails to deliver on various projects and proposals and sent Tasmanians back to the polling booth. It is overlooking the healthcare needs of vulnerable Tasmanians, failing to support our medical and health practitioners and neglecting the ever-evolving medical landscape.

I'm aware of mutterings of a scoping study for a data-management system aiming to promote practitioners meeting their documentation and notification obligations. Indeed, the government mentioned this in its response to my questions without notice regarding such a portal and the governmental hesitancy to commit. Frankly, the response I received included irrelevant information and incorrect assumptions about the necessity of the portal and its role. It gave me little hope that there would be a sound basis for the apparent conclusion that a portal such as in other jurisdictions was not viable. The current commitments to a data-management system are, quite simply, too little and too late.

It has been suggested that the three-year VAD review in October will be an opportunity for a portal to be considered. That is unacceptable. I am informed that the review could take 12 to 18 months to finalise. If the government does not act now and find the funding for a portal, I fear that in 18 months it will be too difficult to find adequate numbers of primary medical practitioners, consulting medical practitioners or administering health practitioners willing to be involved in VAD to service the needs of the Tasmanian population. We've just lost one person who did over 20 per cent of the 250 cases here in Tasmania.

There are portals in use in all other states, and one is being prepared in the Australian Capital Territory, which commences on 1 November this year; it's not as though we need to reinvent the wheel. Technology is there and well within the ability for our government to access. If other authorities across Australia have chosen a portal as the most effective way of operating, why are we lagging?

It was posited in the response to those questions that there is 'no evidence that a lack of an online portal is hindering the access to voluntary assisted dying in Tasmania', based on the fact that roughly the same proportions as other jurisdictions of people who made a first request for voluntary assisted dying in Tasmania died by the administration of a VAD substance. I understand that six months ago that was the case; now, with the doctor who did over 20 per cent of the cases getting out, there is going to be neglect and there is going to be a shortage.

This is fundamentally flawed, based on a misunderstanding of the role of the portal, and reverses the onus to provide an efficient system of legislative healthcare administration onto those healthcare practitioners going out of their way and putting themselves out to afford Tasmanians the same level of care that other jurisdictions receive.

Moreover, the response concluded that such a portal would not address the needs of Tasmanians. This is ridiculous. VAD healthcare professionals are spread thinly across the state, making clunky systems that use paper and OneDrive even more damaging to the process. Meanwhile, Tasmanians are older on an average than in other states, meaning a more efficient suite of end-of-life care options will disproportionately benefit our state in the ongoing future.

As I mentioned in a recent article in the *Mercury*, a doctor made this damning comment:

How is it government can automatically and instantly accept and justify a \$45m increase for a Center for Sporting Excellence above its \$60m budget allocation ... and say that is viable, however the Government cannot find \$1.5 to \$2m for a VAD portal which is so important ... We have GPs walking away, stating they will consider returning to the VAD space when there is a portal.

The previous Budget emphasised the need for strong spending and support for the healthcare industry, across both medical investment and more holistic preventative health care. Mind you, this Budget and its emphasis on frivolous spending above the needs of Tasmania was no small part of the reason Tasmanians have only recently been back to the polling booths. I must implore the government to not make the same mistakes again and put the fundamental needs of vulnerable Tasmanians first.

It is unfathomable to me that the government will dig its heels in on expensive and deeply unpopular proposals, defend poor budgetary management and overspending fiascos, and then hesitate to invest in much-needed healthcare infrastructure.

One only needs to look at the Australian Medical Association Election Priorities 2025 to see that adequate investment in healthcare is important to Tasmanian stakeholders. For example, the primary priority detailed in the AMA document is that 'we want a commitment to fund our health system to meet demand'. The second priority is that health infrastructure needs must be met with a clear, long-term pathway. Third, there should be a 'commitment to attract, retain and invest in a strong medical workforce'.

An easy win for the government is a commitment to a VAD portal. This would take a step to enable practitioners to meet the demand for end-of-life care, that healthcare infrastructure and appropriate systems are in line with other jurisdictions, and to support and ensure a strong and expanding medical workforce.

I was, however, heartened by a recent meeting I had with the honourable Bridget Archer and her advisers. Ms Archer is the new Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing and the minister responsible now for VAD in Tasmania. We had a very positive meeting regarding the VAD situation in Tasmania. We touched on a range of issues, including the absence of and need for a portal. I was extremely impressed with the minister's input and her willingness to question, discuss and deliberate on VAD in Tasmania. I'm certain the minister will do all she can to garner support for funding for a portal from those within Cabinet. It should be noted, and it is known, that a number of ministers and senior members of the Liberal Party did not support the VAD legislation. However, I also know they are professional and experienced politicians who support appropriate and correct parliamentary process. The honourable Bridget Archer's speech in 2022 in Canberra included the comment:

As mentioned previously, in Tasmania, the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Bill passed last year - the fourth attempt at passing such a law after previous attempts in 2009, 2013 and 2017 failed. Each and every attempt saw passionate advocacy from both sides of the issue, but, year after year, community expectations have changed. And, thanks to the tireless work of Independent MLC Mike Gaffney, Tasmania now has laws that, by and large, meet the community's expectations. As pointed out by Mr Gaffney, the end result is a good indication of how parliament should work. The legislation will allow people who are suffering from advanced, incurable and irreversible conditions, which are expected to cause their death within six months [and sometimes 12], to end their own lives. The law will come into effect in October and, I hope, will bring relief and peace for those who may seek to exercise this right.

That was in her response to the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory having the capacity to have their own legislation. The Australian Capital Territory has taken that on board; from 1 November 2025 it will have a portal.

To conclude, the current situation is unacceptable and untenable. The government is cutting doctors participating in VAD at the legs, and for no good reason. Tasmanian doctors are walking away from VAD. Others are hesitant to join the program that they otherwise would. We're hamstringing the VAD scheme over pennies compared to other, less serious and more frivolous government expenditures.

To finish this notice, I would like to read an excerpt of a statement I received from the president of Dying with Dignity Victoria, Jane Morris. She says:

As a staunch advocate of Voluntary Assisted Dying with a keen interest in the operation of VAD legislation in other Australian jurisdictions, my interest was piqued listening to Tasmanian Independent MLC, Mike Gaffney's Budget Reply speech. In his speech, I was amazed to hear that Tasmanian Medical Practitioners that provide VAD, unlike those in every other Australian state where VAD is operational, do not have access to a VAD Portal. The VAD Portal is an online system that ensures compliance with the Act and provides a secure online system for medical practitioners to lodge the required forms, at a time of their choosing. It limits the precious time that doctors must spend filling in the necessary VAD paperwork.

A VAD portal has been operative in Victoria since 2019, when legislation was implemented and is now utilized in all Australian states. Currently in Tasmania, VAD providers must download numerous PDF forms, fill them out by hand, scan them before finally submitting them to the Commission. Gaffney stated that he had been informed that a "portal in Tasmania was not seen as viable.

The Victorian VAD Review Board stated in its last report, 2024, that it was concerned about the ongoing sustainability of the Victorian VAD program recognizing the excessive workload involved in VAD provision, most of which is unremunerated. Thank goodness our doctors [in Victoria] are not further burdened by having to complete the laborious task of manually completing and submitting these forms, often at times they find unsuitable. This is an unviable situation.

VAD will not function in Tasmania if the government continues to let practitioners and healthcare professionals down. We are letting our healthcare system lag like those of other states and cannot afford to do so given our demographics. It was only weeks ago that we were sent to an election due to questionable spending. Now is the time for the government to make the right choices and make commitments to things that Tasmanians need now and into the immediate future.

I was going to conclude my speech at this point, however I will briefly comment on the media article in yesterday's *Mercury*. When I was contacted by Sue Bailey on Sunday, we discussed today's notice of motion regarding the portal. I was able to assist Sue by providing a copy of my speech. I would like, however, to comment on the end section of the article where

it quoted the Health minister, the lady I've just spoken about in high regards. I think she can change things. I acknowledge that the new minister has not been long in this space and is no doubt being guided by advisers and others in the VAD space, especially when contacted by a reporter. I left a copy of the *Mercury* article on everybody's seat. It says:

Health Minister Bridget Archer said feedback had been "consistently positive" on the VAD process.

Significant work has been progressed to explore a potential provider with capacity to develop a VAD data management system, she said.

"Recognising the review of the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act commences next month, potential outcomes or recommendations from the review may impact a future VAD data management system, and these would need to be considered.

"The process to select a review panel is under way and will be announced in the coming weeks."

First, I agree with the minister's statement regarding positive feedback as I, probably more than most people in this parliament, have been receiving feedback about the legislation and the VAD process for some time now. However, when the minister talks about exploring a potential provider with the capacity to develop a VAD data management system, yes, that has been the low-cost budget model that is being tested and still has, as we have heard, numerous issues and is not being well received and is not doing the job.

I somehow find myself reflecting on the TV series *Yes Minister*. How is it that every other state utilises a portal and the Australian Capital Territory's act doesn't come live until 1 November this year, 2025, and they have decided to use a portal? They would have looked at every option available and they would have said a portal is the one that we're going with.

Don't you think the ACT VAD committee would have looked at the options and not something likened to an Adobe OneDrive cumbersome data management system? In previous answers to similar questions regarding the different approaches, the government has commented that Tasmania is different and needs a different system. I use a phrase often synonymous with the speeches from the member for Murchison, although I'm certain I won't do her inflections justice: really? I'll do that again: really?

How are we so different to every other state in the VAD space that we would use a data management system other than a portal? We do not have such a vastly different demographic or healthcare needs that our providers require worse services and less support to do their jobs than other states.

This does not make sense. In fact, the high median age of Tasmanians, strain on the Tasmanian healthcare system and worse healthcare outcomes relative to other states should indicate that there is more use for a portal and more support, especially in end-of-life care, not less.

This is not and should not be an issue review of legislation regarding scope and operation. This is an implementation concern - one that is not restricted or constrained by legislation and that can be implemented and decided on immediately.

I know the government is going to stand up and say we are going to wait for the review process and that will take 12 months and then the report will go to the minister, and the minister will bring it to the parliament and then the parliament will take that to the budget and then that will go to here. So, we're not going to do anything about it now. We're going to wait for two years or two and a half years before we make a decision.

By that time, we won't have doctors operating in this space, because that guy walked away and there are others lined up to go away, and it's not going to attract the doctors that we need.

I think the government needs to seriously consider what's important. As an email I received yesterday stated after reading yesterday's release, 'that's just a way of kicking the can down the road and questioned me if I think that by underfunding and not attracting Doctors to the VAD space that the delivery of an essential service for all Tasmanians will be minimized and will not address the needs of our state and that negates access to VAD'.

I did not respond to the question. As I have stated previously, I have faith in politicians to be responsible and not let their personal feelings regarding VAD influence their support for the processes and its funding and implementation.

On 8 July 2025, I received correspondence from the Department of Health explaining the review is to commence as soon as practicable after 23 October 2025 and is to be completed within 12 months of the commencement.

The review report is to be given to the minister as soon as practicable after the review is concluded. The minister is to cause a copy of the report to be tabled in each House of Parliament within five sitting days after it is given to the Minister.

I thank the Health department for that advice. As being the primary mover of the legislation, I was reasonably aware of what is in it, and the intent of the legislation.

I suppose there are two scenarios. Scenario 1: If the commission was given the finance to seek out a process using a portal that a project could start almost immediately.

Scenario 2: Let's wait for the review to commence as soon as practicable at the end of October. Let's report as soon as practicable after 12 months, let the minister table the report, review it and - then what, Mr President? Take that review to the next budget for consideration and debating?

Scenario 2 probably means a two- or three-year or longer delay with no guarantee that the review's recommendation will be heeded. We have seen that recently. What we do know about this government's current form is that independent reviews do not guarantee any action at all. Indeed, the opposite could occur. Tasmania cannot afford this lack of action in its healthcare policy.

On behalf of the people of Tasmania and the health practitioners who are working largely inadequately funded in this space, I hope that the new minister is able to convince the Premier, the Treasurer and Cabinet that appropriate funds should be made available for a portal. I note that the previous Leader of the Liberal government, Peter Gutwein, was very much in favour of VAD and the freedom of choice it brings to end-of-life care. It will be a sad reversal by the government to hamstringing the VAD process after all which was put into creating and passing such a landmark bill.

To those people listening and to the doctors and nurses and VAD support staff who have contacted me, I hope I have represented your case without becoming too frustrated.

On a lighter note, I have it on good authority that the portal does not require a roof. I urge you, honourable colleagues, to support this motion and call on the government to support funding a Tasmanian VAD portal.

[3.54 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I will make a brief contribution on this. First, I thank the honourable member for Mersey for his tireless advocacy for this compassionate, safe, legal framework for dying with dignity. We saw it again today, where numerous members of the medical community, but also the wider community, feel very comfortable talking to Mr Gaffney about the problems that they have with the way this extraordinary reform has been rolled out and implemented.

Tasmanians are being made to put up with worse than second best, relative to other jurisdictions that have voluntary assisted dying frameworks in place. It would be extremely helpful if the minister or the department who say that it is not viable to have an online portal could explain why they think it is not viable. To say that there's no evidence that an online portal would make the system work any better is to play deaf to every single participating medical professional.

The Tasmanian Planning Commission last week said the stadium is not viable, yet the government's prepared to spend something close to \$2 billion on it. Three weeks ago, the Racing minister announced that there would be \$1 million given to horse breeders to encourage the breeding of racehorses. Here we are talking about the expenditure of around \$1.5 million. I don't know if that's a recurrent expenditure or if it's one-off. Either way, it's a good investment if it makes sure that the scheme works for people who are working within that scheme.

We know how reviews work, and it was well laid out by the member for Mersey. Governments often use reviews as a means of delaying action. It's not like we have to remake or reinvent an online portal here to provide for functionality, but also to make sure that those empathetic and hardworking medical professionals - who are primary medical practitioners, CHPs, CMPs or AHPs - are not walking away from this framework, which parliament overwhelmingly got behind.

Ultimately, the people who will pay the highest price if the government doesn't accept the need and the reality, are people who are suffering, and who want the peace of mind of knowing that they can access voluntary assisted dying under the care of experienced medical professionals.

I certainly hope the minister for Health was listening to the member for Mersey's contribution because there is no excuse at all for not making sure that this system is highly functional and responsive to the people who are seeking to make it work, and the people who want it to work.

The \$1.5 million is a drop in the ocean. We subsidise the racing industries here to the tune of \$37 million every year. This government needs to have a good think about what's important. When we sign up to that code of ethical conduct and we promise to act in the public interest, this is an example of where we need to apply that ethical lens and understand we have to prioritise the health and wellbeing and the peace of mind of the people of Tasmania over, for example, encouraging horse trainers and breeders through financial incentives to breed more animals.

There's a terrible split lens here on the part of a government that throws money at colosseum-like projects like the stadium and horse racing and won't stump up for something which is so obvious and needed.

It sounds like it's ideological and it's within the Health department. Let's hope that the new minister for Health will see clearly. I hope that the participating medical practitioners who are part of this scheme go and seek an appointment with the minister for Health and provide that evidence that the Health department appears to be telling her doesn't exist about the need for an online portal.

[3.59 p.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, I thank the member for Mersey for bringing this forward and for the legislation. It's been an emotional ride for the member. The work that you've done is amazing.

I personally haven't had any contact with patients, but I have had contact with one doctor.

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

MOTION

Voluntary Assisted Dying Online Portal

Resumed from above.

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, as I mentioned before the break, I will have a very short contribution as it's been covered very well. The contributions have been fairly comprehensive by the member for Hobart and obviously the member for Mersey.

I haven't had any dealings personally with anyone who has been involved in VAD apart from a doctor who contacted me, a doctor who's a friend and who's had a lot of involvement in the VAD space. He told me it is time-consuming and rewarding. He said:

You know, you can spend six to seven hours at the first or second visit getting to know the person because you really need to know that person before you continue the process.

I hadn't realised how onerous it was, particularly on medical practitioners. This doctor is an absolutely amazing Launceston GP - and we know how busy GPs are, and to be able to spend that amount of time, whether it be during normal practice hours or after hours. At one stage he told me he was there until 1.00 a.m. He said the rewarding thing at the very end is, one particular patient he told me about grabbed his arm, obviously before he had the medication, looked him in the face and said, 'Thank you.' He said something like that makes it so worthwhile, to help someone in such a difficult situation.

I didn't have a lot of knowledge about the portal or how it actually worked. I was really surprised to see and to hear from the member for Mersey about the fact that Tasmania is the only state not to have a portal in place. To me, it's amazing - the fact that we weren't the last state, from my understanding, to get the VAD, but we're the only state not to have a portal. When I put into the search engine about the portal, I thought that it was interesting:

A voluntary assisted dying (VAD) portal is a secure, state-specific online system used by medical practitioners and other authorised personnel to manage the VAD process, including accessing training, submitting forms, applying for permits, and recording data for quality improvement.

This next section is really the prime part, I believe:

The primary reasons for a VAD portal are to streamline administration, ensure consistent application of the law, protect user privacy, and provide a secure platform for the entire VAD workflow.

I'm sure that members in this place appreciate the amount of work that's gone into it, particularly by the member for Mersey, and the terrible situation that people are in when they need to choose VAD.

From my perspective, I certainly support the motion before us. I believe that all tools necessary should be available for a smooth transition for end-of-life care.

[4.34 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I rise briefly in support of the motion that we have before us. I thank the member for Mersey for bringing this for discussion today.

It's really important. It's a clear demonstration of the member's ongoing commitment to this and advocacy for Tasmania to have an appropriate, good-quality, safe, accessible, functional system for people to be able to access voluntary assisted dying, where relevant and necessary. I hope that, at some point, you can lay down tools and not have to be such an active advocate for continuing to improve the system. We appreciate that you are still keeping a keen eye on things, and that you're somebody identifiable that people can go to for assistance and to advocate for improvements, which is really important.

I'd also add my thanks to all those in Tasmania who are facilitating this system to be operating and, largely, to be operating well and compassionately and being a really important part of our healthcare landscape now. It's incredible. I hope that it is, as others have observed, a very rewarding thing to be part of, as well as something that's challenging, which brings us to the point of this motion.

It's absolutely astonishing to me that we would be risking this system that does interact with incredibly vulnerable members of our community at incredibly difficult times in their lives, by not having something as straightforward as a piece of appropriate technology in place to assist the process to happen efficiently and effectively, and for it not to be a burden on the medical professionals who have to operate and engage with it. We are clearly lagging behind other jurisdictions. There is, it would appear, no need to demonstrate why we should need such a system and such a portal to be in place. Clearly, it's in place in other jurisdictions. It's been clearly identified by people participating in the system here, by medical professionals, that it's required. Now we've heard from the member for Mersey that we will, if we haven't already, be losing medical professionals from being participants in this system because of the lack of this portal - because it's just too onerous without it.

I absolutely support and reiterate the member for Mersey's comments that it is unacceptable to suggest that we wait for a review of the act. I agree, even if that review begins quite soon, it will take a measure of time. We would not expect it to be back with us until a year from now, and then it has to be considered by a government. It would then have to go through a budget process and then eventually, hopefully, end up in a budget some years down the track before we would see a portal as a result of the review. Why should we have to wait? Quite frankly, why should we wait and risk losing more valuable medical professionals from this important area of health care in the meantime?

I personally have heard from a number of people who have had some element of interaction with our VAD system. Largely, people have spoken so glowingly about it and how important it's been as a part of a journey for their family or for a loved one. One thing that I'm hoping will also get addressed through the review process - and it's appropriate that the review process would be the spot for this - is what we do in terms of supporting families post a VAD death. Maybe we can be doing more in that space, because that support for grieving families is an area that we haven't turned our mind to quite enough yet.

However, that is not in relation to this motion. It can wait for the review. This portal, though, is without doubt needed. It seems we can draw from other jurisdictions that are currently doing it, and look to implement a straightforward piece of technology that can be put in place here to good effect. If the government suggests that we wait for the review, they're going to hear a lot more about it in the two-, three-year interim before it might come about through that avenue. Thank you to the member. I support the motion wholeheartedly.

[4.39 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I will commence by thanking the member for Mersey for the opportunity to speak on this important matter in relation to the voluntary assisted dying process. I acknowledge the points and examples raised during your contribution.

The Tasmanian government, on behalf of the community, would like to thank the honourable member for his continued commitment and work over many years on the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Bill. I endorse the words of the honourable member for Nelson when she said that sometime in the future we hope that the honourable member can take a breath and step back from the work that he has continued to do in this space.

Tasmania's voluntary assisted dying law, the *End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act 2021*, allows eligible Tasmanians who are suffering from a terminal illness, and

who meet the strict eligibility criteria, to access a substance to end their life with support from registered health practitioners. The law has been in place now for nearly three years. In that time the number of people choosing to access voluntary assisted dying in Tasmania has steadily increased. We know, from observing other states and territories with voluntary assisted dying laws, that demand for voluntary assisted dying will only increase over time.

On behalf of the Tasmanian government, I acknowledge those who have died and express my sincere condolences to their families, friends, and loved ones. To actively assist a person to access voluntary assisted dying in Tasmania, medical practitioners and registered nurses must have completed the voluntary assisted dying training, as set out in the commission's previous annual report of 2023-2024.

As of 30 June 2024, 111 people have successfully completed the Tasmanian voluntary assisted dying training. Completing the training does not oblige a practitioner to become involved in supporting a person through the voluntary assisted dying process; it does, however, position those practitioners who wish to engage in the process with the knowledge to be able to do so. It is also heartening to read in the VAD Commission's 2023-24 report that practitioners who have assisted a person through the voluntary assisted dying process find the process professionally and personally rewarding. We heard the member for Launceston's example of her doctor friend's rewarding experience.

The voluntary assisted dying process is sequential, deliberative and highly structured. Practitioners assisting patients through the process are required by the act to document their decisions using approved forms and to comply with certain strict notification requirements. They are required to document the decisions using forms that are approved by the commission and to comply with certain strict notification requirements. The process was clearly outlined by the honourable member for Mersey in his contribution. I appreciated having that full understanding of what's required.

In Tasmania, practitioners are supported to comply with their documentation and notification requirements through the provision of manual and smart forms which are completed by practitioners and transmitted to the commission by email or post, and an Excel-based case-tracking database to which the data from the forms is entered. Again, we heard about the complexity surrounding that.

I can confirm the minister, Mrs Archer, met recently with the honourable member for Mersey, Mr Gaffney, who indicated and has been advised that some practitioners who have chosen to assist eligible people to access voluntary assisted dying in Tasmania have expressed frustration with the act's documentation and notification requirements. Again, examples were given. Mrs Archer has advised she is eager to meet with these practitioners to assist her in her understanding of the structured process and any issues with its applications.

I also expect that the minister, Mrs Archer, will be reading all contributions to this debate. I know that that was mentioned as well because there's somebody here listening on behalf of the minister. I know, given her commitment, that she will be reading them herself.

The Tasmanian government has been informed that overall feedback from practitioners has been consistently positive, emphasising the outstanding level of support that they have received from the Voluntary Assisted Dying Navigation Service and Voluntary Assisted Dying Commission in navigating the voluntary assisted dying process.

It is pleasing to note that significant work has been progressed by the Department of Health in exploring a potential provider with capacity to develop a VAD data-management system. Recognising the review of the act commences next month. Potential outcomes or recommendations from the review may impact a future VAD data-management system and these need to be considered. The act is to be reviewed after three years of operation from October 2025. The process to select a panel is currently underway and will be announced in the coming weeks. The minister, Mrs Archer, has advised she will be pleased to keep interested members updated in the plans to progress management of data.

Over the break I asked for a comment from Mrs Archer, given the information that was delivered by the honourable member for Mersey, and this is what was received:

Minister Archer would like to reassure Mr Gaffney that a portal will happen and has advised she is committed to a VAD portal and implementing a portal to assist practitioners who participate in the VAD process as soon as practicable.

As Mr Gaffney acknowledged, Mrs Archer is new in the role of minister and is keen to take advice on the best way to ensure this occurs in a suitable format for key stakeholders including doctors, nurses and the department. I trust that gives some comfort and assists with this matter going forward. I will certainly be following that too. I supported the legislation and am keen to see it through and work properly, effectively and efficiently.

In closing, on behalf of the Tasmanian government, I acknowledge the tremendously rewarding, but also inherently emotionally challenging, nature of the work involved with supporting a person through the voluntary assisted dying process.

The Tasmanian government acknowledges the free and valuable GP support program offered by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the doctors health service offered by Drs4Drs, that is doctors for doctors. I again commend our dedicated practitioners for their role in supporting those Tasmanians who are eligible to access voluntary assisted dying to enable them to exercise their choice to reduce their suffering by ending their lives legally.

On a personal note, in my capacity as a justice of the peace, I take this opportunity to share that I've recently accepted an opportunity through the Tasmanian Association of Justices of the Peace to undertake training to act as an independent witness for voluntary assisted dying second request forms. The first two sessions were oversubscribed in no time. There have been an additional two sessions arranged, one of which I will be participating in next Monday evening. That shows a high level of support by members of our Tasmanian community to undertake that, to be part of that second request form process.

Again, before I close, I acknowledge all those who have died after accessing voluntary assisted dying since the act's commencement in Tasmania. I know somebody in one of the other states and acknowledge their families and the difficult time. It was fairly recently. I express my deep sympathies to their families, friends and loved ones who are grieving.

The Tasmanian government thanks the member for Mersey and notes this notice of motion.

[4.49 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I thank the Leader. Please thank the minister for the comments she's made about the portal. That's really heartening. I appreciate the comments from members who have chosen to voice similar concerns. I know mine was a bit longwinded. I wanted to reflect the feedback I'd received from our medical and health practitioners.

I take this opportunity to talk about the review. The review gets underway in October. It's really important for those people listening we have input into that review. I encourage all Tasmanians to forward their thoughts to the review panel because our Tasmanian review not only looks at the operation of the legislation, but also the scope and the potential scope for further review purposes.

The review of the scope will probably include issues such as eligibility criteria including but not limited to residency, prognosis, dementia and decision-making capacity. As I mentioned before, there are also clauses in the act which refer to time restrictions like 48 hours or seven days. Any delay in the paperwork trail may impact negatively on that VAD experience and put undue stress and pressure on both the practitioner and the family.

The act will look at the improvements in other VAD acts, notably Queensland's and the ACT's, which came after us. However, some of the other states haven't included scope as part of their review process. Some of them have just included operation. I know that people across Australia and internationally are looking at the Tasmanian review process as a potential for things that they think should be in the law, so that debate is really important.

For those who don't know, in the in the act there are 20 parts with 147 clauses of the legislation to be reviewed and to be assessed as to its effectiveness. There may be amendments to the legislation to achieve a more appropriate and robust operation.

I want people to understand that the Tasmanian of *End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act* does not mention the words 'Adobe smart forms' or 'portal'. Neither of those systems appear in the act, because those words and management tools are part of the implementation process, not the legislative process. The review of the act is looking at the legislation and the operation of those clauses and how that can be improved. The portal and Adobe forms are the implementation - the tools people use to do the process to operate the act properly.

It makes no sense to delay by some years - and I thank the minister - the possible implementation of a portal based on the false premises and assertion by the government that it's part of the legislative review process, which has been intimated - 'Oh yes, we'll cover it as part of the review'. I am pleased the minister has clarified that they'll be looking at the portal.

People in this place know that I'm not precious about this legislation. To the listener, that means I'm not going to die in the ditch about clauses and amendments. When this act was passed, when I drafted the bill and brought it into the parliament, it became a stronger act because of participation by members of this place and the other place to make it better legislation, especially with such sensitive legislation.

Dare I say the review will also make it stronger legislation because it will be more reflective of what our community needs. It will be more reflective of some of the operational

processes that the clinicians, doctors and nurses find confusing, because all legislation can be improved.

Again, I say the portal is part of the implementation. It is not part of the legislative review. The portal can be achieved outside of that review process and should be.

Once again, I thank all members. I am really excited that the minister has come back with a statement through the Leader. I think that's wise. I have had - and I'm not telling out of school here - three or four ministers come and see me personally after reading the article yesterday, not realising that was the situation, and saying, 'Honourable member for Mersey, we need to do something about this.'

Ms Forrest - A move into the 21st century, perhaps.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. I think at the end of the day, the funds between \$1.5 million and \$2 million to ensure that this process - and I've had a number of people comment to me about how their loved ones exited this world because of our navigation system, because of our process, because of the commission, because of the doctors - it's a good thing we're doing in the state. I would hate to see it damaged to the extent that in the future other people won't be able to access it if they need to.

Thank you once again to all members, thank you to the Leader and to the minister, if she's listening, and her advisers for those comments, I'm really quite heartened by that. I am certain other members of the medical profession will hear that comment about meeting with the minister or the representatives of the minister to talk through some of the issues they may have. Thank you very much.

Mr President, I move -

That the motion be supported.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Routine Disclosure of Ministerial Diaries

[4.56 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I move -

- (1) That the Legislative Council notes the Resolutions of this House on 28 March 2023 and on 10 September 2024 requesting the Tasmanian Government undertake to introduce mandated requirements for the regular and routine disclosure of all Ministerial and Cabinet Secretary official diaries, detailing scheduled meetings, and their purpose, with stakeholders and organisations, including third parties and lobbyists; and when developing this disclosure regime to also:

- (a) ensure the process is informed by best practice examples of mandatory disclosure of Ministerial diary requirements established in other jurisdictions, including examples of oversight and compliance requirements; and
 - (b) develop and publicly consult on a proposed Tasmanian mandatory disclosure of Ministerial diaries scheme.
- (2) That the Legislative Council further notes that:
 - (a) The Tasmanian Government failed to report progress to this House by 28 November last year as requested by the 10 September Resolution;
 - (b) public consultation on a proposed Tasmanian mandatory disclosure of Ministerial diaries scheme did not occur; and
 - (c) despite the Tasmanian Government introducing quarterly routine disclosure of Ministerial diaries commencing with the January/March 2023 quarter; the current routine disclosures of Ministerial diaries system is not mandatory under statute does not occur in a reliable and timely manner; and the format and details disclosed remain deficient.
- (3) That the Legislative Council also notes, given the failure to implement the Integrity Commission's Lobbyist Code of Conduct reforms this year, the growing urgency for clear, timely and transparent disclosure of lobbying contact between government, advisors and lobbyists.
- (4) And that the Legislative Council calls on the Tasmanian government to:
 - (a) undertake comprehensive and public consultation as a priority on a best practice mandatory disclosure of Ministerial diaries model, and that process is to provide for input into the design, disclosure details, timeliness, application, and any other related matter; and
 - (b) report back to the Legislative Council by 5 December 2025 in relation to the above.

Motion 3 may be auspicious. It may be a case of third time lucky. Some members may be wondering why they're experiencing an odd sense of déjà vu at this particular moment. That may be because it's just over a year since this Chamber passed a similar motion, on Tuesday 10 September 2024, requesting the state government undertake a comprehensive and public consultation on a best practice ministerial diaries disclosure model and to provide the Council with a progress report by 28 November that same year. That was our last scheduled sitting day of that year.

Unfortunately, the government quite shamefully chose to completely snub its nose at the Resolution of this place, and that is unacceptable. Sadly, such arrogant and disrespectful behaviour is not an aberration in this place. In fact, today we've had some conversations in other aspects of matters on our Notice Paper that reflected similar sentiments. An example in addition to the ones we've discussed today is the failure to act on the Resolution passed by this Chamber in September last year. This compounds the failure to act in accordance with the initial Resolution passed in this place on this same matter that my motion relates to on 28 March 2023, the year before. When added to other unrelated matters, I'm aware of at least six Resolutions passed by this place which the government has chosen to ignore, conveniently, or we might say rudely and disrespectfully.

Now is not the time to go into detail regarding this unfortunate and undemocratic trend. However, I'm placing on the record that to turn a blind eye to such unacceptable behaviour by any government is to be complicit in devaluing the democratic outcomes of this place. I will call out such behaviour whenever I have the opportunity to do so. However, it's worth noting those ignored Resolutions occurred under the arrogant and dismissive approach of the government past. In contrast, and optimistically, there does appear to be a different dynamic and a sense of intent surrounding the government present. Hence, I'm hoping that the current government is open to taking a more responsive and respectful approach to the will of this Chamber, with past Resolutions acted upon instead of falling on deaf ears.

This raises the question of exactly what the action via responsive and accountable government should look like in response to this motion before us - No. 3 on the Notice Paper. Well, hopefully, future action will not resemble nor repeat parts (1) and (2) of the motion that I note. Part (1) details the failure of the previous governments to respect and act on the Resolutions passed in this place on 28 March 2023, and subsequently on 10 September 2024, calling for the proposed mandatory ministerial disclosure scheme to be publicly consulted and also informed by best-practice examples from other jurisdictions.

Similarly, part (2) also details the failure of the previous government to review or publicly consult on the current non-mandatory disclosure system, and therefore any progress report made to the House by 28 November also failed to materialise. It could have literally been a progress report that said, 'We haven't done it yet.' It could have been, 'Actually, we don't intend to do it' - but nothing. Not even the courtesy of meeting that expectation that they come back to tell us what they were doing.

Before I move on to part (3) of the motion, I'm just going to discuss a bit more why the shortcomings summarised in (1) and (2) matter. I will expound on that. For the benefit of those who are new to this place or watching online who may not be familiar with the debate surrounding the current ministerial diaries disclosure system, I will briefly provide some context.

Although lobbying is a central and legitimate activity for the functioning of a democratic system, there has been a growing concern locally, nationally and internationally regarding the inherent risks of corruption and other undesirable risks associated with it, and the need for effective regulation to mitigate those risks. I will quote from the OECD on this:

Lobbying is often perceived as an opaque activity of dubious integrity, which may result in undue influence, unfair competition

and regulatory capture to the detriment of fair, impartial and effective policy making.

The routine disclosure of ministerial diaries is recognised as a key transparency tool, a real boon in our public accountability toolbox. In its 2024 submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration Inquiry into access to Australian Parliament House by lobbyists, the Grattan Institute stated the following:

Ministers are Australia's most senior public policy decision makers, so meeting with a minister is a particularly privileged opportunity to influence. Publishing ministerial diaries would enable journalists and others to know who ministers are meeting - and, perhaps even more importantly, who they are not meeting - which could encourage politicians to seek more diverse input.

Ministerial offices should publish details of all official meetings, both in the office and offsite, all scheduled phone calls, and all events attended by a minister in an official capacity. 'Official meetings' should include not only those at which a minister was present, but also those held with ministerial advisers only. Records of meetings should identify those present and key issues discussed.

Although that submission was provided to the national parliament, the points made are just as pertinent here in Tasmania in relation to Tasmanian ministers and the Tasmanian community.

On Tuesday 28 March 2023, this Chamber resolved to support the proposal that the state government be requested to develop and publicly consult on a proposed Tasmanian mandatory disclosure of ministerial diaries scheme.

That Resolution was subsequently conveyed formally to the Premier on that same date. However, instead of the requested consultation process to help inform the most effective disclosure model occurring, the government introduced what is now the current quarterly routine diaries disclosure system, which is administered by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC).

These so-called routine disclosures are released every quarter in arrears. For example, in mid- to late October 2025 we should see the release of the ministerial diary disclosure for the previous quarter of July-August-September. I caution you, Mr President, don't hold your breath on that. Until this morning, the only diaries for this year's disclosures available on the website were for the first quarter; that is, January, February and March. They were the only ones that have been disclosed until this morning.

Then the ministerial diaries for April, May and June, which should have been disclosed, I would have said, in mid- to late July or, to be fair, perhaps mid-August by the latest, to recognise that we had the concurrent caretaker period in place for some of that time; yet, they didn't go up in a timely fashion. They have literally only gone up this morning. Is that a coincidence, I wonder, given we are talking about it today?

I was checking it daily these past couple of weeks, wondering when the April-May-June quarterly ministerial diary disclosure might go up online. I wonder when we might get it, considering it's months late? Lo and behold, there it was this morning when I checked. Immediately, we have a live example, as it were, of why people are frustrated by the lack of reliability and timeliness in the current disclosure system, put in place really just as a stopgap 'go away' measure from the government when I first brought this matter to this place back in 2023. This failing seriously erodes the public's confidence in, as well as the credibility of, both the disclosure system and of the government administering it.

As has been pointed out recently, a lot can happen within a three-month period. Budgets and snap elections can happen in that period. Those aside, we've regularly seen just in the course of normal business in this place: legislation arise, be tabled, be debated and passed in this parliament within a three-month period. What this means is that under the current system of tardy quarterly disclosures, there's a very real likelihood that the parliament and the public may have no opportunity to be aware of relevant meetings held between government and lobbyists or stakeholders which were germane to the debate of legislation in this place.

Instead of fostering and informing public confidence in good governance practice, this perceived deliberate time lag only serves to undermine confidence in government decision-making. In contrast, let me point to Queensland, which requires monthly disclosure of ministerial diaries.

As many are only too aware, once diaries are disclosed here, the details contained also leave much to be desired. I previously raised in this place an example of the routine diary disclosure for the quarter of 1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023, the final quarter of 2023. I use as an example the then-deputy premier, treasurer and minister for infrastructure and transport. In that disclosure of that minister's diary there was a total of 120 meeting entries for that three-month period. Only 57 entries contained any content in the purpose column. That leaves almost 48 per cent of meeting entries with the 'purpose' component left empty.

Further, of the 57 diary entries which did have some content provided in the 'purpose' column, 41 of those consisted solely of the phrase 'various matters' or 'various issues'. That equates to almost 72 per cent of entries consisting of solely a variation on 'various matters'. It is absolutely farcical. That's deliberate obfuscation by any standard.

In 2024, the *Tasmanian Inquirer's* analysis of the Premier's diary disclosures for the July-August-September period of 2024 found that - and I put in air quotes here - 'general issues' and 'various issues' or 'various matters' were listed as the purpose of meetings in that disclosure 38 times. So much for leading from the front by the Premier.

Let's look at the only example from this year, 2025, that was available, until this morning, and that was, of course, the January-February-March quarter of 2025. For this period, the Premier's disclosed work diary details had a total of 190 entries. Removing from consideration the self-explanatory media entries, there were 156 total ministerial events. Of those 156 work appointments, only 72 had anything put in the 'purpose' column. That's over 53 per cent without a purpose listed. Of the 72 items which did have a purpose listed, you have a choice of either 'various issues' or 'various matters' listed 66 of 72 times. That equates to 91.6 per cent of the less than half of the Premier's diary entries for the three-month period which had any purpose listed as either 'various issues' or 'various matters'.

I know I've gone on about that a bit, but I can attest even now, from the cursory glance at the disclosures that were put up online this morning for the April to June quarter of this year, the Premier's diary disclosure continues to be littered with 'various matters' in the purpose column.

The government wonders why Tasmanians laugh when they hear claims of this being the 'most transparent government ever'. There is either delusion on steroids occurring here, or gaslighting on an industrial scale, neither of which are remotely appropriate nor acceptable from a government of this state. I shake my head about it. I really do. While our interstate counterparts do not disclose anything as detailed, for example, as meeting minutes under their disclosure scheme or anything inappropriately detailed that some people may want to see, they do, at least in many other jurisdictions, have more context provided when they are detailing the purpose of meetings in their ministerial diary disclosure schemes.

I will give a very brief example of that: the Victorian Premier's diary disclosure for the April-to-June quarter this year contains numerous entries listed as a 'stakeholder meeting', but with all the individual attendees listed - a level of detail we don't see here. There are also entries with even greater detail, and I'll give an example: a purpose of a meeting held between the Victorian Premier and Swinburne University in this year's April-to-June disclosures has as the purpose listed:

Discuss jobs and advance manufacturing landscape for the state international student visas and changes to evidence levels.

What there was not, across the entire three months of that Victorian Premier's diary disclosure, was 'various issues' or 'various matters'. Not once. Time does not permit me to detail all the other fascinating and contrasting diary disclosure entries from our interstate counterparts; but suffice to say they do make the current Tasmanian scheme look decidedly opaque, amateurish and half-hearted at best. And in fact, it's hard to not actually read it as cynical at worst.

So far, I've raised concerns about the timeliness or otherwise of our current disclosure system, and I've raised concerns regarding the detail actually disclosed or otherwise; but another limitation of the current system is the scanned PDF document format that each minister's disclosed diary is presented in. It prevents functional searching or cross-referencing of entries. It's not a useful system for the purpose for which people will be using it.

Ideally, we'd have a ministerial diary disclosure database where members of the public could, for example, insert the stakeholder's name and see all the ministers who those stakeholders met with during the period according to the diary disclosures. Let's think of a really relevant example here, right now, which no doubt members of the community, members of the relevant industry and members of the media would all be interested in. Let's think about how we might wish to search ministerial diary disclosures for meetings between Tasmanian government ministers and, for example, the RSPCA or Greyhounds Tasmania, between the date of the last election in 2024 and 10 August 2025 when the announcement of the greyhound racing phase-out was made - a decision that I personally welcome and absolutely confirm here, but which came about, it would appear, as a surprise. The public, the industry and the media would all be relevantly asking themselves what influenced this decision. Who had access to having a say in this decision? Who was consulted in this decision?

We could take the example of the proposed AFL-demanded Macquarie Point stadium. Currently, Tasmanians need to trawl through pages of numerous ministerial diaries, including those of the Premier, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal and maybe the Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events, to see where relevant stakeholders on that matter, involved in that debate, may have received access to a relevant ministerial ear.

In the Grattan Institute Senate committee submission I mentioned earlier, the point is also made, and I quote again:

To be useful, ministerial diaries must be published in a timely manner and an accessible form. For example, all meetings for one month could be published by the end of the following month, as already happens in Queensland. The publication should be searchable and exportable, to facilitate scrutiny.

It is worth noting the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption, in its 2021 report *Investigation into the regulation of lobbying, access and influence in NSW*, also raised concerns over the format of disclosures, stating, and I quote:

An equally important matter to proper disclosure concerns accessibility. In its current format [as PDF files], diary data is not easily accessible or searchable. This further reduces the utility of disclosures and makes analysis more difficult.

Clearly, other jurisdictions have noted the same limitations in the format issue. Clearly, there is an opportunity to improve, here and elsewhere, and we can look to jurisdictions that do it well. In a digital age, the scanned document, or PDF format, is unnecessarily cumbersome.

This also leads me to part (3) of the motion, noting the significance and urgency for meaningful ministerial diary disclosure reform in the absence of the anticipated Integrity Commission reforms to our lobbyist code of conduct and register, as recognised by the recent 2024 Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration and their inquiry into the access of lobbyists to the Australian parliament. Ministerial diary disclosures allow for valuable cross-referencing, not just across ministerial portfolios but also with disclosures made by lobbyists via those relevant codes of conduct and registers.

Unfortunately, in the absence of the Integrity Commission's intended reforms to our lobbyists register and code of conduct, all we currently have is a list of registered lobbyists in this state. A list of registered lobbyists does not tell us whether lobbyists receive disproportionate and privileged access to decision makers. A list does not shine a light on when and how often they may be securing the ears of government or regarding what policy matter. Nor does it tell us whether lobbyists' access is well balanced, partially, or not at all with NGO and community stakeholders, for example. Without a comprehensive and accessible ministerial diary disclosure system, there is no other mechanism other than the time-consuming RTI system for the public to see and scrutinise the access and potential influence over government decision-making that lobbyists and vested interests may have. This in turn risks undermining confidence that decisions are being made in the public interest.

I stress I do not believe it's a case of either/or when it comes to ministerial diary disclosure and the important lobbyist code of conduct and register reforms we should be putting

in place here, as designed by our Integrity Commission. Ideally, Tasmanians would have both an accessible and rigorous ministerial diary disclosure scheme operating alongside an equally robust lobbyist code of conduct and register, but the absence of the latter highlights even more urgently the need for a comprehensive review of the former, as called for in this motion.

That leads me to the fourth and final part of the current motion. Part (4)(a) calls on the government to undertake, as a priority, comprehensive public consultation, seeking input on the design of a mandatory best-practice ministerial diary disclosure system, which may address the current limitations experienced in timeliness, content, accessibility and searchability, which I've just outlined. There may be others that are raised during such a consultation. I am certainly not giving an exhaustive list here, just an indicative one.

As I've also discussed, this is a vital step which this Chamber recognised in the initial 2023 Resolution, which the government has so far refused to undertake. The shortcut did not work. It's now clear that leapfrogging that vital step was a false economy and was at the expense of transparency, accountability and communities' confidence. I reiterate my assessment made during a previous debate, that currently we have a ministerial diaries dissimulation racket rather than a genuine disclosure model.

I also reiterate that this recently election-washed 'watch us turn a new leaf' government still has considerable ground to cover to re-earn Tasmanians' trust and confidence, particularly when it comes to genuine transparency and accountability. The motion before us today presents a real and meaningful stepping stone towards rebuilding that community trust.

I have stated previously, and reiterate now, it's considered standard and best practice in the community and private sectors to routinely undertake periodic reviews of programs and initiatives. There's no shame for a government or a parliament to also do so. Rather, it's a professional and responsible approach to take. Further, it's also considered responsible and best practice to consult with affected stakeholders when undertaking such periodic reviews looking for improvement and progress.

It is in that context I once again, for the third time in as many years, seek to provide Tasmanians with a say in making our ministerial diary disclosure system mandatory and which provides meaningful information in an accessible and timely manner. What does the community need to see and within what time frame for the disclosure model to inform them usefully and in a timely way and crucially, to restore confidence in our system of governments, governance and political decision-making?

I am conscious the Chamber has a range of important items still listed for debate. Although there are many examples, and I could cite eminent persons to quote in support of a rigorous and timely ministerial diary disclosure regime, I will instead begin to wrap up this contribution to hear if other members may also like to make contributions and leave space for that.

We all know hindsight is a beautiful and yet frustrating thing. I cannot help thinking that if the first of the requests passed by this place on 28 March 2023 had been respected and acted upon by the then government, we possibly would not be having this 'third time lucky' debate now.

While I do not endorse needless repetition in this place, surely the government can see by now that I will not be giving up or backing down on this matter. I feel too strongly that Tasmanians deserve better than the minimalist PDF scans they have previously been served up in an incredibly untimely fashion by former iterations of this government.

Tasmanians deserve better in attitude and respect for democratic votes which occur in this place and the broader parliament. Tasmanians also deserve more comprehensive, rigorous and reliable transparency and accountability mechanisms. It should not be too difficult for a government led by a Premier who likes to claim that it is the most transparent government ever. Why is this so difficult that it requires three votes in as many years?

Ultimately, all this motion is calling for is that we have a ministerial diary disclosure system that lives up to its name. It's worth emphasising the call for a ministerial diary disclosure scheme is not contentious in itself. These are transparency and accountability mechanisms that are accepted in principle, broadly, widely and without question.

However, whether and how the implementation of this transparency mechanism meets community expectation is a matter of serious and growing contention. It's not good enough to do what I might call a 'half something' effort if I were not in this place, but here I'd use a different term that is more parliamentary. It's not coming to mind, but a far from adequate effort - and pretend that you have done what was requested. It's just not good enough.

We hear about whitewashing or greenwashing; those terms are used to describe the efforts of involved, vested interests or other corporate stakeholders seeking to usurp the intent of a genuine movement and claim some form of social licence that's actually just skin deep. It's unwarranted and undeserved. It's performative and misleading. Instead, the intent of whitewashing or greenwashing is to control perception and to control the message without undertaking the fundamental change that's necessary. This is similar to cases where governments seek to control community accountability expectations and usurp the momentum that's there in the cry from the community for more accountability and genuine transparency.

We are seeing performative transparency and faux transparency producing quarterly PDF documents of which 91 per cent of the included purposes of meetings consist of either 'various issues' or 'various matters'. This can only be described as performative transparency, at best. It does not reflect genuine intent nor respect for the community's right to be able to inform itself on whether vested interests are receiving privileged access and are benefiting at the cost of public interest. Hence, this motion seeks for Tasmanians to be consulted and to have input into how best to make our disclosure system genuine, accessible, timely and robust.

It is important to note this motion does not seek to impose any particular ministerial diary disclosure model. None. I am not dictating what the outcome of this should be. Today's debate is not about those of us in this place declaring we know what a viable and mandatory best-practice system should look like when it comes to ministerial diary disclosure. I have provided some thoughts and ideas, but I am not dictating an outcome. I am not trying to impose a model here and now. The motion is very reasonable. It's the third time and it's been very reasonable. It doesn't even dictate a deadline for the full activity to occur and a result to come out the other end of it. It just makes a request for public consultation to be undertaken and begun, and for there to be a report back to this place before we rise for this year, on where that's up to; on how progress is going.

To be very clear, there's no room for misapprehension or misinterpretation. The motion's final paragraph, (4)(b), merely requires a formal update on progress to be provided to the Council by 5 December 2025. This may take the form of an update on who will be, for example, undertaking the review, or what the expected time frame might be, or the proposed public consultation process, or whatever. It is just a report back on progress. It is a minimum ask, really, that should demonstrate genuine intent. Whatever the content of that report back, in order for it to comply with the intent of the spirit of this, it does require that some action along the lines described here is undertaken.

In September 2024, I stood here and said:

A truly transparent and accountable government committed to delivery of democratic good governance would not think twice of undertaking such a consultation. It certainly wouldn't take being asked twice to do so.

For the third consecutive year, I seek to put that same request a third time. I commend this motion to the House.

[5.24 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I admire the member for Nelson's patience, even though there were notes of exasperation as well -

Ms Rattray - I wrote down 'frustration'.

Ms FORREST - Yes, well, I will get to that. I will make a fairly brief contribution on this motion, because at its heart lies the question of public trust in government decision-making. I acknowledge the detail and extensive comments provided by the member for Nelson. In the notes I have prepared to speak on this motion, I may repeat some of what she said, without collaborating with her obviously. It is interesting that the same things pop up, as these are particularly relevant to this question.

It is not an onerous ask. I find it hard to understand why we seem to be having to ask for a pretty reasonable thing a number of times, with the full support of this House, to be back here again. It doesn't really make a lot of sense. I would also hope that in this new parliament, where we have all heard the commitments from the Premier to work collaboratively across the parliament, that we might actually see a formal response to a very reasonable request from this House, the member for Nelson putting it to this House in the past. If I feel frustrated, I am sure it's nothing compared to what the honourable member for Nelson feels.

As the member for Nelson said herself, lobbying itself is not inherently problematic. It is a legitimate part of democracy that individuals, businesses and organisations put forward their views to those elected to represent them. However, lobbying becomes a problem when it takes place without transparency, and when some voices are heard more often than others and when access is not equitable - particularly when the public cannot see who is influencing the choices that affect us all.

The simplest way to shine a light on these interactions is through the mandatory regular disclosure of ministerial diaries. The member for Nelson said this is not revolutionary. It's not something new or untried that she's asking for here, and that the House has asked for previously.

Clear disclosure tells Tasmanians who ministers are meeting with and for what purpose. It allows the public to scrutinise whether influence is being exercised appropriately. It helps guard against conflicts of interest or even the perceptions of that. Importantly, it actually protects ministers themselves and those engaged in legitimate advocacy from any suggestion of secrecy or undue influence. I believe that is sometimes a little overlooked as well. This actually can protect the ministers, because it's out there. If it's properly done, it's open, transparent and 'nothing to see here'.

As I mentioned, this Chamber has recognised the value before, with the previous motions brought to the Chamber by the honourable member for Nelson in March 2023 and again in September 2024. We then, similarly, as we assume we may today, pass Resolutions calling on the government to act, to develop a mandatory disclosure scheme informed by best practice elsewhere, and to consult the public on its design and report back on the progress. It's not a huge ask.

Both times, the previous calls have been ignored or not acted on. Instead of genuine reform and meaningful, evidence-based approaches, the government opted for a voluntary quarterly disclosure of limited diary details. That system is patchy, unreliable and incomplete.

As outlined by the member for Nelson earlier, releases too have been delayed or missed altogether. The detail provided is often so vague as to be meaningless. Diary entries described as 'general issues' or 'various matters' tell the public nothing of substance and, of course, give no confidence. That makes a mockery of the very idea of disclosure.

The Tasmanian Integrity Commission has been clear in its consultation on lobbying reforms. It reported that:

Keeping and publishing ministerial diaries was supported by submissions, and is regular practice in other jurisdictions. The Commission supports publishing Ministerial diaries as a matter of good practice for government transparency.

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) too argued for reform, calling for:

... publication of details about meetings between the government and lobbyists, in a format which is accessible and easy to understand ... not only relating to face-to-face meetings, but also phone calls, emails and/or messages.

National bodies have also added their voices, and I might add, the member for Nelson quoted the Grattan Institute. I will just repeat a part of a quote that she mentioned:

Ministerial offices should publish details of all official meetings, both in the office and offsite, all scheduled phone calls, and all events attended by the minister in an official capacity. ...

To be useful, ministerial diaries must be published in a timely manner and an accessible form.

This repeats a little of some of the quotes that the member for Nelson made, but I just want to pick out the key issues.

The Centre for Public Integrity is equally clear:

In order to promote transparency and accountability, lobbying activity should be periodically disclosed via publication of the diaries of ministers, shadow ministers and their chiefs of staff.

What is in this motion and in those that have preceded it are not radical demands. They reflect the considered views of integrity bodies, community advocates and transparency experts across the country. They are not untested ideas. As we have known in previous debates on motions on this topic, Queensland requires monthly disclosure with details of meetings, attendees and subject matter. New South Wales, Victoria, and the Australian Capital Territory all publish regular mandatory disclosures. Internationally, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada and the United States have similar requirements. I'm not sure that still applies in the United States, but it did once. It may still do. Tasmania, by contrast, is lagging well behind.

This motion is modest and reasonable; it does not impose a particular model. It simply requires the government to finally undertake comprehensive public consultation on a best-practice scheme and to report back to this House by 5 December 2025. It is surely not too much to ask. That deadline, as the member for Nelson clearly outlined in her closing comments, is not about finalising the process. It is an accountability measure to ensure this work is not, once again, deferred or ignored.

Tasmanians deserve to know who is in the ear of their ministers. They deserve confidence that access is fair and that decisions are made in the public interest, not behind closed doors or under the veil of secrecy. It's well past the time we joined other jurisdictions across Australia and the world in treating transparency as the foundation of good governance, not an optional extra. I commend the member for Nelson for again bringing this motion to the Chamber, and I will be supporting the motion.

[5.32 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I will make a brief contribution. 'Frustration' is one descriptor for the member for Nelson, but we should all feel disrespected by the government, given that this is the third time a similarly worded Resolution has come to the Council and will undoubtedly be passed. At what point are we collectively going to say to the government, 'Enough'? I don't believe that the government would have the same level of comfort ignoring a similar Resolution from the House of Assembly, so we shouldn't tolerate it. We are the House of review, and a really important part of our job is to hold the government to account.

A number of members who are here today were at the Integrity Commission's briefing on ethics and integrity in the lunch break. It was a short but good refresher on what comprises ethics and integrity. It was a good reminder of the members' Code of Conduct, which we sign up to, that requires us to act always in the public interest. It's very clear from the history of corporate influence on politics in Tasmania that successive governments and various ministers have put corporate interests ahead of the public interest. There's been no line of sight to understand how decisions have been made that manifestly work against the public interest.

The history of gaming machines in Tasmania is perhaps the best example of how corporate influence has had the ear of successive governments of both colours. It has been able to establish a very profitable system for itself, which - as we heard from the member for Nelson this morning - has in the past year led to \$193 million coming out of the pockets of Tasmanians across the island.

This is in part because when the deed with the Federal Group expired, there had been a whole lot of lobbying done before it expired. The gambling industry from here and interstate was lining up at the doors of the Premier and various ministers, and the system we have now, which hooked \$193 million out of the pockets of our communities, was in a very significant part designed by the gambling industry. The decision to walk away from a promise made by the Premier to deliver on mandatory pre-commitment, so the people would lose less of their money, was heavily influenced by the gambling industry here and interstate. That policy switch, and that framework that was put in place, was manifestly not in the public interest.

Ultimately, we are all public officials, public servants. A minister of the Crown is a servant of the Tasmanian people. The only reason that you would find having details of your ministerial diary being published 'onerous', to use the member for Murchison's word, is if you find it irksome or uncomfortable to explain how you spend your time as a minister when you're on the public dime; either because you don't want people to know which vested interests you're meeting with or, potentially, because you're a slacker and you'd have a ministerial diary full of holes and holidays.

It does take me back to the Basslink debacle of the summer of 2016, and we shouldn't speak ill of the departed from this place, but former minister for energy, Matthew Groom, was suspiciously absent when the cable went down. He was absent from public communications, out of sight somewhere. We asked for his ministerial diary through Right to Information, and after an extended and deeply frustrating period of being blocked, we got a version of what is posted today as some indicator of a ministerial diary, and it had blocks in it that just said 'busy'. Busy all day, busy for half the next day, 'I'm busy'. He was just busy. That's why he couldn't talk to Tasmanians about the Basslink outage and what that meant for energy security in Tasmania. As it turns out, we busted him. He had gone on holiday with his family and didn't come back until some days after the cable went down.

Perhaps ministers are reluctant to share the full details of their diary because, for example, back in 2022, there was a flash fundraiser up in the Premier's office, using a public space for a meeting with corporate leaders, \$4000 a ticket. We had this confirmed: \$4000 a ticket. Who was there? The CEOs of the big salmon corporations. What promise were they made by the Premier at that dinner? They were made a promise to their faces that the Premier was committed to expansion of inshore finfish farming. That private \$4000-a-head dinner saw a policy commitment being made out of sight, out of mind and beyond the knowledge of everyday Tasmanians who pay ministers' salaries.

We have Font PR here - a former chief of staff of a former premier, a huge corporate client list, massive ownership of rural and regional papers and a very clear path through to the minister's office, through to the Premier's office. Now, we know Font PR is a registered lobbyist and it is undertaking a legitimate business. I am not taking away from that; but in a place like Tasmania, which is so cosy and small, the connections between politicians, vested interests and other stakeholders can often be, just by virtue of how we live here, quite close. Those connections, should they influence public policy, should be understood by Tasmanians, in the

same way that we had a short refresher today from the Integrity Commission on declaring conflicts of interest, which is not something that we are culturally very good at here.

We should have a cultural commitment to transparency in democratic governance. Ultimately, it is the people of Tasmania who pay the wages of ministers who earn more than a quarter of a million dollars a year. It is simply not good enough that most of the democratic world has accepted the reality of the need for genuine transparency and publishes ministerial diaries, whereas here, this Council has been given the middle finger by the government in response to its previous two Resolutions, but much worse than that: the Tasmanian people are being treated with contempt by a government that talks the big talk on transparency but whose track record is very poor.

I am sure members have received a copy of the independent review of Tasmania's Right to Information Framework, which landed in our inboxes at 3.36 this afternoon, undertaken by professors Tim McCormack and Rick Snell, very esteemed academics and contributors to our community. I will read a couple of choice lines that are very relevant to this debate:

It is an easy thing for political leaders, especially early in a new term of government, to articulate a commitment to transparency: we all know it is beneficial, and we all want to be seen to be committing ourselves to it. However, transparency in government does not result from rhetoric devoid of substance and nor is it an end in itself. The ultimate objective is the quality of our democracy and an effective RTI framework helps strengthen three key inextricable threads that are core to the path to that goal.

This goes back to transparency about how ministers are spending their time - with whom and for what purpose. These three threads are:

Increased accountability of the government to the people; increased participation of the people in their governance; and increased commitment to the concept of government as custodians of public information on behalf of the people.

After extensive consultation, no doubt with a number of members of this place, but also within government and without, the reviewers found:

... it has become increasingly clear that the current frustrations with a lack of transparency in government stem less from legislative design and more from cultural and administrative shortcomings.

That is what we are dealing with here: not an administrative shortcoming, but a cultural attitude towards accountability and transparency that is deeply wanting.

A central and recurring concern is the persistence of a culture of non-disclosure and obfuscation.

This is very germane to this debate we are having here. One of the recommendations they make that the Greens are very interested to see happen here is 'the automatic release of Cabinet documents after 10 years as an important contribution to a significant transformation in Tasmania's information culture'. They've also recommended 'Tasmania join the growing

number of Westminster systems that now routinely release cabinet policy information 30 days after a Cabinet decision'.

These changes would send an unambiguous message that transparency in government information practice is the new default, not the exception, and act as a circuit-breaker to the prevailing culture.

I haven't had a chance to read that large body of work yet, but I think there'll be something in it for us all because all of us at one time or another have sought to extract information from the government through right to information. Many months and grey hairs later, often what we get back is pages full of black, redacted material.

It's the same rubbish, different bin as pretending that you're being transparent about ministerial diaries when what you're doing is tokenistic at best and lip service at worst. In New Zealand, where they have an open culture of declaring conflicts of interest at the beginning of meetings, it is de rigueur for members around the table to openly declare or question whether this connection that they have could be perceived or actually be a conflict of interest. They also proactively release, within 30 business days of final decisions being taken by Cabinet, all Cabinet papers, unless there is a good reason not to publish all or part of the material or to delay the release.

I will close by saying that good governments have nothing to hide. Good ministers have nothing to hide. Ministerial diaries should be a matter of public record. They are funded by the people who put us in there. They're funded by the people who pay the salaries of government ministers.

I know this is the third such motion that the Council has debated and will pass. After the last two Resolutions of this place were ignored, perhaps we could have been a bit more hardline in this motion but there's a kindness that's part of the culture of this place, which is one of the reasons it's a good place to work. I understand that the member for Nelson is trying to give the government an opportunity to be its best self but come 5 December, if there's not a coherent and responsible response to this third motion on establishing a process to determine the best form to publish ministerial diaries, then there needs to be further action taken.

I don't know, Mr President, if you and the Chair of Committees, for example, would feel compelled, on behalf of the Council, to have a chat to the Premier about why there's this resistance to a now commonplace transparency mechanism. We don't want to be back here early next year because we know the member for Nelson is not going to give up on this - nor should we, because we've all resolved that ministerial diaries should be published, that they should detail who a minister is meeting with and the purpose of that meeting. That is the 'why' of the meeting, and it only raises suspicions, not just of a lack of adherence to transparency, but it raises suspicions they're trying to hide something. It works against the government ultimately not to hear what this Council will three times have asked them to do. At some point we are going to have to assert our authority and require the government to do this. We're not requiring them to spend any money. It's not a budget bill or anything like that. We're requiring them to establish, in good faith, a process of consultation. It shouldn't be rocket surgery because now we have any number of other jurisdictions that have a model in place for the publication of ministerial diaries, so we don't need to reinvent the wheel. What we need is for government to understand this issue is not going to go away and it just makes them look shifty to have them

ignore a Resolution of this place again on what these days is just a very basic transparency and accountability measure.

I am very thankful to the member for Nelson for her tenacity. I hope that third time's the charm, but we'll be here on 5 December waiting for the government's response and let's hope this time they get it.

[5.50 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I rise to speak on behalf of the government in response to the member for Nelson's motion in relation to ministerial diaries and public disclosures. It's been interesting listening to a bit of the history on how we're here for the third time. I've certainly heard that history before, but it's always good to be reminded.

The government is committed to continuing high standards of public disclosure and accountability and the release of information from ministerial diaries is a small but important part of the government's transparency agenda. All the Tasmanian state government agencies as well as ministerial and parliamentary services proactively and routinely disclose information on a twice-yearly basis.

In 2016, ministerial and parliamentary services introduced a range of voluntary disclosures including staff salaries, ministerial travel and entertainment, taxi fares, fleet cars and ministerial and electorate office fittings.

I am advised that none of this information was released by the previous government.

There is also a significant number of State Service agencies providing proactive publication of a wide range of government information across agencies. The government continues to build on and improve the accountability of government decision-making through an increased release of proactive government information.

I also note that some of that has been challenged in relation to ministerial diaries. From the beginning of 2023, ministerial diaries have been released quarterly, providing information on meetings, visits, media and attendance at functions. We heard some of the examples read out. The release of this quarterly reporting of ministerial diaries has been discussed regularly and in response to motions such as this. This motion, we know, is number three.

It is my understanding that the government was the first government in Tasmania to introduce a regular disclosure scheme for ministerial diaries, and it was done voluntarily as part of the government's transparency agenda. The government recognised the importance of providing public information surrounding meetings, visits, events and media commitments to the community. Importantly, the information is publicly available on the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Ministerial and Parliamentary Support - Routine Disclosures website.

As part of the preparation for the disclosure, all personal electorate meetings or internal government briefings with ministers, staff or government officials are not published as part of the diary disclosure, with only official ministerial meetings and business disclosed. The ministerial diaries are released regularly, in fact quarterly, and I understand that information is now available up to 30 June 2025, following the disruption of nearly two months due to the state election and then the reappointment of the government and Cabinet ministers.

Now that the government has been recommissioned, it has been able to finalise the latest quarterly reporting of ministerial diaries and release that information to the public. I think that might have been today.

I also advise that there is a significant amount of work to produce these diary disclosures to the public, ensuring the provision of correct information from hundreds to thousands of diary entries over the course of a three-month period for the Premier and 10 ministers. The diaries are being disclosed regularly, as committed to by the Tasmanian Liberal government.

Members of the public and indeed the parliament are able to view that information regularly and, if required, seek further detail if there is a particular meeting that is of interest to them. Members are able to ask questions on notice and a question without notice if there is any matter regarding a diary meeting that requires further information.

Members are also able to seek further information by writing to the Premier or asking questions of the Premier or ministers in Estimates or committees. Again, for members of this Chamber, the government continues to provide a diary disclosure scheme that is being delivered regularly, is in the public interest and is in line with the existing ministerial diary disclosures across other Australian jurisdictions.

As has been previously discussed in this Chamber, there is not a one-size-fits-all in relation to diary disclosures around the country; what happens in Queensland appears to be quite different to what happens in the Australian Capital Territory. Some report monthly and some report quarterly. What appears to be evident is that ministers do report information regarding the ministerial meetings with external stakeholders and any matters that relate to their portfolios. All states do not appear to provide details relating to personal events.

Tasmanian ministers are required to report on all meetings, whether they relate to their portfolios or indeed any other matter that the community may wish to meet and discuss with them. Many states, even the Commonwealth government, do not mandate disclosures; but it is clear there is no consistent requirement for ministers to proactively disclose diary meetings. However, they all have different transparency initiatives in place. It appears that there isn't any particular model that is best practice, but it's clear that the state government continues its commitment to regular quarterly reporting as part of its transparency mandate.

I note that the previous Leader of government business advised in a previous debate that there had not been any large movement by any other jurisdictions in terms of different models or approaches since the government introduced reporting in 2023. It is not readily apparent what improvements could be made that provide the absolute best approach and what value public consultation would bring to this discussion.

Ms Forrest - Maybe the Leader for the Government needs to read the member's speech.

Ms RATTRAY - I do read them. Another transparency project of the government to improve transparency and accountability of government decision-making is its commitment to improving processes and information access under Right to Information, including the Right to Information Uplift Project and the recently commenced independent review of Tasmania's Right to Information framework.

I am advised the government has provided \$500,000 for the Right to Information Uplift Project to improve capability and practice across the State Service by introducing consistent training, building skilled practitioners and reducing key person dependencies. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) has partnered with the University of Tasmania to produce a whole-of-government information management and RTI training program to improve consistency of practices, knowledge and approach of the training modules. It will provide guidance to RTI delegates on how exemptions should be applied with reference to case law and Ombudsman's decisions.

The second module is for all employees, providing guidance on information management, as well as what RTI and personal information protection is and how these legal frameworks operate. I am pleased to advise the Chamber that the Ombudsman's office, the Office of the State Archivist and the RTI delegates from across the government have assisted with the development of the training, with training materials approved by the secretaries board and being rolled out across state government agencies this month. DPAC will also be sharing the training with other public authorities outside the Tasmanian State Service.

There will be a model Right to Information policy and procedures to increase the consistency for internal RTI processes across the Tasmanian State Service. These documents have now been approved by the secretaries board and provided to agencies for implementation. The work is reviewed by Adjunct Associate Professor Rick Snell, who has been appointed to independently review the framework in Tasmania, along with Professor Tim McCormack. To conclude, there is a range of information and ongoing work in the State Service and also work being undertaken by external officers for the continued strengthening of the government's transparency agenda.

In closing, I acknowledge the member for Nelson's frustration. I think that's been shared by a couple of others and whilst appreciating the honourable member's efforts and the member's support, the government does not support this motion. However, I also appreciate many of the points raised and will raise these points directly with the Premier.

[6.01 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - I don't think *Hansard* indicates steam coming out of one's ears, Mr President, in this place.

Ms Forrest - We can describe it, though.

Ms WEBB - Perhaps I can just note it for the record.

Ms Forrest - That steam is coming out of your ears?

Ms O'Connor - You're steaming.

Ms WEBB - Steam. Unbelievable. Mr President, let me thank members for contributions on the motion. I appreciate the member for Murchison's comprehensive contribution and her reiteration that we should expect a formal response to this very reasonable request. The contribution from the government certainly doesn't constitute that. If this motion passes this place today, it's a formal communication from this Chamber to the government, and it requires a response accordingly.

Ms Forrest - It's the respectful thing to do.

Ms WEBB - It is the respectful thing to do, and if the government expects this place to do its business, it should also respectfully engage with the business of this place that goes through on private members' days, including motions that call for a response.

I appreciate the contribution from the member for Murchison and her reiteration of the principles underpinning this motion, and its importance, its clarity and its straightforward simplicity. It's not controversial. It's not particularly onerous. It's reasonable and it's standard good practice.

Thank you to the member for Hobart for the contribution on the motion. I appreciated your highlighting of the fact that public interest should sit at the heart of everything we do and everything our government does in its role on behalf of the Tasmanian community, and that we need transparency to demonstrate public interest being pursued and delivered.

I agree with the various examples that the member for Hobart provided of the challenges we face in Tasmania in relation to inappropriate influence into our political space and our decision-making, particularly from vested interests. We see blatant examples of policy capture and regulatory capture. It is absolutely imperative that we build a scaffolding of transparency and integrity measures. We must try to work against and mitigate the risks involved in eroding our democracy through the sort of influence that can be brought to bear when you are opaque and do the business of government behind closed doors without proper public visibility, and without the opportunity for scrutiny and oversight from this place and the community itself.

I appreciate the member for Hobart pointing to the RTI report. I find it very interesting that the government's contribution in relation to that report came out today. I will have a bit more to say about that in a minute. It is an interesting report that's come out today. I've read the executive summary thus far, and I believe the pieces the member for Hobart read out in her contribution were highly relevant to here. That report absolutely concurs with the intent of this motion and the importance of changing culture around matters of transparency and integrity and accountability. The government is doing nothing to demonstrate that it is changing the culture on those fronts, including in its response thus far to the RTI report.

This brings me to the government's contribution. Again, the government defaults to listing things it is doing - which is completely irrelevant to the core of this motion and to its responsibilities in responding to this motion. It points to quarterly reporting of ministerial diaries, which only occurred the first time this motion was brought to this place in 2023 - and it was brought in as a bit of 'integrity washing'. It's as simple as that. You're being asked to do something, you know this Chamber was going to call on the government to do it, so instead of genuinely engaging with that motion the first time and doing a consultation and coming up with a model that was through a warranted and appropriate process, it jumped in to do a voluntary model.

Rather than pat itself on the back about that, the government should be ashamed of this integrity washing that it tried to do. To voluntarily put in place a model that you know to be absolutely dysfunctional in delivering the intent of having such a model is absolutely pernicious and further eroding public trust in government.

To say that we've regularly discussed this model is absolutely ridiculous from the government - as if that's a positive. The only times we've discussed it were when I brought these motions to this place to point out the insufficiencies of the voluntary, untimely, and pretty much useless model the government put in place as its piece of integrity washing. Those are the only times we've discussed it, and every time the government has said it's against the motion and refused to improve its utterly useless current voluntary model.

This is where we have crossover with the RTI report that came out today. For the government to say in its contribution that if people need more detail than the 'various matters' or 'various issues' listed as purposes in the current disclosure model, those people can RTI it, or maybe give the Premier a call, is the worst kind of nonsense. It's offensive for the government to say such a thing.

What the RTI report by Adjunct Associate Professor Rick Snell and Professor Tim McCormack makes very clear is that RTI should be the last resort, that there should be a proactive culture of information release. It should be the third tier of having to ask for information. You shouldn't have to ask for it.

To turn around and have the government say in this place today that as far as it's concerned, if people want to know more than 'various matters' as the purpose of a meeting between a government minister and a potentially vested interest stakeholder, 'they can RTI it', that is offensive to its core. It's entirely against what's being recommended in that RTI report today, so I can't wait to see what the government is going to do in response to that report, because on the basis of what we've heard here today, they're going to do - not much.

Ms Forrest - I was about to stop you saying something you wish you hadn't.

Ms WEBB - It was going to be an unparliamentary expression, but it's going to be 'not much', 'not much at all'. If they're going around telling people to go RTI these meetings, rather than have them straightforwardly put some basic information in the public domain, that is absolutely reprehensible.

Ms Forrest - How would you know what to RTI, anyway?

Ms WEBB - Exactly right. You just shouldn't have to. It's just ridiculous. To say there are various models around the country is true, but it's also a complete excuse. We are one of the worst. To claim that there is no model that's best practice is utterly rubbish. There's plenty of information available. We have expert academics who have provided numerous submissions through numerous inquiries and different sorts of examinations of this issue available on the public domain across various jurisdictions.

Our very own Integrity Commission has made it patently clear what should be in a ministerial diary disclosure scheme. For the government to say 'there's no information available' - that's the quote I have from the government's contribution about what would constitute best practice - is absolute rubbish. Clearly, they haven't read a thing from our state integrity entity, the Integrity Commission. They haven't cared to read, perhaps, a thing from our Integrity Commission on this topic. It's absolutely ridiculous. Of course we know exactly the features that would be included in a best-practice model here for a ministerial diary disclosure scheme. We could absolutely adapt those features most relevantly to fit this

jurisdiction. That's exactly what a consultation process would provide us the opportunity to do - to tailor the principles of well-known best practice in this place to fit here.

That's why I've called for consultation on it, so that nobody's dictating what the outcome should be. We should discuss what it should look like here, knowing clearly the publicly available best-practice approaches that are readily available to any government that isn't covering its eyes and blocking its ears and saying, 'La, la, la, la, la'. That's what this government's doing when it comes to genuine transparency, to genuine integrity, to genuine accountability. They're putting their fingers in their ears, they're closing their eyes and they're saying, 'La, la, la, la, la. We're doing something. Let me list the things.' Oh, my goodness me. Steam is coming out of my ears.

To then refer to a whole range of matters relating to the Right to Information Uplift Project, clearly the speech was written for the Leader, and I appreciate the Leader reading out the speech provided to her by the government. However, that speech was clearly written not even knowing the RTI report was going to come out today, because to point out that we are successfully doing things in that space made a mockery of the report coming out today.

There's so much improvement that's required in that area. While the RTI Uplift Project has been a positive start on some matters, and the report says that too, there is so much more to be done to deliver the intent of a genuine RTI system based on the legislation we have. To begin to pat ourselves on the back about what we're currently doing, it's just effectively a bit of a 'look over here, look over here' moment for the government today in relation to this motion.

The RTI report today clearly identifies directions for us to take. I can already read the writing on the wall that this government is not in the slightest bit interested in taking any of them based on its response to this motion and the sorts of things it's happy to pat itself on the back about in terms of our current RTI system.

Talk about an absolute joke to talk about continuing to strengthen the government's transparency agenda. This is a government that has yet to demonstrate any genuine interest in a transparency agenda. If the government was remotely interested in the transparency agenda, it would be welcoming this motion. It would be acknowledging it is a straightforward and very reasonable request, and it would want to deliver the outcome that's being intended from it.

As the member for Hobart said, good governments have nothing to hide. Good ministers have nothing to hide. They would be welcoming this, they would be engaged with doing it instead of saying 'we can't imagine what a best-practice model might be'. They would understand that the best-practice model principles are readily available. They would be going to look for them and they would be keen to put them in place and have Tasmania be the best jurisdiction in the country.

We could get there quite easily from where we are now. We could get there if there was genuine intent, if there was genuine interest in inner transparency agenda rather than just performative faux transparency, which the government clearly intends to continue to deliver.

That was a disgraceful contribution from the government. We'd laugh if it wasn't so disgraceful, but we can't laugh about it. I hope members will recognise it's appropriate for our Chamber, on behalf of the Tasmanian community that we represent, to be always working for improvement when it comes to government accountability, when it comes to accountability

around ministerial decision-making and when it comes to the basic architecture of good governance and integrity in this state.

We're putting this in place for today, we're putting it in place for tomorrow, we're putting it in place for this government, but we're putting it in place for future governments too. I invite members to support this motion for the third time, and I invite the government to have a good hard look at itself on this.

If this is passed for a third time in this Chamber, I invite the government to take it seriously and respect this, the call of this Chamber, and to do work that is entirely in the benefit of the Tasmanian community, to the benefit of public interest and, ultimately, to the benefit of the government, quite frankly, where it can actually point to where it's walking the talk rather than just integrity-washing itself through faux measures.

Before I bring my contribution to a close, I've been asked to move to adjourn this debate for the purposes of a dinner break, and then we resume here after.

Ms Lovell - You might get a second wind.

Ms WEBB - I might, you never know.

Mr President, I move -

That the debate be adjourned.

[6.15 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I thought we were going to deal with this motion and then go to dinner rather than adjourn it now. I'm not sure why. Everyone who was going to speak has spoken. I'm just clarifying whether it makes sense to adjourn the debate at this point or deal with this motion and then adjourn for a dinner break.

Mr PRESIDENT - We have a couple of options. You can either keep it adjourned, and we'll come back and start again, or you can withdraw and then I will put the question and then the Leader will move that -

[6.16 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I thought I was being asked to do it because otherwise we'd move on to the next business and we wanted to have a break. I'm going to withdraw my adjournment. I'm going to finish my contribution and ask members to support the motion that's before the House.

Motion agreed to.

Mr PRESIDENT - That was very generous of you giving up that opportunity to go again.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

[6.17 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, it's obvious that this is the first real test day today. I did ask the member for Nelson to move the adjournment. I should have checked with the Clerk to see the other option.

I move -

That the sitting be suspended until the ringing of the division bells.

This is for the purpose of a dinner break. I expect that they will ring at 7.15 p.m. Thank you, members.

Sitting suspended from 6.17 p.m. to 7.20 p.m.

BUDGET ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE BILL 2025 (No. 57)

First Reading

Bill presented by Ms Forrest and read the first time.

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I move -

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

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Government Businesses Scrutiny Committees - Establishment

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I move -

- (1) That two Government Businesses Scrutiny Committees be established to inquire into Government Businesses in accordance with the schedule detailed below and rules as set out in the Standing Orders at Part 22.
- (2) That the Committees have leave to sit on Monday, 24 November 2025 and Tuesday, 25 November 2025 between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. or such other times as varied by the Chair and as necessary for the purpose of relevant stakeholder and deliberative meetings.

- (3) For 2025 Government Businesses are allocated to the Committees as follows:

Committee A

Monday, 24 November 2025

Hydro Tasmania, TasNetworks Pty Ltd, TT-Line Company Pty Ltd

Committee B

Tuesday, 25 November 2025

Sustainable Timber Tasmania, Tasmanian Ports Corporation Pty Ltd, The Public Trustee

And that -

Ms Forrest, Mr Harriss, Ms Lovell, Ms O'Connor and Ms Thomas be of Committee A and

Ms Armitage, Mr Edmunds, Mr Gaffney, Mr Hiscutt and Ms Webb be of Committee B.

- (4) And that the Committees report on the Government Businesses by no later than 30 January 2026. If the Legislative Council is not sitting when the Government Businesses Scrutiny Committees complete their reports, those reports may be presented to the President or if the President is unable to act, to the Deputy President or other Office holder and in that event:
- (a) the reports shall be deemed to have been presented to the Council;
 - (b) the publication of the reports is authorised by this Resolution;
 - (c) the President, Deputy President or other Office holder, as the case may be, may give directions for the printing and circulation of the reports; and
 - (d) the President, Deputy President or other Office holder, as the case may be, shall direct the Clerk to lay the reports upon the Table at the next sitting of the Council.

Normally we don't speak much on these motions, but I will on this occasion, mainly because it was disappointing to see our released sitting schedule has so few sitting days in the remainder of the year. I acknowledge that, after another early election, there was an extended caretaker period while the confidence of the government was tested in the other place. Then the sitting schedule was updated, but the sitting schedule was actually set before that, where that date was set.

We have hardly sat this year. We've had very few sitting days. We've had very little opportunity to hold the government, government businesses or state-owned companies to account.

During prorogation of parliament, as members know, all committee work ceases, which means that committees like the Public Accounts Committee couldn't scrutinise TT-Line. It was not possible even for GAA and GAB, if they wanted to look at one of these companies. I believe, from a public-perception point of view, that we are here to work in this place and to hold the government and the government businesses to account. We have a duty and obligation to do it.

I know it makes it tight toward the end of the year. I had a discussion with the Clerks about resourcing because of the pressure on Hansard and our committee secretariat, which is quite small, as we all know. It would be after four full days of Hansard recording Estimates. It would be one committee on Monday and one committee on Tuesday, which I think the general public would see as a reasonable request.

Particularly, the companies that were due for scrutiny this year by our committees are very significant companies. They carry nearly all the state debt in this total state sector.

TasNetworks has a massive project on foot: the North West Transmission Developments project. The enormous impact of that should be scrutinised in a timely manner. If it needs further scrutiny next year, we can do it then too. If we leave it to next year, it is even further away from the end of the financial year of which this period reports.

Hydro Tasmania: the same - Tarraleah and then Marinus Link. They are all related to these really important and significant entities that have a significant impact on our state and our state's financial position.

TT-Line - need I say more? We saw during the caretaker period an extension to TT-Line's borrowings. There are a lot of questions that need to be asked about that. Also, what does it actually mean for their capacity to furnish the debt? What I heard from the minister earlier in Question Time today was effectively borrowing to pay for the borrowings. We need to understand what this looks like. We need to understand what the implications for the state are and we need to do it in a timely manner.

TasPorts is another one. We know from previous performances of TasPorts in GBEs that it does not always perform ideally. There has been a change of leadership in that organisation. One hopes that it will be better for Committee B to scrutinise. It has significant financial challenges too. It has massive capital projects it needs to deliver on. The Macquarie Wharf 6 project, for example, needs to be progressed and federal funding has been allocated to that, but only to a point. We need to fully understand what that means. We know Tasmania pays for the overruns there. We know that there are things that the Tasmanian government must fund that aren't covered under that federal government grant.

I have discussed this also with the Auditor-General. He believes he will be in a position to brief committees prior to undertaking the scrutiny because all the annual reports will be completed by then and will be tabled. Yes, there is not a lot of time between.

The other reason I am moving this motion now rather than leaving it until later, like the next week back, is because it gives us time to hear from stakeholders now, because when we do hear from stakeholders, they rarely go through the annual report and pick out the bits in the annual report they want us to follow up. They talk about other matters of relevance to that company, like workplace culture, like employment arrangements, like issues of concern that

affect those businesses. I don't think I've ever had a stakeholder sit across the table in one of those stakeholder briefings where they go through the annual report and tell us what questions we need to ask directly from the annual report. The purpose of our stakeholder briefings is more to find out what else is going on with this company that we need to understand. This will give us the opportunity to do that and to hear from those stakeholders well before the annual reports are necessarily tabled.

The question has been put to me by some regarding whether we could do the scrutiny next year. Of course we could. In fact, I've been here long enough to remember quite a bit. Back in the day, when I first started, we always did GBE scrutiny at this time, toward the end of the year. Then for some reason, I don't recall how the decision was made, that was pushed off until February. That didn't last very long because it was too far from the end of the financial year reporting. It became irrelevant. So much of the information was out of date. You'd front up with these GBEs and they'd say, 'Oh well, we've moved on from there, that was last year'. We need to do it in a timely manner. We need to do it this year. If there's a reason to call them back - TasPorts had to be called back after a 2023 appearance - we can do that. We can do that through GAA or GAB if we need to, but we need to do proper GBE scrutiny, as we have every year, at this time of year.

These are matters of integrity and accountability: accountability of those government businesses and integrity of this place. This is our job. This is the obligation we have, and particularly from a public-perception point of view. Many members of the public have said, 'When in the hell are you getting back and talking to these people?' You know, I say, 'Well, we don't see the sitting schedule.' We have an opportunity here to do the job we're paid to do. Our job is about holding the government to account and, by extension, the businesses owned by the government, in a timely manner. I hope members will support this motion.

[7.31 p.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, I am a bit betwixt and between. I can see a reason for doing it. I just hope that we can do it well. Listening to the member for Murchison, I hadn't really thought about the fact that we can call them back if other things come up. Initially I was thinking, 'Yes, this is great', then I'm thinking, 'Oh no, I'm not really sure' - and no, member for Murchison, I haven't been got at by the government, I'm just a little betwixt and between, thinking, 'Can we do it justice straight after Estimates? Can we get that done well?'

Ms Forrest - Questions that are turfed off by the ministers to the GBE, you'll be ready. When they do that at Budget Estimates, they'll say that's a matter for the company.

Ms ARMITAGE - I was hoping that lots of people would speak. Maybe I've given them a chance to have a bit of a think while I'm standing up here. Initially when it was mentioned to me, I thought, 'That's a great idea. We shouldn't be doing it too far away from the annual reports.' Then the other part of me is thinking, 'Gosh, we have Estimates there. Do we have time to get all the questions for Estimates, then basically go in the next week?'

Of course, you're right about stakeholders. We have a month where we can go back to stakeholders. I don't recall too many who have questioned much about the annual report. Occasionally they do, but it's more something that we scrutinise and find a lot of questions from.

I am really hoping that other people get up and speak. I'm leaning towards supporting the member for Murchison again now. I have vacillated both ways. I'd hate to think that we're trying to cram something in because it is the end of the year, and don't do it full justice. On the other hand, perhaps they can be called back. I'm hoping other people will speak.

[7.33 p.m.]

Mr EDMUNDS (Pembroke) - Mr President, the signal went out and I will heed the call. I support this motion because I believe that when there's an opportunity to provide scrutiny, you should take it. What others do in other places is fine, and I've heard the arguments about February, et cetera, but I will confine my comments to my role for one day in November where I can scrutinise three government businesses.

I will accept that opportunity because I believe that's important, for the reasons laid out by the Chair of Committees. Perhaps a lot of this comes back to the consultation issues we've spoken about on and off the record today. I know there's a lot of focus on crossbenchers and minor parties in the lower House. They shouldn't forget that there's an upper House that exists. When the upper House gets ignored or treated in a way that perhaps it shouldn't, or indeed just isn't communicated with, then there are some pretty blunt objects we can use. In fact, I believe we are a more powerful House. You might reinforce that.

I believe the point made about calling those GBEs back in - and I have been part of committees that have done that - is another reason for keeping our committee system nimble. Being bogged down by joint select committees from the other place is another reason why we won't be able to do that quickly and effectively. I will get onto that when we debate other issues. Picking up the dregs of negotiated deals from the lower House to sprinkle four of us into something we didn't initiate will inhibit our important role in scrutinising government businesses and government decisions. It will be too hard because people are on seven committees, and they won't want to take on another one.

To that point, I support the motion. Any arguments about resourcing and Hansard - I bet you there will be committees champing at the bit for that week already anyway. This is a more important use of those couple of days to scrutinise GBEs. It is appropriate they are heard from in the usual manner by this House.

[7.36 p.m.]

Ms THOMAS (Elwick) - Mr President, I will speak very briefly to thank the member for Murchison for bringing this motion to us for consideration and speak in full support of it. We have not had the opportunity very much this year to do the very important part of our job that we do here in this place. That is, holding the government to account, being the House of review, scrutinising the government, which includes government businesses. If we are afforded the opportunity - and we are through this motion - then we ought to take it. We owe that to the people of Tasmania, the people we represent, to take that opportunity.

I am in full support of this motion. We have had a lot more time to be spending doing the other part of our job in and about our electorates and helping people within our communities. Now it's time to take every opportunity we have to make up for the time we haven't had in this place to scrutinise the activity of government.

[7.37 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I rise in relation to the motion moved by the honourable member for Murchison to establish Government Business Scrutiny Committees for 24 and 25 November 2025. I acknowledge and respect the honourable member's commitment, and that of other members, to parliamentary accountability. In the government's view, the proposed timing included in this motion does not fully appreciate the practical realities facing parliament, government agencies and parliamentary staff in this compressed 2025 schedule.

We must acknowledge the circumstances facing this parliament. The early dissolution on 11 June 2025 and subsequent election on 19 July 2025 have compressed our parliamentary schedule, and that's been referred to. As members here would know, the 2025-26 Budget, originally scheduled for May 2025, did not pass this place. Instead, a supply bill was passed to ensure the essential services provided by the government to Tasmanians continued while the election proceeded.

The bill passed by this place and the other provided for funding until 31 December 2025. It's imperative that an appropriation bill be passed to ensure that funding continues post this date. If this does not occur, the provisions of essential services to Tasmanians will be impacted. The Budget has been rescheduled for 6 November 2025 - as early as possible. I note that this has meant that the standard six-month or so time frame to develop a budget has been compressed to two months.

Ms Forrest - That is not really relevant to the committee question. It was about the Budget.

Ms RATTRAY - I am allowed to deliver something on behalf of the government, surely. This has meant that the budget session now occurs over the same period of time during which GBE scrutiny often occurs. I have been here long enough, too, to know that in the past there were times when scrutiny of GBEs and state-owned companies was held in the beginning of the following year as well, but yes, they went back to the last part of the calendar year.

The government is committed to ensuring that the budget is properly scrutinised within the constraints of the budget development process. For this reason, the government has scheduled the budget Estimates and Estimates replies as occurred in the past. Given the need to scrutinise the budget, this has meant that it would be challenging to schedule GBE scrutiny during November or early December. This is why the government has proposed to hold scrutiny hearings early next year.

Parliamentary staff, agency officials and government business staff are already working hard to meet the deadlines of the compressed timeline. Adding Government Business Scrutiny Committees to this workload in November would create the possibility of challenging working conditions for parliamentary secretariat staff and competing demands on agency executives already managing the budget processes.

Mr President, February 2026 represents responsible parliamentary scheduling, allows focus on budget processes, meets supply deadline without additional pressures, follows professional standards, provides two to three months for annual reporting, absorption matching Commonwealth practices - and I wasn't going to read those out, but they're there for anyone who wants to look them up - quality scrutiny based on a more thorough preparation, focuses

committee attention without competing priorities, and allows for better outcomes for parliamentary oversight.

Government business scrutiny serves as an important accountability function. The timing of this does matter. In this instance, February 2026 allows for thorough scrutiny that serves the public interest effectively, and the government supports that accountability. With the greatest of respect, and acknowledging the genuine intent behind the motion, the government will not be supporting the motion.

[7.42 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I acknowledge members' contributions and thank them for their comments. There's a lot I don't agree with in the Leader's contribution. This in no way interferes with budget scrutiny. In this House we do budget scrutiny differently from what they do in the other place. We sit across tables for four full days, every day, and we don't sub in and out. We are there the whole time.

It is up to the members of this House to decide whether we can fit it in. Yes, it will be a challenge, but we have hardly sat this year. I don't want to repeat myself, but these are GBEs that carry significant amounts of the state debt. We need to scrutinise them in a timely manner. The government business enterprises and the state-owned companies' CEOs, chairs, the people who support them in GBE Scrutiny, do not front up to Estimates. If you ask a question about a GBE at Estimates, a minister will shunt you off and say, 'That's a matter for the company.' They don't engage in that, so I find that crossover that the Leader did, saying this will basically interfere with budget scrutiny and make it hard for the government businesses to prepare, is absolute nonsense.

In terms of accountability, this is what this place is about. Our job is to hold the government to account and that, by extension, is government businesses and state-owned companies. I know all members of this House take their jobs very seriously, and if we found that there were matters raised that we didn't feel fully prepared for, going back to the member for Launceston's questions, which did happen, or we felt fully prepared but the responses we got from TasPorts were far from adequate - in fact, they were completely inadequate - they were called back by GAA. We do have those avenues available to us next year as well. The fact that these really significant companies that are due for scrutiny this year could be pushed off till February, as requested by the Leader on behalf of the government, smacks of unwillingness to front up on such really important matters. I'm very disappointed that the government has taken that approach.

I accept and I have said in my contribution there will be a significant workload for not only members in this House, but also Hansard and the committee secretariat. They work really hard, but they they've had no committee work to do for several months now, because no-one has had any to do.

I acknowledge most members who have spoken haven't expressed opposition to it, except for the government, and I hope that other members will support it because this is an important function of this House and we have the power to do it, as the member for Pembroke said. We are the master of our own destiny with regard to these sorts of matters and this is our job. This is important work that we do and we should be doing it.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Climate Action Review

[7.46 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, as I indicated earlier, I seek the leave of the Council to table Australia's *National Climate Risk Assessment*, which was forced out of the Albanese government by a Resolution of the Senate last week, and the high-level summary report of *Tasmania's Risk Assessment for Climate Change 2024*.

Leave granted.

Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council -

- (1) Notes the growing evidence of runaway climate change and the impact extreme weather events such as fire, flood and drought are already having on Tasmanian communities, the environment and economy;
- (2) Acknowledges the Tasmanian Risk Assessment for Climate Change 2024 warns of future increases in the severity of acute extreme rain and flood conditions, acute bushfire and wind conditions, more frequent and/or intense periods of extreme heat, and declines in rainfall across the state;
- (3) Further notes Tasmania's Greenhouse Emissions Report 2025 confirms carbon emissions across all sectors are not falling and that it is business as usual, despite scientists warning us of a climate in crisis;
- (4) Recognises the report in a graph on page 8 further confirms the state's claim to net zero status is the result of avoided native forest logging and burning from 2012, through the Tasmanian Forest Agreement;
- (5) Expresses its disappointment that the Tasmanian government is in breach of its obligations under the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* to 'reduce greenhouse gas emissions';
- (6) Notes the current review of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008*;
- (7) Agrees the Act needs a substantial overhaul to deliver emissions reductions and prepare Tasmanians to adapt to the intensifying impacts of climate change;
- (8) Calls on the Tasmanian government to work with scientists, the community, farmers, business and industry leaders, and the

parliament, to ensure the Act is strengthened to reflect the urgency of the times; and

- (9) Agrees this demonstration of leadership will give more young Tasmanians hope for a safe climate future.

I highly recommend that honourable members read those reports. There's also a high-level summary report of the *National Climate Risk Assessment*, which is available to members, because as we are elected to deliver on the public interest for each of us, we have to understand the impact that global heating will have on the communities that we represent.

The *National Climate Risk Assessment* report was sat on by the Albanese government for some 10 months. They'd refused to release it. They offered senators a closed-door briefing on the *National Climate Risk Assessment*, continued to refuse to release it, and it was finally a Resolution put forward by the Greens in the Senate for the production of that document that saw its release.

Having read most of that report, I understand why a government that is continuing to approve new coal, oil and gas mines and do very little to bring down our emissions in any tangible way, as well as not investing in adaptation, would not want that report made public. What it tells us, in black and white up front in the report, is that by 2050 all regions in the country will experience severe climate impacts. I ask members to think about where they were in the year 2000. In the year 2000, I'd just given birth to my beautiful daughter, Stella. She's now 25 years old. Within 25 years, when Stella is 50, the Tasmania that we live in now will be almost unrecognisable. Twenty-five years is not a great length of time. What the *National Climate Risk Assessment* report tells us is that within 25 years the west coast and north-west and central plateau of Tasmania will be much drier. There will be far more heatwave days and many more days of high wind. We will have far more thunderstorms, dry lightning events and, therefore, we will have a much higher number of bushfires. Those bushfires will threaten life, property, the environment that we rely on and, of course, the economy. By 2025, areas that are low-lying in Tasmania, such as Lauderdale and Port Sorell, will be subject to sea level rise and coastal inundation.

The pictures that the *National Climate Risk Assessment* report paints of the future should be a wake-up call to governments and parliaments all over the country. It is simply not tenable that we do that human thing where, because the problem is so big and hard to conceive of, we stick our heads in the sand and hope it will go away. I don't think we have that choice. I want Stella and all my children and all Tasmanian children to grow up in a community where they know that the government of the day understands the science, understands the risks, and is acting accordingly.

The problem that we have, and that's the subject of my motion today, is a very weak climate governance framework in Tasmania and a government that is not complying with the objects of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008*. That object, which the government continues to not comply with, is to identify, promote and support measures to reduce Tasmania's greenhouse gas emissions.

The *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* was, remarkably, brought forward by former Labor premier Paul Lennon, and he initiated a change of culture in government agencies through an exercise called the Wedges report, where all government agencies had to assess

what their emissions output was and put forward a plan for reducing emissions within their agencies.

The initial act that parliament passed in 2008 was much more robust in many ways than the act that is before us now. Numerous sections have been repealed out of this act, but the most damning happened in about August of 2014, not long after the election of the Hodgman Liberal government, when the first move made by the then minister for the environment, Matthew Groom, was to abolish the Tasmanian Climate Action Council.

The Climate Action Council was an independent expert-based body that was established to assess the science and provide advice to the government of the day, through the minister for climate change, on steps that needed to be taken to reduce emissions, but also to provide for adaptation. Adaptation matters because it is an investment in keeping communities and people safe. It is an investment in mitigating those safety risks caused by extreme weather events. We now have a climate change act which the government is not complying with, which has been gutted, so that there's no expert advisory body that's advising the government on the steps that it needs to take - in 2025, when the government's own climate risk assessment report says things like this:

The impacts of climate change are already being felt in Tasmania. Over the past 10 years, the state has experienced significant and devastating impacts, such as prolonged dry periods, flooding, bushfires, and record marine heatwaves. Chronic climate hazards such as seasonal temperature change, sea level rise and changing rainfall patterns and acute trends like (e.g. heatwaves, floods, bushfires, and coastal storm surge events) impact the natural environment, health and wellbeing of communities, the economy, the built environment and emergency management. Future physical climate trends include:

More frequent and/or intense periods of extreme heat, impacting on health and wellbeing,

The Minister for Health needs to read the *National Climate Risk Assessment* report.

It will be impacting our energy systems, ecosystems, biodiversity, and there will be economic disruptions associated with outdoor production - that is, primary producers who are growing our food. Overall, long-term increases in average temperatures are expected. Changes will be greatest in the north-east, coastal regions and islands.

There will be a projected decline in rainfall, on average, across the state. There is a projected increase in the severity of acute extreme rain and flood conditions, particularly in the eastern half of the state.

There will be increases in the severity of acute bushfires and wind conditions, particularly in the north of the state. This has direct health consequences and impacts on emergency services preparedness and disaster reduction.

Like all climate extreme impacts, the state's infrastructure - buildings, transport and roads - will be more prone to damages and disruption and insurance risks.

We will see sea level rise, and storm surge/extreme wave events are projected to become more frequent and severe.

There will be continued warming of Tasmanian coastal waters and marine heatwaves, along with chronic increases in ocean acidity. This has the potential for major impacts on the natural environment, including the destruction of marine ecosystems, the incursion of more northerly species, and associated impacts for ocean aquaculture, fisheries and local communities.

The summary report goes through a range of scenarios out to 2050. The consequences in climate risk terms for our healthcare and emergency services by the year 2050 are classified - by a conservative consultancy like Deloitte - as major; the risks to the built environment due to climate extremes by 2050, major; the risks to contaminated sites due to extreme events and chronic climate impacts, major; the risk to stormwater and sewerage systems, major; risks to ports and coastal infrastructure by 2050 will be moderate and by 2090 will be major.

There will be risks to our national and international supply and distribution networks due to extreme weather events; by 2050, they're classified as major. If your only concern is the economy, the risks to business through the implementation of new technologies, including emissions reduction through fugitive emissions, agriculture, industrial and fuel switching will have an economic impact. On it goes. Risk to our cultural heritage, our built heritage, significant impacts on health and wellbeing.

In Tasmania, as we know, in 2016, devastating fires went through the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. There are about 300 fires that burned 127,000 hectares of the central highlands, the west coast and the south-west; burnt through Gondwanan landscapes, cushion plants, pencil pines, king billies, Huon pines - devastated them and they will never recover.

Many honourable members will also remember the devastating floods of 2016 where some places experienced the highest rainfall ever recorded. Tragically, two people lost their lives in the 2016 floods in Latrobe and the Derwent Valley, and the Blake report found that local authorities were not adequately equipped to deal with the human impacts, if you like, of those floods.

There were again floods in 2018 in Hobart, where our stormwater drainage system absolutely cacked itself and there were major economic impacts as a result of those floods, which at the time we described as 'biblical', but they were really just a taste of what is to come.

More floods in 2024, up in the Derwent Valley.

In terms of fire, we've had bushfires rage through the years. The 2013 bushfires on the east coast and Dunalley. Two hundred homes were lost in 2019-20. After record low rainfall, we had a warmer and drier-than-average season and fires swept through Fingal and the Douglas-Apsley and burned 36,000 hectares. In February 2024, a 95,000-hectare fire caused by dry lightning strikes, which even Parks and Wildlife will tell you have increased in frequency and intensity, burned through the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and the west coast.

We had a really interesting briefing the other day with Professor David Bowman from the University of Tasmania, a fire ecologist. One of the primary reasons for the briefing was to understand the climate risk to Hobart. It is the most fire-prone capital in the country and we do not have an evacuation plan for Hobart. We do not even allow here, for some reason that baffles Prof Bowman and us, provision for fire shelters. In Victoria, after their devastating bushfires about 10 years ago, they changed the regulations and they allowed for people to construct fire shelters on their properties, which will save, and have saved, lives. We are so far behind the eight ball here, which is why I know that, when I bring on these sorts of debates, some people internally just think, 'Oh, here we go, she is going to have another rant; Cassandra, the prophetess of doom'. However, it is my responsibility as the member for Hobart to raise these issues and it's my responsibility, as a spokesperson for climate change and a former minister for climate change, to bring these matters to the Table because this Council will be needing to make some thoughtful and strategic decisions in the future.

Hopefully, there will be some amendments coming through as a result of the review of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008*. On the government's record, they will be flabby and weak amendments and, certainly, the Greens will be moving to strengthen the climate change act because, at the moment, it's all we have. Within that act are pathetic things like the government legislated a net zero by 2030 target - well, we're already at net zero. What the act needs to do is to set an absolute target for emissions reduction and, like the evolved jurisdictions on the mainland, set sectoral-based targets and work with the industrial sector, the agricultural sector, the tourism sector and small businesses, so that they can bring their emissions down as well. I know it feels like an exercise in futility when we read such things as this, from the Stockholm Environment Institute, which showed that planned fossil fuel production in 2030 is projected to hit 120 per cent of the level needed to hold warming to 1.5°Celsius and 77 per cent more than is needed to keep it to 2°Celsius.

It is very hard to advocate for emissions reduction from a little island like this, but leadership has to come from somewhere. What we could do, and the science is really clear about this, is that, overnight, we could end the logging of native forests, and by 2050 our forests would be sequestering an extra 75 million to 80 million tonnes of carbon. Overnight we could make a substantial and positive impact on the climate and demonstrate leadership.

In our greenhouse gas emissions report for 2023, what we see is how lazy this government has been on emissions reduction. It thought it could set a net zero by 2030 target, knowing that our forests were doing all the heavy lifting, but if members can get their hands on a copy of the Tasmanian Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2023, there is a chart in there called 'Changes in Tasmania's Emissions,' and it's very telling. What it tells us is that from the year 2012 our emissions profile improved markedly, heading towards net zero. That was, of course, as a result of the Tasmanian Forest Agreement and avoided logging and burning.

The story above the line is the damning story. In direct combustion, transport, electricity generation, agriculture, industrial processes and waste, emissions are stagnating. There's been no change to business as usual. What it tells us is that this government doesn't understand the ethical and moral imperative of the times, which is to show leadership.

Even if it's not within your philosophical view of the world to act to lower emissions because you don't want to have any impact on businesses - and that's through a very short-term lens of course, because the medium to longer-term impacts will be significant anyway - even if you couldn't bring yourself to act to lower emissions, a responsible government would have

strong adaptation planning in place. This government does not. The act itself, which is up for review, places no real responsibility on government to develop an effective adaptation plan.

I was listening to a climate scientist on the radio a few years back, and they were asked, 'Where will be the safest places in the world to be?' The answer was: the safest places will be where there are the strongest communities. That is what gives Tasmania an edge. As the world changes, we have a highly connected community. We all have our differences, but we're islanders and we share this little place in the world, and we do have a strong sense of community. This is something that the government needs to tap into, so that there's that sense of collective responsibility to each other. The way to drive adaptation is to take communities with you, and that's a really clear message in the *National Climate Risk Assessment* report. The way you do that is that you fund conversations, like the Hobart City Council's Sparking Conversations initiative, which was a broader conversation with people who live in the municipality of Hobart about bushfire risk and general climate risks, and how we might mitigate those risks.

When I was the minister for climate change, we had access to some federal government funding. We did a project called Coastal Adaptation Pathways. We worked with the Clarence Council down at Lauderdale, we worked up at the Break O'Day Council, four councils around the state. There were targeted conversations with communities about the future and what it might look like.

In the case of Lauderdale, of course, which has already had swimming pools in backyards fall over onto the shore of Frederick Henry Bay, those conversations were hard, because at some level, there has to be a conversation about when you leave. I still have friends who live down at Lauderdale, right on Frederick Henry Bay, and I've sat in their backyard and the waves are at the foot of their garden.

This government needs to get serious about adaptation planning. We need to have a really clear picture of risk, and that picture has been created for us by scientists and experts. The government, as the Minister for the Environment herself said, is very good at assessments and reviews. That was the minister's response when we asked, a simple ask, for an actual minister for climate change. Some of the material that's coming out of the government on risk, for example, is really good. It's outstanding. What we need here is a government that's prepared to invest and to act.

I don't know if any other members have had a look at the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008*. I would encourage my colleagues in here to do so, because it will come before this House. There will be some amendments to that legislation and, as I said, we will be moving for strengthening of the act and the reinstatement of an independent advisory council. There absolutely should be a minister for climate change. It's ideological and short-sighted for there not to be. If you have a minister who is responsible for emissions reduction and adaptation planning, and it's part of their accountability KPI effectively, it allows for a very specific focus on those tasks. We don't have that now in this government, and it's negligent for the government not to be investing in adaptation planning at the very least.

By not doing that, it's putting Tasmanians, now and in the future, at risk. Again, even if your only metric is money, what the *National Climate Risk Assessment* report tells us is that increasingly properties in hazard zones will become uninsurable. A report out of *The Guardian* in April this year says:

The climate crisis is on track to destroy capitalism, a top insurer has warned, with the vast cost of extreme weather impacts leaving the financial sector unable to operate.

The world is fast approaching temperature levels where insurers will no longer be able to offer cover for many climate risks, said Günther Thallinger, on the board of Allianz SE, one of the world's biggest insurance companies. He said that without insurance, which is already being pulled in some places, many other financial services become unviable, from mortgages to investments.

Global carbon emissions are still rising and current policies will result in a rise in global temperature between 2.2°C and 3.4°C above pre-industrial levels. The damage at 3°C will be so great that governments will be unable to provide financial bailouts and it will be impossible to adapt to many climate impacts, said Thallinger, who is also the chair of the German company's investment board and was previously CEO of Allianz Investment Management.

This comes at the same time the Tasmanian government has announced plans to set up an insurance company. I feel like that was one of those scenes from *Utopia* during the state election campaign, where the Premier said we need a big idea, we need a big thing to sell, and they've come up with TasInsure. I would like to think it's a great idea and that it will provide low-income people with a better opportunity to insure themselves.

During the floods that went through Lismore a couple of years ago, about one in four people whose houses were effectively destroyed were uninsured because it's really difficult for people on low incomes to have comprehensive insurance. Again, I encourage my colleagues in here to go and get a briefing from the RACT about some of the insurance challenges they are facing. I am so impressed with the work that the RACT is doing to understand the level of risk to communities and property. It is far ahead of anyone in the government right now in terms of grappling with the situation that's before us. There will be homes in and around Hobart that will increasingly become uninsurable.

We have a government policy, which is the question I asked the minister today in Question Time, that is pushing out the urban growth boundary, pushing people closer to the bush and farther away from emergency services. The RACT is grappling with how to engage people in that community conversation about being prepared, and it is a really difficult subject to talk about. It's difficult for the climate spokesperson for the Greens to talk about without thinking, 'Are people just going to think that I am a doomsayer?' I am just reading out what the science and the experts tell us. It is human nature not to want to deal with big and terrible things that feel like they can be put off, but this is the mindset that has got us here, where we have a totally inadequate response to global heating.

We have a government that will go into debt to the tune of around \$2 billion for a stadium when the climate risk assessment report - and this is one the honourable member for Launceston might be interested in - makes a case study of the Kanamaluka/River Tamar. On page 69 of the *National Climate Risk Assessment* report, it says:

The Launceston flood risk will increase with climate change. ... The estuary is vulnerable to rising sea levels, which can lead to increased flooding, erosion and potential saltwater intrusion. ... The analysis in this compound flood assessment identifies the need to raise the levee heights to make them more resilient to climate change.

That is just one area of critical infrastructure spending where human lives are involved where there's not even a conversation, as far as I can tell, within the government. There's no conversation with the people who live in and around Launceston. There's no accommodation in our Fiscal Strategy for making sure that we are ruggedising our infrastructure, that we are getting it as ready as it can be for some of the changes that are here and will be here with increased frequency and intensity in the years ahead.

I bring this motion forward as a plea to us all to understand that we really don't have a choice here. I guess we do. We could consciously make a choice to pretend it will be some other Council's problem, some other parliament's problem, but that would be an abrogation of our responsibility, because we now have before us the information that makes it impossible to say we didn't know. It wasn't that long ago that governments, local councils, for example, 20 years ago, could pretend they didn't know. They could continue to approve subdivisions in low-lying coastal areas. We can't do that anymore. The insurance industry is telling us we can't do it. The scientists and the risk assessors are telling us that we can't ignore it anymore.

One of the key findings in the *National Climate Risk Assessment* report - and it is threaded through each chapter - is the mental health impacts of inaction. This is particularly so for young people. Also, there is projected to be a significant increase in mental health suffering as people experience the climate breaking down around them. The best thing we can do to counter that is demonstrate that we are serious about the problem. The best message we can send to young people is to say there isn't a single climate denier in the Tasmanian parliament - and hopefully there isn't. The message that should be coming from the Premier, and from all of us as community leaders, is that we've listened to the science. We have some understanding of the risk. We are highly motivated to keep our communities and the people we love and the places we love safe. Therefore, on the basis of the risk assessments we have been provided with, we will strengthen our overarching climate legislation, we will get serious about emissions reduction and we will work across the economy to help industries adapt. We will work with communities to make sure that adaptation becomes almost second nature.

Sometimes, I wish my brain wasn't like it is.

Ms Forrest - How would you prefer it?

Ms O'CONNOR - Honestly, sometimes I look at the dogs lying on the deck, not a care in the world, and I think, 'Wouldn't that be nice?'

Ms Forrest - Wouldn't you prefer to be a cat, with an attitude?

Ms O'CONNOR - No, cats are aliens. I'd rather be a dog. I have the sentinel brain, and so I see threat. It's just in my makeup, but we all have a responsibility not to pretend this will go away.

We have some fantastic debates in here, but sometimes when we're talking about things that seem to me to be relatively trivial in the great scheme of things, I become more worried. The fact that as a community, we've been fighting about a stadium for three years while there are fires and floods happening around us is maddening. That's three years where government has not turned its attention to the need to keep communities safe, and has not turned its attention to our ageing infrastructure and the need to invest in it. A government which is just pretending that it'll go away, or that it'll be another government's problem, in another day. It won't, unfortunately. I'd like us to be able to give to young people, who are particularly terrified about the future, a lot of young people who pay attention, a really clear line of hope to a government that takes this seriously.

We'll see whether or not this government, which refused to have a minister for climate change, will listen to the submissions that have come in to the review of the climate change act. Our submission was really clear: you need a minister for climate change. You need to set absolute targets and sectoral targets. You need to have principles underpinning the act about community safety, protection of the environment, protection of the economy, understanding of First Nations knowledge and tapping into First Nations understanding of the landscape in order to help us adapt.

There needs to be accountability within that act. If a minister fails in the objects of the act to help to deliver emissions reduction or proper adaptation planning, there needs to be accountability for that failure. In the same way that secretaries of departments, for example, are accountable when they don't meet the KPIs that the minister has set them. The now Minister for Environment, unfortunately, but the minister responsible for administering this act should be held accountable when the objects of the act are not being met. When it is manifestly obvious that there has not been enough preparedness for natural or unnatural disasters, whatever you want to call them these days, there does need to be accountability for that.

I would like to believe that the Premier, Mr Rockliff, who is a very intelligent man and empathetic, understands that of every challenge that he's ever faced in politics or as Premier, this is the greatest one - this is the greatest ethical and moral challenge that he will face as Premier, and it is the greatest challenge that we will face as Tasmanians. I'm not sure Jeremy Rockliff will take the Liberals to the next state election. That would be totally understandable given that he was elected in 2002. Say that is the plan, and he has another three or four years. I would encourage the Premier to understand that his greatest legacy won't be a stadium that drives us into massive debt and causes resentment amongst the people of Hobart and Tasmania more broadly. That is not a legacy that, overwhelmingly, people will look at and feel love and thanks to him for. Certainly, not in my city, in my experience of doorknocking during the last few election campaigns.

For young people, Jeremy Rockliff should get serious about this, read the risk assessment report, and make sure its chapters are partitioned up and given to each minister to whom they relate. I will put ministers coming before Estimates committees on notice now - in the House of Assembly and in the Legislative Council, we will be taking apart this report as it relates to portfolios, and we will be asking each minister whether they've read that chapter and what their response is to the findings and recommendations of the *National Climate Risk Assessment* report, but also to our own state-based climate risk assessment report.

I remember asking the then infrastructure minister, Rene Hidding, in 2014-15, 'What's your plan for infrastructure?' 'Oh, what do you mean?' I said, 'You're going to face more

extreme weather events, our infrastructure's ageing. Would you do an audit on vulnerable community public infrastructure and assess risk and invest where you need to?' I was fobbed off. I was fobbed off that year. I was fobbed off the year after and the year after. Continually fobbed off, on a key issue.

You're not just minister for infrastructure for four years, not really, because you're dealing with infrastructure here. The decisions that you make as minister for infrastructure will be there, in our faces, 20 or 30 years from now - or not, if you don't do it properly. I encourage all honourable ministers to get to those chapters of the *National Climate Risk Assessment* report and read them, and as you read them, remind yourself that the Albanese government did not want to release this report. The reason it didn't want to release it is because it is terrifying. It does demand a response from all governments at all levels: federal, state and local. It points to disastrous land use decisions that have created greater risks to communities. It encourages community adaptation planning strongly and it encourages transparency and openness with people about the risks and the choices that we're going to have to make.

We need to ask ourselves: are our emergency services adequately equipped to deal with what is coming? Is our legislative framework that governs our emergency services sufficient? I would say not. In the past, over summer when there have been extreme fires, we have been able to call in VLATs, very large air tankers, either from the mainland or from Canada and North America. Well, the fire season is lengthening, and those planes won't be available to us for very much longer. They won't, and that is a fact.

What are we doing? What are our conversations with the Commonwealth like about how to keep people safe in the future? How to protect our Gondwanan wilderness? How to make sure that our economy, fragile as it is, can withstand these shocks? What are the conversations that we are having with the Commonwealth about disruptions to food security? I would say there are not very many.

I encourage honourable members - you can perceive the nature of the challenge in any way that is comfortable to you, but the facts are the facts. Most of us here have children in our lives that we love very dearly. I'm not just motivated to talk about these things out of love for my own children. It's a love for this island's people, for the community that I represent, for the kids I see playing soccer on the weekend, for Gondwana vegetation like nowhere else on Earth, and for our primary producers who produce some of the best food in the world. This is an expression of love for Tasmania and its people.

We can't pretend it's not happening. I can assure honourable members that as long as I'm in here, you won't be able to.

I commend the motion to the House.

[8.31 p.m.]

Mr VINCENT (Prosser - Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Madam Deputy President, I will make a slight correction. The member mentioned something very dear to my heart there, and that was the 200 homes you mentioned destroyed at Dunalley. I think it was actually 90 or 93 homes and 186 outbuildings or other structures. The school went, of course, and the police station, but one remarkable thing happened in the Dunalley fires: the pub was saved.

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Madam Deputy President, I rise briefly to speak on this motion. It warrants a much bigger contribution, and so I apologise to the member for Hobart for the brevity that my contribution will have.

I appreciate the comprehensive contribution from the member for Hobart. The topic of this motion is something that I think all of us should be deeply invested in and should be having a view on, and bringing to this place an awareness of in relation to most of the tasks that we do here; whether it's legislative, whether it's our scrutiny roles, or whether it's much of the work we do through committees.

As the member for Hobart quite rightly pointed out in her contribution, the effect of climate change and the need for climate action are not confined to a single area of policy or one portfolio. It stretches into every single facet of our lives. When we talk about an urgency for action, we are talking about something that applies not just to the government of the day, but to each and every one of us, in our roles in this place, and every facet of those roles, and in our roles as members of the community as well.

I suspect - certainly I feel this myself - that there's a certain overwhelmedness that comes with that. It can become difficult to really engage in a practical and pragmatic way with how to incorporate consideration of this into all those different aspects of what we do here, and also in our lives as community members.

I understand that not all members at all times are ready to get up and speak on this, or give voice to our views on it or what we prioritise in relation to it. However, I hope that it becomes something that we can do more readily and feel equipped to do more readily.

It can be really easy, particularly in this state, in a funny way, in our political environment, to say, 'Climate change or climate action, oh, that's something to do with the Greens.' I really appreciate that the member for Hobart, the Greens member in this place, brought this motion, but to some extent I also hope that hasn't contributed to the idea that people might not want to speak to this motion, or support this motion, or align with the sentiments in this motion, because of the way things can become politically siloed into being owned by someone and not others, or people being receptive to certain things because they are seen as aligned with some and not others.

Certainly, as an Independent in this place, I am receptive to and hopeful to speak on motions relating to this topic that, I hope, come from all sides and all members of this Chamber. This is not to take away from the Greens member for Hobart bringing this motion, but to hope that this is actually an issue that is seen and embraced and occupied by all of us.

I am very concerned for our state in relation to what we know are already being experienced as impacts relating to climate change and climate challenges. Our risks are high. Much of the electorate that I represent is significant in terms of, particularly, bushfire risk. Many members here will have other sorts of risks - whether bushfires, flooding or coastal erosion and all sorts of things - in their electorates that they will be mindful of too. They will likely turn their minds to those in relation to this.

I also believe we are not, in any way, living up to our responsibilities with our current act. I am pleased it is being reviewed. I hope that results in more tangible and accountable

requirements on the government and on all of us here to meet post-review. We aren't cutting emissions. We just simply aren't.

We are sitting back and relying, basically, on our forests to provide us with a net-zero scenario and it is a false complacency that that lulls us into then, because we simply must cut emissions. So far, there's no evidence that this government has an inclination or the ability to accept that that's what needs to be done. That's unfortunate. I am quite happy to stand here and agree that a really important way that we can continue to move forward here is to end native forest logging and to protect our carbon sinks in that way. That is the inevitable direction that we are taking as a country. That is an inevitable direction for our state. There are all sorts of conversations we should have constructively and productively around that. It should not necessarily be a point of contention. It should be a point of collaboration in terms of seeing that outcome achieved.

I thank the member for Hobart for the motion. I would not necessarily have written all the points in the same way that they are written here, but I think they are all important ones to discuss and to recognise.

I particularly note that point (8) of the motion calls on the Tasmanian government to work with scientists, the community, farmers, business and industry leaders and the parliament to ensure the act is strengthened to reflect the urgency of the times. I agree with that 100 per cent. There could not be a more inclusive and positive and collaborative proposition for us to consider. In terms of a call on the government of the day, I cannot see any reason why the government would not embrace that call. It would be quite extraordinary, quite frankly, if it didn't.

I agree in terms of point (9), which invites us to agree that this demonstration of leadership will give more young Tasmanians hope for a safe climate future, and it is a conversation I have had with young people in different contexts at different times, both in my personal capacity and also in my professional capacity as the member for Nelson. Hope for young Tasmanians is something for us to be mindful of.

I know the government is quite happy to trot that out as an imperative when speaking on other issues like infrastructure proposals, but I think there's something incredibly fundamental about the need to have us as leaders of our state here in this parliament, and within the government, from the government, for us to demonstrate leadership in terms of effective climate action. We must show young people that we are mindful of the prospects for their future and that they can have hope that we will hand over something where we have done the best we can and taken the greatest efforts we could to mitigate for that future.

I do not think that's what we can claim or point to doing at this time. Young Tasmanians definitely deserve a greater response from us in order to deliver the opportunity for more hope for them on the climate front. I support that sentiment in the motion most certainly.

It was a somewhat scrappy and brief contribution from the member for Hobart, but at the end of this sitting day, we're tired. However, this topic is important. It is comprehensively interwoven into every aspect of what we do here. I hope we might all think about ways we can bring our consideration of issues relating to climate action to any work we're doing here and not just rely on some members of this place, or some members of parliament more broadly, or

the government indeed, to be the ones always to be acting. We can all act on this. I support the motion.

[8.41 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I also acknowledge the motion that's been brought forward and the expertise, if you like, of the honourable member for Hobart and her knowledge in and around this particular important issue. I also acknowledge it is late in the day, so I will do my best to make a contribution to this. I again thank her for bringing this forward and, more importantly, for her to please know that the Tasmanian government clearly recognises both the challenges and the opportunities that climate change presents. It is responding with diligence, evidence-based policy and a commitment to long-term resilience.

The government has acknowledged the growing body of evidence pointing to the intensification of climate impacts, fires, floods, and droughts that are already affecting Tasmanian communities. We already had some examples read out and shared with us in the previous contribution by the member for Hobart. These events are deeply concerning. The government is responding with targeted investments in disaster preparedness, regional recovery frameworks and enhanced early-warning systems.

The approach is grounded in science and shaped by local knowledge. Tasmania released a climate change risk assessment in November 2024, which identifies 40 climate-related risks and opportunities that influence the natural, social, built, and economic domains. The Tasmanian government responded to the risk assessment with its own report, 'Managing Tasmania's climate risks and opportunities -

Ms O'Connor - And made no commitment to do anything, but I'm sure that's not in your speech.

Ms RATTRAY - No, it's not actually, but you might mention that when you sum up. The report addresses the themes identified in the risk assessment and sets out the strategic direction for climate adaptation. The government response includes a range of adaptation actions and focuses on five priority areas to build resilience to the changing climate and to make the most of transition opportunities. These are:

- (1) Helping Tasmanians understand the climate risks and opportunities and how they might be impacted;
- (2) Supporting Tasmanians to access fit-for-purpose climate science data to prepare for changing climate;
- (3) Building public sector capability;
- (4) Facilitating collaborative partnerships to support adaptation action; and
- (5) Monitoring and learning - recognising that this is an iterative process.

This is part of a coordinated, forward-looking strategy, and emissions reduction is a key part of this strategy. Tasmania was the first jurisdiction in Australia to achieve net zero

emissions in 2014, and subsequently maintained this level each year to 2023. Tasmania has a legislated emissions reduction target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions or lower from 30 June 2030, which has already been commented on by the honourable member for Hobart. The latest reported greenhouse gas emissions data for Tasmania was released this past May by the Australian Government. Tasmania's net emissions in 2023 revealed a 125.2 per cent decrease from the 1990 baseline level of 19.55 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. Between 2022 and 2023 alone, Tasmania's total emissions decreased by 0.3 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

The Tasmanian government has also put forth a climate change action plan that includes 98 practical cross-government actions to improve knowledge about climate change, reduce emissions and build resilience to the changing climate. In addition, the six emissions reduction and resilience plans have been developed to support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, assist our businesses and industries in the transition to a low-emissions economy and build resilience to climate-related risks.

From the outset, on behalf of the government, I want to say that the government is committed to the *Climate Change (State Action) Act* and the delivery of outcomes beneficial to both Tasmania and Tasmanians for generations to come. I also want to point out that the government has met all legislative requirements under the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008*.

The government is strengthening reporting mechanisms and ensuring that emissions reduction remains a central pillar of this government's climate policy. Also, the government is currently in the process of conducting a review of the act with great care and broad consultation, engaging with scientists, community leaders, industry experts and young Tasmanians to ensure the revised legislation reflects the urgency of the moment while remaining practical and achievable.

The summary report on the consultation feedback and a final independent review report will be prepared. I understand the final review report is expected in late 2025. The goal is to create a framework that is both ambitious and grounded, one that prepares Tasmania for the future while protecting what we value today. Climate action requires collaboration which includes convening roundtables with farmers, scientists, business leaders and community organisations to co-design solutions that are inclusive and effective. Through education programs, youth-led initiatives and green job pathways, the government is ensuring that the next generation is not only protected but empowered.

Tasmania is demonstrating a serious commitment to climate change and the government is leading with a science-based, inclusive and forward-thinking strategy for reducing emissions while safeguarding the state's social and economic wellbeing - that is really important, state social and economic wellbeing. This work emphasises sustainable development, transparency and community engagement, ensuring that the climate action benefits both current and future generations.

The government is updating fine-scale climate projections and integrating environmental, social and economic considerations into decision-making. Tasmania is actively pursuing a resilient and low-emissions future that reflects the unique needs of its people and ecosystems. It is clear that Tasmania's approach to climate change requires collaboration and working together to ensure our home remains pristine and the envy of others.

[8.50 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, just briefly, with all respect to the honourable Leader, a fair bit of that was rubbish. It was just pap. Rubbish. When the state's climate change risk assessment report came out, it identified urgent actions to strengthen infrastructure, the community, ruggedising health, emergency services and transport infrastructure, protecting land marine ecosystems, ensuring physical safety and wellbeing of communities, and improving food security through local food networks. The government's response to that climate risk assessment report made no commitments - that is, zero commitments - to any of the recommendations or actions required.

Just so everyone's really clear about that, to say that the work that will be done or is being done on climate is ambitious and grounded is a gross overstatement. There's nothing ambitious about legislating a net-zero target and then doing nothing to reduce emissions across the rest of your economy, and denying the fact that the reason we have net-zero now is because the forests that were saved.

When the government talks about protecting what we have today, it is just naive. You cannot carry on business as usual and think you are going to protect what we have today. The greatest disruptor to our social and economic wellbeing in the future will be climate, and it has already happened: fires, flood and storm surge.

The last thing I will say, and I meant to say it in my substantive contribution, and I point members to page 51 of the *National Climate Risk Assessment* report. In there is a hazard proneness chart and at 2°Celsius of warming, the only places that are more hazard-prone than Tasmania are northern Queensland and northern Western Australia. At 3°Celsius of warming, again, we are the most hazard-prone state in the Commonwealth. We can tell ourselves, because we are a little cool island down in the Southern Ocean, that we will be buffeted from some of the worst impact - and I thought that until I read this assessment. It is not true.

With 1.5°Celsius of warming, we are the most hazard-prone state. I encourage the honourable Leader to ask for less greenwashing in the material that is prepared for you. This is the same rubbish we have been hearing for 10 years. I heard it come out of Matthew Groom's mouth when he was minister, Mr Jaensch's mouth, and I am hearing it again from the Leader for the government in here, pretending that this is a challenge that is being taken seriously when all the evidence before our eyes is that it is not being taken seriously enough. To say, as we got in that response, 'Oh, well, people have more access to data so they will know how to be prepared', is grossly irresponsible.

People cannot make themselves safe on their own or in a vacuum of knowledge and support. That's why we invented governments. Governments are here to look after communities. You cannot say, 'Umm, adapting to climate change is a matter of personal responsibility as we have with COVID'. You cannot say that because the other thing that the *National Climate Risk Assessment* report makes really clear is that it will be older people, people living with a disability, people for whom English is a second language, people who live on the urban fringe, people who are poor - it will be the most disadvantaged cohorts in our community who cannot be told to go and look at a government website to find the data that tells them how to be better prepared for climate risks.

That is a collective responsibility on all of us because in every one of our electorates are people who are highly vulnerable to what's coming. I include children in that as well. I'm glad

to hear that the government is talking about strengthening the act, because they haven't done any of that for the last 11 years. They've weakened it.

I look forward to the summary of the submissions. I know how many strong submissions went in from community groups, stakeholder organisations and scientists. I know broadly what they said. They said the act is weak, it is not fulfilling its purpose, it needs substantial amendment and overhaul so that it delivers on emissions reduction and genuine adaptation planning. That is what this Council should be expecting to see when the amendments come forward.

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

The Council divided -

AYES 10

Ms Armitage
Mr Edmunds
Ms Forrest
Mr Gaffney
Mr Harriss
Mr Hiscutt
Ms Lovell (Teller)
Ms O'Connor
Ms Thomas
Ms Webb

NOES 4

Mr Duigan
Ms Palmer
Ms Rattray (Teller)
Mr Vincent

Motion agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Joint Standing Committee on Integrity - Appointment - Mr George

[9.01 p.m.]

Mr PRESIDENT - I have a message from the House of Assembly -

In accordance with section 23(4) of the *Integrity Commission Act 2009* (No. 67), Mr George has been appointed on the part of the House of Assembly to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity.

Jacquie Petrusma
Speaker
House of Assembly
23 September 2025

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 49)

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AMENDMENT (PETS) BILL 2025 (No. 40)

**DANGEROUS CRIMINALS AND HIGH RISK OFFENDERS AMENDMENT
BILL 2025 (No. 46)**

First Readings

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

[9.03 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, I move -

That the second readings of the bills be made orders of the day for Tuesday
next.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, I move -

That at its rising the Council adjourn until 11 a.m. on Wednesday
24 September 2025.

Motion agreed to.

Answer To Question - Launceston General Hospital - Temperature Control

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, before moving the adjournment, I will answer a supplementary question that was
asked by the honourable member for Launceston in Question Time today. The company
undertaking the air-conditioning works at the Launceston General Hospital is Degree C.

I also remind members of the briefings for tomorrow morning:

- 9.30 a.m.: Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2025.
- 10.00 a.m.: Government Business (Sale Reforms) Bill 2025, with departmental officers.
- 10.30 a.m.: Government Business Governance Reforms Bill 2025, with departmental officers.

I thank members for their patience today. I was excited this morning and then it turned into nervousness. I've done my best to get through the day, and I'll continue to improve, I promise.

Mr President, I move -

That the Council do now adjourn.

The Council adjourned at 9.05 p.m.